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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

# Chicago Studies





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# Chicago Studies 2018

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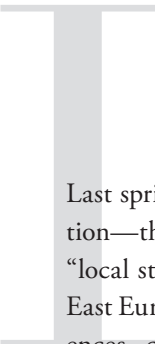
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# Preface





Last spring, the Chicago Studies Quarter explored a topic—immigration—that links the past and present of our city in powerful ways. This “local study-abroad term,” designed with the program in Russian and East European Studies, took a humanities-based approach to the experiences, conflicts, and storytelling that surrounded migration from Southern and Eastern Europe to Chicago in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition to lectures and field trips, students engaged materially with the question of how immigrant experiences are translated into documents and communal memory. They participated in archival processing, interviews, and place-based investigation to capture the memories of this period and explore its meaning for the civic culture of Chicago.

The mission of Chicago Studies is to connect the vast resources of our urban environment to the curriculum of the College, in all programs of study. In this way, the life of the city—such as Slavic community organizations, family documents, and today’s heated public discussions about migration—become part of the intellectual and civic development of our students, and a singular asset to the pedagogical work of our faculty. The Chicago Studies Office and Advisory Board have worked creatively to encourage these connections at the levels of coursework,

undergraduate research, and student programing, with a broad spectrum of Chicago-based offerings available for this academic year. The Chicago Studies Quarter is the centerpiece of this portfolio.

Though Chicago Studies was founded in 2007, this curricular vision has a deep and compelling history at the University of Chicago. Some of the earliest faculty, particularly in the social sciences, were drawn to this city in part because it offered a fascinating and unvarnished site for the investigation of social problems and human behavior. Figures like Albion Small, W. I. Thomas, and Charles Henderson sought to make Chicago a critical object of research for the Department of Sociology and encouraged graduate students to conduct active investigations in the city.<sup>1</sup> At the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, which merged with the University of Chicago in 1920 as the School of Social Service Administration, Edith Abbott and Sophonisba Breckinridge studied urban conditions with a view to informing public policy and reform. One could find similar expressions in the Departments of Psychology and Geography prior to World War One. Chicago was a site where one could encounter the structures and problems of urban-industrial society in their most potent form. The realities one observed daily on the tram or street corner were ready topics for investigation. It was sociologist Robert Park who, in his famous 1916 essay on the city, articulated this in a systematic way, calling Chicago “a laboratory or clinic in which human nature and social processes may be most conveniently and profitably studied.”<sup>2</sup>

In the next three decades, these empirical approaches to the city gained a sophistication that made the University of Chicago an acknowledged center for social science research, generating storied graduate

1. Robert E. L. Faris, *Chicago Sociology, 1920–1932* (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing, 1967), 12–13.

2. Robert E. Park, “The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment,” *American Journal of Sociology* 20, no. 5 (Mar. 1916), 577–612.

programs in Sociology, Political Science, and Psychology, and to some degree in Economics and Geography. A collection of scholars gathered who defined the first iterations of the Chicago School: Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, Charles Merriam, George Herbert Mead, and L. L. Thurstone in the first generation, and a list of academic notables like Harold F. Gosnell, Louis Wirth, Harold Lasswell, and Everett Hughes in the second. In each discipline, face-to-face inquiry and empirical research were essential parts of teaching, and these values turned the focus of students and faculty alike to the social and ethnic groups, relationships, institutions, and physical spaces of the city. Notebooks in hand, students traversed the districts of Chicago, using participant observation, interviewing, and other forms of data collection to develop or refine methodologies, such as social psychology, urban ecology (with its famed emphasis on neighborhood maps and urban zones), and social pathology. Chicago was not representative of all cities, of course, but it was a quintessentially modern city, where one could observe in a “natural” way the larger forces that were shaping humanity in the urban twentieth century. As researchers collected local data, they were tapping a well of inspiration for their disciplines and gaining scholarly insight into the world in becoming.<sup>3</sup>

Tied to these ambitions was a claim about education that owed much to the philosophical influences of John Dewey and George Herbert Mead, which stressed the dynamism of social reality and the contextual nature of social facts. The commitment to close observation, to analyzing the worlds of communities and individuals, meant facing up to the changeable and pluralistic character of social experience. One could choose any number of urban topics, from the shape of immigrant identities to the causes of juvenile delinquency or the voting behavior of racial

3. On the pedagogy of the Chicago School of Sociology, see James T. Carey, *Sociology and Public Affairs: The Chicago School* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishing, 1975), 151–90; and Martin Bulmer, *The Chicago School of Sociology. Institutionalization, Diversity, and the Rise of Sociological Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 89–107.

minorities. None lent themselves to one-dimensional or rigidly ideological claims about social questions. Instead, Chicago placed learners in touch with a stubbornly evasive reality and asked them to formulate claims with respect to this complexity and the humanity of their subjects. While the city was not without an ordering logic, one had to apprehend it inductively, with healthy suspicion of abstract and impersonal theories.

The curricular vision of the first Chicago School is part of the genealogy of today's Chicago Studies Program, and perhaps of the interest in place-based education nationally.<sup>4</sup> Though scarcely acknowledged in the literature, these scholars nurtured a lively interest in the education of undergraduates through urban excursions, fieldwork, and research, giving their scholarship a strong point of reference in the college curriculum. Their syllabi and lecture notes speak to a level of engagement with Chicago that was not fully recaptured in the College until the beginning of this century. Today, across vast differences in the character of the city, the University of Chicago, and the associated disciplines, we maintain our admiration for Chicago as an environment to test and refine truth claims, to consider complex processes, and to recognize the rich variations of human experience. The city of Chicago is more than ever a partner in the curriculum.

The contributions to the 2018 *Chicago Studies Annual* illustrate these continuities, even as they originate from activities and interests that could not have occurred to scholars in the first half of the twentieth century. Generally, they are more concerned with interventions in the planning and identity of the city than with its underlying structures and forces, and the tensions they explore have causes other than rapid population growth and industrial expansion. As a set, they came to the attention of faculty and peers as finalists at the inaugural Chicago Studies Research Symposium on May 17, 2018, where the authors presented their work to an interdisciplinary audience in the John Hope Franklin Room.

4. See James D. Orcutt, "Teaching in the Social Laboratory and the Mission of SSSP: Some Lessons from the Chicago School," *Social Problems* 43, no. 3 (Aug. 1996), 235–45.

Madeline Anderson, AB'18 (Public Policy Studies), received the 2018 Chicago Studies Essay Prize for her thoroughly researched analysis of the reparations package that the Chicago City Council approved in 2015 for the victims of police torture under Detective Jon Burge. Anderson develops a highly original typology of reparations from international examples and uses a wealth of in-depth interviews to investigate the effectiveness of the Chicago reparations package as an effort to address the harm caused to victims and their families. Her conclusions are nuanced in their treatment of the varied aspects of the package and make a strong contribution to the literature about reparations as a tool of public policy.

Elizabeth Dia's essay introduces us to the family and social structures of Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood in the 1970s and 1980s. A rich archival source base on the women's community organization *Mujeres Latinas en Acción* allows Dia, AB'18 (History), to reconstruct the practices of support for the Latina/o community, which she finds were built upon the traditional language and duties of motherhood. This focus opens a striking narrative about contests and shifting identities within the community—over gender roles, over relationships with American feminism, and over the boundaries of ethnic identity.

Hannah Edgar, AB'18 (Music), brings the genre of biography and the scene of aesthetic criticism to the *Annual* in their study of Claudia Cassidy, whose famed coverage of the Chicago arts world in the *Chicago Tribune* and other media wound through most of the twentieth century. This exploration of Cassidy's prolific career reveals noteworthy historical themes: the place of women in journalism, the centrality of cultural institutions to the identity of the city, and the evolution of methods and styles for the literary treatment of the arts. At center, however, is the mutually dependent relationship between Cassidy's professional reputation and the cultural scene of Chicago.

The present and future of Chicago's mid-South Side are the subjects of Valeria Alejandra Stutz's analysis of public debates about the Obama Presidential Center. Plans for the center in Jackson Park are vigorously debated for many reasons, but it is the simultaneous intensity of enthusiasm

and resentment among residents that concerns Stutz, AB'18 (Geographical Studies), manifest in conflicting claims about the rightful uses of urban space. In the language and imagery of stakeholders, we can find competing visions of the neighborhood and its future, and the character of its members and activities, that are not always apparent on the surface.

As the *Annual* enters its second decade of publication, it is gratifying to reflect on this record of ways that the city and the curriculum interact to educate our undergraduates as scholars and citizens. The urbanists of the early twentieth century would be pleased by the vitality of this work, and no doubt grateful to James Dahl Cooper, AB'76 (Political Science), whose generosity has supported this volume of the *Annual* as a continuing conversation with the city of Chicago.

Daniel J. Koehler, AM'02, PhD'10 (History)

*Associate Dean of the College*





# Acknowledgments



**MADELINE ANDERSON** | My deepest and heartfelt thanks go first and foremost to the survivors and mothers of survivors who so graciously opened their homes and hearts to me. Nothing has ever amazed and inspired me more than their strength, perseverance, grace, faith, and kindness. Moreover, my greatest appreciation goes to my mentor Forrest Stuart. I could have never written this paper without his guidance. So much of the structure of the paper was the brainchild of his brilliance: he guided me through every crisis while writing and showed unwavering belief in me even when I didn't hold the same belief in myself. To Jamie Kalven and Alison Flowers, my advisors at the Invisible Institute, who gave me the idea for the paper, gave me access to my research sources, and helped and inspired me every step of the way. To Dan Koehler, Chris Skrable, Chad Broughton, and William Feeney, who championed my paper and widened the audience it would reach in ways I never imagined and for which I am eternally grateful. To my parents, who make everything in my life possible, who place the world at my fingertips, and who patiently read and edited multiple versions of my paper. To my friends, who also read copy after copy of my paper and who bring endless joy to my life. And finally, to my grandparents, for being the presidents of my fan club and always encouraging me to keep writing. Since graduating

from the University of Chicago, I have moved to California. I teach world history and integrated science at a special education high school, administer individualized education programs for a caseload of students, and coach varsity girls soccer. I am also in the second and final year of a masters in education. Through all the stress of my busy jobs, I am still propelled forward by the love, support, and inspiration of all the people listed in these acknowledgments.

**ELIZABETH DIA** | I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Professor Matthew Briones, and my thesis preceptor, Nicholas Kryczka, for their support throughout this process. I would also like to thank Jacob McCarthy for his valuable comments on multiple drafts of this thesis. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my partner, Brian Choo, for his continuous encouragement, and to my parents and family, who made it possible for me to attend the University of Chicago. Since graduating, I have remained in Chicago where I continue to explore the city's diversity and history. I am currently employed as a paralegal at an immigration law firm.

**HANNAH EDGAR** | My contribution here wouldn't have been possible without the guidance of my phenomenal advisor, Jennifer Iverson, whose trenchant edits, insights, and guidance were indispensable. Additional thanks, too, to the staff of the Newberry Library's Special Collections, Frank Villella and Phillip Huscher of the CSO, and WFMT archivist Allison Schein Holmes. A most heartfelt thank you to Linda Winer and Lois Baum for their time and reflections; they called Claudia Cassidy a friend, and I'm grateful that they could share some of her with me. Many thanks, too, to those who have supported me in my ongoing efforts to turn "Chicago on the Aisle" into a book. Above all, this thesis is dedicated to another red-haired woman whose honesty and love are one and the same: my mother. I still live in Chicago, where I work as a journalist and freelance humanities researcher.

**VALERIA ALEJANDRA STUTZ** | I am deeply grateful to the residents of Woodlawn who shared their knowledge, experiences, and perspectives with me. I would also like to thank my advisor Professor Michael Conzen, Professor Forrest Stuart, and Professor Euan Hague for their guidance on the central questions and methodology of this paper. Thank you to Daniel Koehler and Christopher Skrable for the opportunity to publish my work. I would like to thank my family for their care and encouragement, with special gratitude to my mother, who supported me in innumerable ways throughout my research and writing. Since graduating, I have interned at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. I currently work in Teen Lab at the Art Institute of Chicago. The program explores the history of museum power structures and the Chicago neighborhoods where the teens live; we share personal narratives and make art as ways to elevate cultural heritage.

# What Makes an Ideal Reparations Package?



## A Typological Examination of Reparations for Jon Burge Torture Survivors

MADELINE ANDERSON, AB'18

### Introduction

On May 6, 2015, in response to decades of activism, the Chicago City Council formally recognized and apologized for Chicago's history of police torture under Detective Jon Burge and his associates by passing legislation that provided reparations to the survivors of police torture in Chicago. The reparations package included a \$5.5 million fund for torture survivors; a Chicago Torture Justice Center (CTJC) was opened in May 2017; the Chicago Public Schools agreed to teach all eighth- and tenth-graders about Burge's torture and brutality; and the Chicago Torture Justice Memorials organization is designing a memorial for the survivors. Finally, the reparations package included a slew of services for survivors and their families (health, education, legal, etc.).<sup>1</sup> This legislation was historic:

1. City of Chicago, Burge Resolution, May 6, 2015, [www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dol/supp\\_info/Burge-Reparations-Information-Center/BurgeRESOLUTION.pdf](http://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dol/supp_info/Burge-Reparations-Information-Center/BurgeRESOLUTION.pdf); City of Chicago, Reparations for Burge Torture Victims Ordinance, May 6, 2015, [www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/dol/supp\\_info/Burge-Reparations-Information-Center/ORDINANCE.pdf](http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/dol/supp_info/Burge-Reparations-Information-Center/ORDINANCE.pdf).

although the City of Chicago has paid settlements to survivors of police torture in the past, it was the first city to make reparations.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that the reparations package was historic means little if it has not been effective. In this paper I investigate as much: how effective is the Burge reparations package in improving the plight of torture survivors and their families? To answer this question, I first defined reparations and then analyzed the Burge reparations package in the context of reparations packages more broadly. I established a set of criteria by which to judge the effectiveness of reparations packages by their scope, completeness, comprehensiveness, complexity, continuity, measure of moral awakening, and valuation of suffering. I then judged four case studies according to these criteria: the US Civil Liberties Act for Japanese Americans (1988), Florida's Rosewood Claims Bill (1994), Chile's National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture (2005), and Germany's Holocaust Reparations (1952–present). I chose these four case studies because they represent reparations packages that are differently focused: on education, on compensation/restoration of property, on health, and multi-area, respectively. I created a typology with my criteria (scope, completeness, comprehensiveness, etc.) on one axis and the foci (education, compensation/restoration, etc.) on the other axis and placed the case studies within it.

Having explored reparations packages more broadly, I then turned to the Burge reparations package. I studied the archival history of the Burge scandal, the movement that culminated in the establishment of the reparations package, and the designers and implementers of the package itself. I analyzed the Burge reparations package according to each criterion for effectiveness of my typology and in reference to the other case studies. To do this, I used data I gathered from in-depth interviews with torture survivors, the mothers of torture survivors, and the organizers of the reparations package. I also judged where the Burge reparations package fits within the typology. Finally, I made policy recommendations about

2. Adeel Hassan and Jack Healy, "America Has Tried Reparations Before. Here Is How It Went," *New York Times*, June 19, 2019.



what work should still be done to improve the plight of torture survivors and their families.

Ultimately, I have made a multipart argument. I contend that the Burge reparations package is lacking in scope. It is adequate in completeness for the class of torture survivors included, but it is inadequate in completeness for the entire universe of police torture survivors in Chicago. It is impressive in complexity. It is comprehensive in nonmonetary aspects but incomprehensive in monetary aspects. It has little to no valuation of suffering. It addresses abuse that is continuous. Finally, it evoked a moral awakening in some populations but not for most. In order to make up for what the reparations package lacks, I recommend that organizers should 1) advocate for expanded funding for investigations of police officers linked to torture, 2) advocate for expanded funding to CTJC and for health-care services, and 3) rethink certain aspects of CTJC services, the memorial, and the education services offered to make them more inclusive for all survivors and their family members.

## Methodology

I collected data for this study in two main ways. First, I did extensive research using books, official city documents, verifiable websites, newspapers, and academic papers to write the introduction, literature review, and historical background.

Second, I conducted comprehensive interviews with torture survivors and the mothers of torture survivors, as well as the designers and implementers of the Burge reparations package. To find the contact information of torture survivors and the mothers of torture survivors, I started by collecting a few names from my advisers at the Invisible Institute, Jamie Kalven and Alison Flowers.<sup>3</sup> I then made dozens of phone calls until I

3. "The Invisible Institute is a journalism production company on the South Side of Chicago. Our mission is to enhance the capacity of citizens to hold public institutions accountable." "About," Invisible Institute, [invisible.institute/about](http://invisible.institute/about).

was able to arrange a few interviews, which lead to snowball sampling: the torture survivors and the mothers of torture survivors are a well-connected community. Ultimately, I interviewed four torture survivors and five mothers of torture survivors. It is important to note that this is not a large or representative sample of survivors.

Contacting the designers and implementers of the Burge reparations package proved more difficult. I sent many emails to lawyers at the People's Law Office, staff at the Chicago Torture Justice Center, members of the Chicago Torture Justice Memorials (CTJM), journalists, etc., but at first no one responded. Then, on February 3, 2018, I attended a For the People Artists Collective discussion that featured two CTJM leaders, Mariame Kaba and Sarah Ross. At that event, I approached and scheduled interviews with Joey Mogul (People's Law Office lawyer) and Sarah Ross (CTJM organizer and School of the Art Institute of Chicago educator). From there, again, I was able to snowball sample to complete more interviews. A couple of individuals whom I initially emailed responded after I persisted in following up several times. Ultimately, I interviewed Mogul, Ross, G. Flint Taylor (People's Law Office lawyer), John Conroy (journalist), and Cindy Eigler (Chicago Torture Justice Center policy director). In addition, I attended a community meeting at Wildwood Elementary School about implementation of the Chicago Public Schools' Reparations Won curriculum and talked to the school's principal and parents.

The interviews with torture survivors and the mothers of torture survivors occurred wherever the interviewees suggested worked best for them; these tended to be in their homes or in local cafes. Interviews with authors and implementers of the Burge reparations package occurred at the People's Law Office, Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law, the *In These Times* office, and the Chicago Torture Justice Center.

The interviews lasted between thirty minutes and 210 minutes (see appendix 1). I began by asking participants to consent verbally to being interviewed (see appendix 2). I then asked them if I could audio record them. All of them agreed, and I recorded the interviews using my iPhone. I asked if they wanted me to use a pseudonym for their names, which

none did. I asked that they not provide any information about criminal activity that had not yet been prosecuted and to be aware that while I would attempt to maintain all confidentiality, there was always a chance of subpoena. During the interviews, if it seemed that they were beginning to reveal information about themselves or others that could have legal ramifications, I reminded them that they should not reveal anything that had not yet been prosecuted. Finally, I informed them that they could stop the interview at any time for any reason.

In terms of risks and benefits for participants, there were minimal risks associated with my study. The only discomfort interviewees experienced was sadness while discussing difficult experiences, but none wished to stop the interview. For most interview subjects, the interviews seemed to be therapeutic. They enjoyed sharing their stories with a very engaged listener. Most talked about experiences beyond the scope of my study and for much longer amounts of time than I had originally anticipated.

At the end of each interview, I transferred the audio recordings from my phone onto my computer and then uploaded them onto the transcription software Trint. I then transferred the audio files into UChicago Box and removed them from my phone and computer.<sup>4</sup> I scanned handwritten notes immediately, transferred them into UChicago Box, and destroyed the original notes.

## Definition of Reparations

In order to define “reparations,” one must define “human injustice.” Article 55C of the United Nations Charter reads, “the United Nations shall promote ... universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language

4. UChicago Box is a cloud-based storage service available to University of Chicago students, staff, and faculty, [uchicago.service-now.com/it?id=kb\\_article&kb=KB00015980](https://uchicago.service-now.com/it?id=kb_article&kb=KB00015980).

or religion.”<sup>5</sup> Various multilateral and bilateral conventions, resolutions, treaties, and covenants define the rights of all humans and provide for their enforcement. A “human injustice” is the violation or suppression of human rights or fundamental freedoms recognized by international law.<sup>6</sup>

Harvard University law professor Mari Matsuda lists five prerequisites for a human rights redress claim: 1) a human injustice was committed, 2) it was well-documented, 3) the victims are identifiable as a distinct group, 4) the current members of the group continue to suffer harm, and 5) such harm is causally connected to the past injustice.<sup>7</sup> Once redress claims are verifiable by these prerequisites, they can, according to University of San Diego law professor Roy Brooks, be divided into settlements and reparations.<sup>8</sup> A *settlement* is a form of redress in which the perpetrator does not express atonement. Settlements are often used in US law: a defendant settles a dispute with a consent decree in which the defendant agrees to pay the plaintiff(s) a certain sum of money, but does not concede wrongdoing. A *reparations* is a form of redress in which a government expresses atonement. Often atonement, in the form of an apology and an acknowledgement of wrongdoing, means more to survivors than anything else. Beyond atonement, reparations can be subdivided into monetary and nonmonetary responses. Nonmonetary responses include amnesty, affirmative action, and services. These types of reparations can be more effective than cash in responding to survivors’ individual or collective current needs.<sup>9</sup>

5. United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice*, chapter IX, article 55 (New York: United Nations, June 26, 1945).

6. Roy L. Brooks, *When Sorry Isn't Enough: The Controversy Over Apologies and Reparations for Injustice* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

7. Mari J. Matsuda, “Looking to the Bottom: Critical Legal Studies and Reparations,” *Harvard Civil Rights–Civil Liberties Law Review* 22 (1987): 323–400.

8. Brooks, *When Sorry Isn't Enough*.

9. Ibid.

## Typology of Reparations

I developed a typology to compare the Burges reparations to other reparations and to analyze its effectiveness. On one axis, the typology measures criteria for judging the effectiveness of a reparations package: scope, completeness, comprehensiveness, complexity, continuity, valuation of suffering, and moral awakening. On the other axis, the typology divides reparations packages into four types: education-focused reparations, health-focused reparations, compensation/restoration of property-focused reparations, and “octopus” reparations.

### Criteria for Judging the Effectiveness of a Reparations Package

**Scope:** Reparations can have greater or lesser scope according to the number of survivors they reach. This is simply a judgment of whether the number of survivors reached is large or small.<sup>10</sup>

**Completeness:** Completeness is the reparations package attempt to cover the whole universe of survivors. In other words, was every survivor included in the reparations package, or only some? No reparations package is ever fully complete, partly because of the difficulty determining the full set of survivors.<sup>11</sup>

**Comprehensiveness:** A comprehensive reparations package provides redress for as many facets of the human rights violation as is feasible, and it generally includes both monetary and nonmonetary redress.<sup>12</sup>

**Complexity:** A reparations package that includes compensation, memorials,

10. Pablo De Greiff, *The Handbook of Reparations* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2006).

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

education, health services, and reintegration services is more complex than a package that only includes compensation.<sup>13</sup>

**Continuity:** This is a measure of whether or not the conflict or human rights violations that inspired the reparations package is continuous or not. Sometimes human rights violations can be continuous in ways not identical to, but related to the human rights violations that inspired the reparations package.

**Valuation of Suffering:** A reparations package that has no valuation of suffering gives every survivor the same monetary and nonmonetary compensation no matter what types and durations of suffering they endured. A reparations package with a valuation of suffering is often perceived as unfair: all survivors suffered yet some receive more than others because their suffering was deemed more worthy of redress than others’.

**Moral Awakening:** For a moral awakening to occur, individuals must acknowledge that human injustices were committed and must acknowledge them as wrong; must experience a change of consciousness; and must change their actions. If a moral awakening has occurred, the human injustices that were committed is not continuous. Moral awakening is rarely experienced by a population fully or evenly. Discerning moral awakening is difficult and highly subjective. It is very hard to tell whether someone has undergone an inner shift in consciousness. One can only analyze their words (or lack of words) and actions, and others may disagree with that analysis. Therefore, I separated the row in my typology dedicated to moral awakening from the rest of the typology to indicate that this more subjective criterion is different from the other more factual criteria.

13. Ibid.

## Four Types of Reparations Packages

**Education-Focused Reparations:** Education-focused reparations are comprehensive and complex with regards to educational programming (curriculums and projects aimed at teaching the public about the human injustices that occurred, funding for survivors' college education, etc.) but may or may not be comprehensive and complex with regards to other services. They evoke at least a partial moral awakening in at least some people thus educated. Scope, completeness, valuation of suffering, and continuity will vary.

**Health-Focused Reparations:** Health-focused reparations are comprehensive and complex with regard to health programming (health care, medication, therapy, counseling, etc.), but may or may not be comprehensive and complex with regards to other services. They may or may not evoke at least a partial moral awakening. Scope, completeness, valuation of suffering, and continuity will vary.

**Compensation/Restoration of Property-Focused Reparations:** Compensation/ restoration of property-focused reparations are not especially comprehensive or complex. These reparations packages likely do not evoke a partial moral awakening. They are often less effective than other types of reparations packages. Scope, completeness, valuation of suffering, and continuity will vary.

**Octopus Reparations:** Octopus-reparations packages can be considered the most successful type. They are very comprehensive and complex; they offer a variety of very well-developed services, which likely evoke a significant moral awakening because of their heightened comprehensiveness; they are more likely than other packages to be nearly complete or working toward completeness; and they are less likely than other packages to respond to abuse that is continuous. Scope and valuation of suffering will vary.

## Four Case Studies

I selected the four case studies to ensure diversity along a variety of measures, including geographical location, the degree of socioeconomic development, the number of beneficiaries, and the type of conflict to which the programs responded. They do not serve as perfect examples of each of the four types of reparations packages, but rather as loose examples (see table 1).

### **Education-Focused Reparations: Civil Liberties Act of 1988 for Japanese Americans (United States)**

Following the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order mandating that all Japanese Americans evacuate the West Coast. Approximately 120,000 people, many of whom were American citizens, were relocated to ten internment camps located in the western United States. The camps were often nothing more than makeshift barracks, with families and children cramped together behind barbed wires. Some Japanese American citizens were allowed to return to the West Coast beginning in 1945, and the last camp closed in March 1946.<sup>14</sup>

Decades later, inspired by the civil rights movement, the Japanese American Citizens League launched a campaign for reparations led by John Tateishi.<sup>15</sup> The campaign culminated in 1988 when President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act, which authorized a presidential apology, the payment of \$1.2 billion in individual reparations claims to Japanese Americans, and a Civil Liberties Public Education Fund

14. "Japanese Relocation during World War II," National Archives, last modified Apr. 10, 2017, [www.archives.gov/education/lessons/japanese-relocation](http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/japanese-relocation).

15. Bilal Qureshi, "From Wrong to Right: A U.S. Apology for Japanese Internment," *All Things Considered*, National Public Radio, Aug. 9, 2013.



(CLPEF) Board funded with \$50 million.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, monuments have been created in Washington, DC, and California.

Most noteworthy is the CLPEF Board. Its mission is to “sponsor research and public educational activities, and to publish and distribute the hearings, findings, and recommendations of the Commission.” The board has given 132 individuals grants, ranged from \$2,000 to \$100,000, totaling \$3.3 million, including nineteen national fellowships. The board funded seven categories of projects: curriculum, landmarks and institutions, community development, arts and media, research, national fellowships, and research resources. The projects included development of internment curriculum for elementary and high school students, oral histories of internment artists, development of materials and a book for teaching law and the internment, books and documentaries on internment camp life, psychological studies on the effects of the internment, and numerous others.<sup>17</sup>

The reparations package is large in scope. Over eleven years, 82,250 survivor each received \$20,000 in compensation.<sup>18</sup> However, the scope is lacking relative to the total number of 120,000 survivors. Consequently, the reparations package is significantly incomplete. The package is very comprehensive and complex with regard to educational projects, but this is at the cost of comprehensiveness and complexity in terms of health services or compensation. The package has no valuation of suffering: all beneficiaries received \$20,000. US government abuse of Japanese Americans is discontinuous; however, one could also argue that the abuse is continuous in that the government still abuses other minorities, such as Muslim Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, African Americans, etc. By the same token, it is hard to say that government

16. De Greiff, *Handbook of Reparations*.

17. Ibid.

18. Civil Liberties Act of 1987, H.R. 442, 100th Cong. (1987). Only Japanese American citizens or legal permanent residents could make reparations claims.

officials have undergone moral awakening, given the continued abuse of minorities. However, it is very likely that many Americans experienced moral awakening as a result of the reparations package's extensive education campaign.

### **Compensation/Restoration of Property–Focused Reparations: Rosewood Claims Bill (Florida)**

In January 1923, a white mob destroyed and burned every home and building of the black community of Rosewood, Florida, after a fruitless search for a black man accused of assaulting a white woman. At least six black people and two white people were killed. The state did not respond at the time of the incident. It was largely forgotten until the 1980s, when the few survivors of the 120 original residents of Rosewood began speaking out.<sup>19</sup> Florida investigated their egregious claims, released a 1993 report, and passed reparations legislation in 1994, which offered an official apology and a \$2.1 million compensation plan. The nine elderly victims received \$150,000 each, \$500,000 was divided among descendants of people who lost property in Rosewood, and a scholarship fund was created.<sup>20</sup>

This reparations package is small in scope: just nine survivors and the families of deceased victims. The package is semi-complete: although it reaches all nine living survivors, it very likely does not reach all descendants of deceased victims; even those it does reach receive little (one descendant received \$3,000). Moreover, 111 other survivors died before reparations were made in 1993. The reparations package's few types of

19. Jessica Glenza, "Rosewood Massacre a Harrowing Tale of Racism and the Road toward Reparations," *Manchester Guardian*, Jan. 3, 2016.

20. C. Jeanne Bassett, "House Bill 591: Florida Compensates Rosewood Victims and Their Families for a Seventy-One-Year-Old Injury," *Florida State University Law Review* 22, no. 2 (Winter 1994): 503–23.

compensation lack complexity and comprehensiveness. Valuation of suffering exists to some degree: compensation went evenly to the nine survivors but unequally to descendants of deceased victims. The human injustice that survivors endured is discontinuous because government officials today generally prevent large scale race riots; however, racial violence in other forms, such as racially motivated police brutality, continues. Partly for this reason, it is hard to believe that moral awakening occurred for Florida state officials. Indeed, state officials have since established or defended racist laws, such as Stand Your Ground, which the American Bar Association says, “result in racial disparities in the criminal justice system.”<sup>21</sup> The reparations package had no educational program, which might have evoked a moral awakening in everyday Floridians.

### **Health-Focused Reparations: National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture (Chile)**

After a 1973 military coup, General Augusto Pinochet’s politically repressive rule in Chile led to political killings, “disappearances,” the imprisonment or exile of countless Chileans, and the widespread use of torture. The Pinochet dictatorship ended in 1989 when Pinochet lost the presidential election to Patricio Aylwin. Aylwin restored democracy and established the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture in 1990. At first, the commission only investigated crimes resulting in death or disappearance, and its report determined that 2,298 persons had died between September 11, 1973, and March 11, 1990: 979 disappeared detainees, 1,061 people killed by security forces in detention or in other circumstances, 168 victims of political violence, and 90 members of leftist groups killed by civilians. The commission could not

21. “National Task Force on Stand Your Ground Laws: Report and Recommendations,” American Bar Association, Sept. 2015, [www.americanbar.org/groups/diversity/racial\\_ethnic\\_justice/projects/SYG/](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/diversity/racial_ethnic_justice/projects/SYG/).

with satisfaction determine a political cause in 630 cases. In 1991, another 899 new cases qualified for reparations.<sup>22</sup>

Soon after, activists pushed Chile to acknowledge human rights violations, such as torture and unlawful detention, that did not result in death. President Ricardo Lagos ordered a second investigation.<sup>23</sup> In 2005, the Chilean government committed to providing 28,459 registered survivors of torture and imprisonment under Pinochet (or their relatives) with lifelong governmental compensation of between approximately US\$2,300 and US\$2,600 for survivors. Children born in prison or detained with their parents would receive a lump-sum payment of approximately US\$6,800. Survivors also receive free education, housing, and health care.<sup>24</sup> The Chilean government constructed dozens of memorials, including the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos in Santiago.<sup>25</sup>

The health-care component, PRAIS, is the largest part of the Chilean reparations package.<sup>26</sup> Through PRAIS, mental-health teams not only assist victims and their families directly but also draw public attention to the lingering psychosocial and psychological consequences of human rights violations. By the end of 2002, the PRAIS program had expanded beyond the care of torture survivors with 93,272 registered beneficiaries of PRAIS throughout the country; by June 2003, this number had risen to 132,000.<sup>27</sup> Although the Chilean reparations package comprises many

22. United States Institute of Peace, *Report of the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation* (Washington, DC: USIP Library, Oct. 4, 2002), [www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/collections/truth\\_commissions/Chile90-Report/Chile90-Report.pdf](http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/collections/truth_commissions/Chile90-Report/Chile90-Report.pdf).

23. Ibid.

24. De Greiff, *Handbook of Reparations*.

25. United States Institute of Peace, *Report*.

26. De Greiff, *Handbook of Reparations*. PRAIS stands for the Programa de Reparación y Atención Integral de Salud.

27. Ruben Carranza, *The Series of Reparations Programs in Chile* (New York: Inter-

parts, I categorized it as health-care focused because of this extensive and effective health-care piece.

The Chilean reparations package includes a valuation of suffering because the compensation given to survivors and their family members varied. It is comprehensive and complex because it provides redress in a variety of tailored ways and its unique health-care services are simply superior. Its scope is relatively large: 28,459 individuals (and many more if we count those served by PRAIS). However, it is incomplete: the total number of officially recognized survivors from the period between 1973 and 1990 is 41,470 (3,216 disappeared or killed and 38,254 former political prisoners). The commission failed to reach 19,011 individuals.<sup>28</sup> Also, many families struggled to provide the extensive evidence of abuse that was required, and the application process was extremely lengthy and involved. It is likely that many survivors did not complete the process.<sup>29</sup>

Although the Pinochet regime is over, human injustice in Chile is somewhat continuous. According to Human Rights Watch, the Chilean national police (Carabineros) continue to use excessive force, particularly against protesters, students, and indigenous communities, and some officers have allegedly sexually harassed women and girls at protests. According to the Public Ministry, complaints of torture, genocide, ill-treatment, and crimes against humanity increased 193 percent in the first nine months of 2016, compared with the same period in 2015, with most cases allegedly involving Carabineros.<sup>30</sup>

national Center for Transitional Justice, Dec. 2008), <http://pmg-assets.s3-web-site-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/docs/110331ictj.pdf>.

28. "Chile: 40 years on from Pinochet's coup, impunity must end," Amnesty International, last updated Sept. 10, 2013, [www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2013/09/chile-years-pinochet-s-coup-impunity-must-end/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2013/09/chile-years-pinochet-s-coup-impunity-must-end/).

29. United States Institute of Peace, *Report*.

30. "Chile: Events of 2016," Human Rights Watch, last updated 2017, [www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/chile](http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/chile).

In terms of moral awakening, government officials appear in their report to be genuine in their apology:

We trust that whoever reads this report will appreciate even more the expression, “Never again!” It must be never again, for we cannot return to a situation in which Chileans will again be facing the vile absurdity of resolving political problems through murder, torture, and hatred. Such a “never again” therefore also means not doing to others what has been done to oneself. Legally and politically, that is tantamount to saying that respect for the rights of every human being must come into play as the basis for our common life.<sup>31</sup>

It is dubious that the moral awakening continues in today’s politicians who allow abuse under the Carabineros. Many everyday Chileans, however, may have experienced a moral awakening through the package’s education programs.

## **Octopus Reparations: Holocaust Reparations (Germany)**

According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Holocaust

was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. Holocaust is a word of Greek origin meaning “sacrifice by fire.” The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were “racially superior” and that the Jews, deemed “inferior,” were an alien threat to the so-called German racial community.... To concentrate and monitor the Jewish population as well as to facilitate later deportation of the Jews, the Germans and their collaborators created ghettos, transit camps, and forced-labor

31. United States Institute of Peace, *Report*.

camps for Jews during the war years. The German authorities also established numerous forced-labor camps, both in the so-called Greater German Reich and in German-occupied territory, for non-Jews whose labor the Germans sought to exploit.... Between 1941 and 1944, Nazi German authorities deported millions of Jews from Germany, from occupied territories, and from the countries of many of its Axis allies to ghettos and to killing centers, often called extermination camps, where they were murdered in specially developed gassing facilities.<sup>32</sup>

In 1952, when West Germany began the process of making reparations for the Holocaust, it did so under difficult conditions. Very few Germans believed that Jews were entitled to anything: only 5 percent of West Germans felt guilty about the Holocaust and only 29 percent believed that Jews were owed restitution from the German people.<sup>33</sup> Jews in Israel also did not want a reparations and protested widely. Menachem Begin, the future prime minister, said, “today you arrested hundreds. Tomorrow you may arrest thousands. No matter, they will go, they will sit in prison. We will sit there with them. If necessary, we will be killed with them. But there will be no ‘reparations’ from Germany.” Protesting Israeli Jews did not think money could make up for all they had lost; in fact, they had a taste for revenge. “My soul would be at rest if I knew there would be six million German dead to match the six million Jews,” said Meir Dworzecki, a survivor of Estonian concentration camps.<sup>34</sup>

Still, in September 1952, Germany and Israel reached the Luxembourg Agreement. Germany agreed to repay Israel for “resettling so great a number of uprooted and destitute Jewish refugees” after the war and would

32. “Introduction to the Holocaust,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, [www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005143](http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005143).

33. Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York, Penguin, 2005), 271.

34. Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *Atlantic*, June 2014.

compensate individual Jews via the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany. In 1952, Germany paid Israel \$7 billion in today's dollars, which tripled Israel's GNP.<sup>35</sup> From 1952 until today, Germany has paid more than \$78.4 billion in reparations and compensation for survivors of Nazi persecution: more than \$70 billion was paid to more than 800,000 Holocaust survivors around the world; of these, 130,000 survivors in forty-seven countries received direct compensation as well as assistance with home care, food, medicine, health care, transportation, legal aid, and socialization.<sup>36</sup> In addition, Germany erected dozens of memorials to the Holocaust including the Holocaust Tower, the Jewish Museum in Berlin, and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin.

The scope of the German reparations package was the largest of any reparations package: 800,000 Holocaust survivors and the entire state of Israel. It is very comprehensive and complex: direct compensation, home care, food, medicine, health care, transportation, legal aid, and dozens of memorials. Its completeness is lacking, however. Julius Berman, chairman of the claims conference, has said that as many as 50,000 survivors have not received compensation in any form.<sup>37</sup> The average age of an Israeli Holocaust survivor in 2018 was 87; it has been estimated that by 2025, all survivors will have died unless the claims conference reaches them with haste.<sup>38</sup> In 2006, a New York State's Attorney report revealed serious financial mismanagement by Rabbi Israel Singer, president of the claims conference at the time; in 2013, the US Attorney's

35. Ibid.

36. Yardena Schwartz, "How the State of Israel Abuses Holocaust Survivors," *Tablet Magazine*, Jan. 25, 2017.

37. Melissa Eddy, "For 60th Year, Germany Honors Duty to Pay Holocaust Victims," *New York Times*, Nov. 17, 2012.

38. Schwartz, "How the State of Israel Abuses Holocaust Survivors," *Tablet Magazine*.



Office convicted ten claims conference employees for “the theft of \$57 million dollars intended to benefit victims of the Nazi genocide.”<sup>39</sup> It is unclear that the claims conference will reach the remaining survivors under these circumstances.

Germany’s valuation of suffering is inconclusive: survivors receive different amounts of reparations depending on what year and where the reparations package reached them. In Israel, 67,000 survivors receive monthly financial aid of about \$700 per month, as well as free medical care from the Israeli governments; an additional 130,000 survivors in Israel do not receive monthly financial aid but do receive about \$800 a year in free medical care; and other survivors outside of Israel who were reached later receive entirely different reparations.

Regarding moral awakening, it is worth emphasizing that, after paying \$89 billion in compensation over six decades, German government officials still meet regularly to revise and expand the guidelines for qualification.<sup>40</sup> Asked whether over sixty years of payments to survivors was enough, Werner Gatzert, who leads the negotiations for the German, said “we will have done enough when no more survivors remain.”<sup>41</sup> Further, everyday German citizens have been extensively educated about the wrong Germany committed through the Holocaust, and Germany is littered with remembrances of the Holocaust.

However, anti-Semitism continues in Germany. In 2017, authorities documented more than 1,400 cases, part of a rising trend of anti-Semitism across Europe, which has caused thousands of Jews to leave the continent. Also in 2017, the Alternative for Germany, an anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic party, was the third largest party elected to the German

39. Ibid.

40. Eddy, “Germany Honors Duty,” *New York Times*.

41. Ibid.

Parliament.<sup>42</sup> That being the case, not all German government officials or all German citizens have experienced a moral awakening. Even though Germany's moral awakening is incomplete—a full moral awakening can never occur—its efforts towards making a complete reparations package is exemplary. The journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates points to Germany as an example of moral awakening: “Reparations could not make up for the murder perpetrated by the Nazis. But [Germans] did launch Germany’s reckoning with itself, and perhaps provided a road map for how a great civilization might make itself worthy of the name.”<sup>43</sup>

## Typography of Four Case Studies

Table 1 summarizes the details of the case studies. The four columns represent the case studies by type of reparation, group affected, and country/state. Each row summarizes how a case study met the seven criteria for effectiveness.

### Burge Tortures: History and Path to Reparations

Jon Burge, a Chicago Police Department detective and commander, and his “midnight crew” of other detectives, tortured mostly African American but also Latinx men who were interrogated at various locations on the South and West Sides of Chicago. Officially, the tortures extending from 1972 to 1991 and involved 120 men.<sup>44</sup> According to many of my interview subjects, the period of torture was much longer and involved

42. Melissa Eddy, “Alternative for Germany: Who Are They, and What Do They Want?” *New York Times*, Sept. 25, 2017.

43. Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *Atlantic*.

44. City of Chicago, Burge Resolution.

**Table 1:** Summary of the Typography of Four Case Studies

	Education	Compensation / Restoration of Property	Health	Octopus
Group Affected	Japanese Americans	African Americans	Pinochet Survivors	Holocaust Jewish Survivors
Country/State	United States	State of Florida	Chile	Germany
Scope	<b>Large:</b> 82,250 survivors	<b>Small:</b> 9 survivors and uncounted descendants	<b>Large:</b> 28,459 survivors and 3,000 descendants	<b>Large &amp; ongoing:</b> 800,000 survivors and the state of Israel
Completeness	INCOMPLETE: 37,750 survivors did not receive reparation	SEMI-COMPLETE: Uncounted descendants	INCOMPLETE: 19,011 survivors did not receive reparations.	INCOMPLETE: 50,000 survivors did not receive reparations
Comprehensiveness	Mixed	Limited	Very good	Excellent
Complexity	Mixed	Limited	Very good	Excellent
Continuity	SEMI-CONTINUOUS: Persistent racism	SEMI-CONTINUOUS: Persistent racial violence	SEMI-CONTINUOUS: Torture and abuse by Carabineros	MOSTLY DISCONTINUOUS: Holocaust is over, but recent rise of the right wing in Germany
Valuation of Suffering	<b>No:</b> All internees received the same reparation.	<b>Yes:</b> Survivors received more than descendants	<b>Yes:</b> Survivors received more than descendants	<b>Inconclusive:</b> It appears that compensation varied for administrative reasons.
Measure of Moral Awakening	GOV'T OFFICIALS: <b>Not likely,</b> due to continued abuse of minority populations.	GOV'T OFFICIALS: <b>Not likely,</b> due to racist laws.	GOV'T OFFICIALS: <b>Mixed,</b> due to a genuine apology, but continued abuse by the Carabineros.	GOV'T OFFICIALS: <b>Very likely,</b> due to 60 years of attention, but rise of right-wing political parties.
	AMERICANS: <b>Very likely,</b> due to education program and memorials.	FLORIDIANS: <b>Not likely,</b> due to no education program.	CHILEANS: <b>Very likely,</b> due to education program and memorials.	GERMANS: <b>Very likely,</b> due to Holocaust education in schools and memorials, but some Germans still anti-Semitic.

more than five hundred men.<sup>45</sup> The torture comprised punching, kicking, hitting, attacks to the genitals, threats to cut off toes, electric shocks, suffocation, and mock executions, often accompanied by racial epithets. The police used torture in order to coerce false confessions that led to wrongful convictions and long sentences, including at least ten death sentences.<sup>46</sup>

The scandal came to light because of the persistence of the torture survivors and their mothers, families, and friends. In addition, journalist John Conroy publicized the scandal in a series of articles published by the *Chicago Reader* over almost twenty years, from 1990 to 2009.<sup>47</sup> Finally, the People's Law Office and other law firms represented the survivors in hundreds of civil trials that cost Chicago taxpayers an estimated \$100 million in settlements, judgments, and other legal costs.

The first torture survivor to come forward was Andrew Wilson. On February 9, 1982, Officers Richard O'Brien and William Fahey stopped Andrew Wilson and his brother Jackie Wilson for outstanding warrants. Andrew shot and killed the two officers. The Wilsons hide for five days, but Burge and his crew found them and took them to the Area 2 police station at 11th and State Streets. On February 14, Andrew Wilson was tortured for fifteen hours by as many as eleven officers until he confessed.<sup>48</sup> The lock-up keeper refused to remand Andrew to jail and sent him to Mercy

45. Mark Clements, Cindy Eigler, Bertha Escamilla, Sarah Ross, and Vincent Wade Robinson.

46. G. Flint Taylor, "The Long Path to Reparations for the Survivors of Chicago Police Torture," *Northwestern Journal of Law and Social Policy* 11, no. 3 (Spring 2016): 330–53.

47. John Conroy, "Police Torture in Chicago: An Archive of Articles by John Conroy on Police Torture, Jon Burge, and Related Issues," *Chicago Reader*, Oct. 8, 2009, [www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/police-torture-in-chicago-jon-burge-scandal-articles-by-john-conroy/Content?oid=1210030](http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/police-torture-in-chicago-jon-burge-scandal-articles-by-john-conroy/Content?oid=1210030).

48. John Conroy, "The Persistence of Andrew Wilson," *Chicago Reader*, Nov. 29, 2007.

Hospital for treatment of his injuries.<sup>49</sup> The next day, Andrew told public defender Dale Coventry that he had been burned by a radiator, suffocated with a plastic bag, kicked in the eye, beaten, shocked in the head with a hand-cranked electrical device in a black box, and shocked on his genitals and back with a second device that resembled a curling iron.<sup>50</sup>

The Wilson brothers were convicted of murder, and Andrew was sentenced to death. In 1986, Andrew Wilson filed and lost a pro se complaint for deprivation of rights in federal court, seeking damages for his torture.<sup>51</sup> Wilson testified six times over ten years before he finally prevailed in 1996 when the Illinois Supreme Court reversed Andrew Wilson's conviction, based in part on the Mercy Hospital documents that his confession was involuntary.<sup>52</sup> The court remanded Andrew Wilson's case to a new trial, and he was convicted of the murders and sentenced to life in prison.<sup>53</sup>

Andrew Wilson's cases were crucial. First, he proved that he had been tortured; second, Burge was fired from the police force in 1993 after John Conroy had begun reporting Andrew's story in the *Chicago Reader*;<sup>54</sup> and, third, the cases led to the public exposure of a broad torture ring.<sup>55</sup>

In February 1989, during the first civil trial, someone began sending anonymous letters to the People's Law Office in police department envelopes, listing the names of "Burge's Ass-kickers" at Area 2 and the names

49. John Conroy calls the lock-up keeper's actions one of the miracles of the path to reparations. The hospital's documentation of injuries was later crucial to the Illinois Supreme Court's decision to vacate Andrew's conviction. John Conroy, interview with the author, Feb. 12, 2018.

50. Conroy, "The Persistence of Andrew Wilson," *Chicago Reader*.

51. Ibid.

52. *People v. Wilson*, 116 Ill. 2d 29 (1987).

53. Conroy, "The Persistence of Andrew Wilson," *Chicago Reader*.

54. Conroy, "Police Torture in Chicago: An Archive," *Chicago Reader*.

55. Conroy, "The Persistence of Andrew Wilson," *Chicago Reader*.

of other torture survivors. The letters expressed that “the torture was not necessary,” that “your client was beat after he confessed because Burge and company were showing off,” that “the machines and the plastic bags” belonged to Burge, and that Burge encouraged their use. John Conroy calls these letters another miracle in the path to reparations.<sup>56</sup> The tips opened a series of new investigations, including investigations into the cases of Melvin Jones and Darrel Cannon.<sup>57</sup>

Around the same time, in the mid- to late nineties, several death-row torture survivors—Madison Hobley, Stanley Howard, Ronald Kitchen, Leroy Orange, and Aaron Patterson—banded together to seek justice.<sup>58</sup> Jones’s, Cannon’s, and the death row prisoners’ cases were extraordinarily hard for public defenders to win. First, many of the torture survivors had committed serious crimes and had gang affiliations. Second, no elected official or judge from the criminal courts at 26th and California or from the Illinois Supreme Court was willing to acknowledge that a torture ring operated at Area 2 (much less the broader South and West Sides), even though the judges dealt with a series of cases naming the same officers, the same locations, and the same techniques. The Illinois Supreme Court established three hurdles for Area 2 victims: a defendant must present another man’s testimony of torture by the same police officers that occurred 1) within a relatively short period of time to the defendant’s torture, 2) with the same methods, and 3) with the result of demonstrable physical injury.<sup>59</sup>

In 1999, three *Chicago Tribune* reporters investigated the death penalty

56. Conroy, interview.

57. Conroy, “Police Torture in Chicago: An Archive,” *Chicago Reader*.

58. *People v. Hobley*, 159 Ill. 2d 272 (1994); *People v. Howard*, 147 Ill. 2d 103 (1991); *People v. Kitchen*, 189 Ill. 2d 424 (1999); *People v. Orange*, 121 Ill. 2d 364 (1988); *People v. Patterson*, 154 Ill. 2d 414 (1992).

59. Conroy, “Police Torture in Chicago: An Archive,” *Chicago Reader*.

and, more specifically, torture in Chicago.<sup>60</sup> In 2003, in large part because of this series, Governor George Ryan ordered three of the inmates—Aaron Patterson, Madison Hobley, and Leroy Orange—released from prison, against the wishes of State’s Attorney Richard Devine. Stanley Howard was moved off death row but remained behind bars to complete a sentence for another crime.<sup>61</sup> Ronald Kitchen remained on death row. John Conroy identifies Governor Ryan’s action as the third miracle of the path to reparations.

Invigorated, in 2005, activists and lawyers brought the issue of Chicago police torture to the United Nations Convention against Torture (UNCAT) in Geneva, Switzerland.<sup>62</sup> The group’s letter outlined the systemic nature of the torture, the government’s failure to properly investigate or prosecute Burge and his associates, and the numerous men still imprisoned as a result of coerced confessions.<sup>63</sup> In 2006, Joey Mogul of the People’s Law Office argued before UNCAT that “for the past 30 years, the United States has failed to comply with Article 2 of the Convention against Torture.”<sup>64</sup> UNCAT issued a report that strongly affirmed the Chicago advocates’ position.<sup>65</sup> Mogul recalls the UN’s affirmation as “refreshing” compared to “hostile” officials in Illinois:

60. Ken Armstrong, Steve Mills, and Maurice Possley, “The Failure of the Death Penalty in Illinois: A Tribune Investigative Series on Problems Plaguing the Capital Punishment System in the State,” *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 16–18, 1999.

61. “Ryan Pardons 4,” *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 10, 2003.

62. Taylor, “The Long Path to Reparations.”

63. Ibid.

64. Natalie Y. Moore, “Payback,” Marshall Project, Oct. 30, 2018, [www.themarshallproject.org/2018/10/30/payback](http://www.themarshallproject.org/2018/10/30/payback).

65. United Nations Committee against Torture, *Concluding Observations on the Combined Third to Fifth Periodic Reports of United States of America* (New York: United Nations, Dec. 19, 2014), [undocs.org/CAT/C/USA/CO/3-5](http://undocs.org/CAT/C/USA/CO/3-5).

I had three minutes to present the Burge torture cases to the UN Committee against Torture. I had an eight-hour flight to figure out what I was going to say. And, I have to say, like, I really went off, you know, I mean I was very passionate in what I said. And, fortunately, the chairman of the UN committee heard me.... I mean, it's kind of profound. I mean, for me to be there and have the UN committee chairman name Burge by name. You know, one of the highest human rights forums in the world. It's kind of incredible, right? I think it's amazing. And it felt like these folks understood what we were talking about, while, in the US courts, you know, we [the People's Law Office] were still—at that point I was litigating Aaron Patterson's case in the Northern District of Illinois. He had been pardoned and we were suing and it still felt like we were the enemy.... We would deal with this whole line of lawyers—you know, six or seven lawyers representing various officers, the city, and the county—and we would be battling all of them in court. I mean, they were so hostile, so, you know, to go to the UN was a really refreshing and amazing experience. And I'm really proud of the work I did.<sup>66</sup>

While fighting for justice internationally, activists were also fighting back home: “During 2006 and 2007, ... Black People against Police Torture (BPAPT), a grassroots organization, and the National Conference of Black Lawyers ... demanded that Mayor Richard M. Daley and the City of Chicago formally apologize to all Chicago police torture survivors and provide financial compensation and psychological services to them.”<sup>67</sup> It was at this time that the anti-torture movement developed

66. Joey Mogul, interview with the author, Apr. 4, 2018. Center on Wrongful Convictions, “Aaron Patterson,” The National Registry of Exonerations, last updated, Feb. 12, 2019, [www.law.umich.edu/special/exoneration/Pages/casetail.aspx?caseid=3447](http://www.law.umich.edu/special/exoneration/Pages/casetail.aspx?caseid=3447).

67. Taylor, “The Long Path to Reparations,” 338.



the concept of redress through “reparations” by linking the racist brutality of slavery to the racist brutality of Chicago police torture. Since activists have long fought to obtain reparations for slavery, this link establishing a complete narrative through which torture survivors could seek redress. BPAPT’s proposed Illinois Reparations for Police Torture Victims Act called for the establishment of a center that would provide psychological and psychiatric treatment, vocational assistance, community education, and the appointment of an Innocence Inquiry Commission to review the claims of Burge-related torture survivors.<sup>68</sup> These demands were later brought to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.<sup>69</sup>

In October 2008, a federal grand jury in Chicago—largely based on the testimony of Melvin Jones and Anthony Holmes—indicted Jon Burge for lying under oath.<sup>70</sup> (In 2006, a Cook County special prosecutor had ruled that the statute of limitations prevented Burge or his associates from being charged with torture.<sup>71</sup>) Directly after the indictment, activists called on Mayor Richard M. Daley to make a public apology. In response to a *Chicago Sun-Times* editorial, Daley issued a mock apology that the newspaper called “sarcastic”:

I apologize to everybody [for] whatever happened to anybody in the city of Chicago ... So, I apologize to everybody. Whatever happened to them in the city of Chicago in the past, I apologize. I didn’t do it, but somebody else did it. Your editorial was bad. I apologize. Your article about the mayor, I apologize. I need an apology from you

68. Ibid., 338–39.

69. Ibid., 339.

70. *US v. Burge*, 08 CR 846 (N.D. Ill. Jul. 29, 2009); Steve Mills and Jeff Coen, “Feds Catch Up with Burge,” *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 22, 2008.

71. Jodi Rudoren, “Report on Chicago Police Torture Is Released,” *New York Times*, July 19, 2006.

because you wrote a bad editorial. [I] was not the mayor. I was not the police chief. I did not promote [Burge]. You know that. But you've never written that, and you're afraid to. I understand.<sup>72</sup>

In January 2011, Burge was convicted of perjury and obstruction of justice and sentenced to four and a half years.<sup>73</sup> Mark Clements, a torture survivor, said of the sentence, "it's outrageous; it's not justice."<sup>74</sup>

Like his predecessor, when Mayor Rahm Emanuel was asked about an apology, he also refused. He thought that the city's monetary settlements to survivors were sufficient and that it was time to move forward: "I am focused on the future of the city, not just about the past ... I wanted to settle this, which is what we have done. I also wanted to see this dark chapter in the city's history brought to a close. I think we are achieving it. And to learn the lessons from this moment so we can build a future for the city."<sup>75</sup>

Following Burge's sentencing, a group of educators, lawyers, artists, and other activists created the Chicago Torture Justice Memorials (CTJM). The mission of CTJM was to imagine how to honor and bring justice to Burge torture survivors, as well as to memorialize the Burge torture cases. According to CTJM organizer Sarah Ross, CTJM started by comparing memorials around the world that responded to state violence and sending out a call for memorial proposals.<sup>76</sup> Throughout 2012, CTJM conducted workshops, readings, roundtables, performances, film festivals, and other

72. Fran Spielman, "Daley Issues Sarcastic Apology for Torture," *Chicago Sun-Times*, Oct. 23, 2008.

73. "Ex-Chicago Cop Gets 4 1/2 Years in Torture Case," *CBS News*, Jan. 21, 2011.

74. Ibid.

75. John Byrne, "Emanuel: It's Time to Close Chapter on Burge Scandal," *Chicago Tribune*, July 25, 2012.

76. Sarah Ross, interview with the author, Feb. 10, 2018.

educational events—most notably, *Opening the Black Box, the Charge is Torture*, at the School of the Art Institute, which displayed seventy-five proposed memorials.<sup>77</sup> Sarah Ross recalls the exhibition as “really special. Survivors were really moved. They showed up and their story was on the walls downtown after decades of people not believing them.”<sup>78</sup>

Joey Mogul participated in the exhibition with “a mock-up of an official city ordinance mandating reparations to the torture victims,” which caught the attention of CTJM.<sup>79</sup> It decided to further research reparations and introduce an ordinance to the Chicago City Council.<sup>80</sup> Given the need to underscore that racism was central to the ordinance, CTJM included “reparations” in the title at the risk of alienating some politicians.<sup>81</sup> CTJM found momentum to push forward after Ronald Kitchen—who had been tortured by a Burge associate in 1988 and who had been on death row since 1990—was exonerated in September 2013.<sup>82</sup>

At this point, Emanuel did make a lackluster apology, using much of the same language as he had in 2012 to suggest that monetary compensation and time heals all wounds:

77. Sarah Ji, “*Opening the Black Box: The Charge is Torture* Opening Night,” Nov. 9, 2012, Flickr, [www.flickr.com/photos/sierraromeo/sets/72157631833347318/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/sierraromeo/sets/72157631833347318/); John Eding, “*Opening the Black Box: The Charge is Torture* among Trio of SAIC Exhibitions on Local and US Justice Systems,” School of the Art Institute, [Nov. 2012], accessed on July 20, 2019, through the Internet Archive, [www.saic.edu/media/saic/pdfs/press/2012/Sullivan-Galleries-Exhibitions.pdf](http://www.saic.edu/media/saic/pdfs/press/2012/Sullivan-Galleries-Exhibitions.pdf).

78. Ross, interview.

79. Moore, “Payback,” Marshall Project; “About,” Chicago Torture Justice Memorials, accessed July 20, 2019, [www.chicagotorture.org/?page\\_id=97](http://www.chicagotorture.org/?page_id=97).

80. Ibid.

81. Sandhya Somashekhar, “Why Chicago Used the Word ‘Reparations,’” *Washington Post*, May 8, 2015.

82. Center on Wrongful Convictions, “Ronald Kitchen,” The National Registry of Exonerations, last updated Nov. 3, 2016, [www.law.umich.edu/special/exoneration/Pages/casedetail.aspx?caseid=3355](http://www.law.umich.edu/special/exoneration/Pages/casedetail.aspx?caseid=3355).

I am sorry this happened. Let us all now move on. This is a dark chapter in the history of the city of Chicago. I want to build a future for the city.... But, we have to close the books on this. We have to reconcile our past.... Yes, there has been a settlement. And I do believe that this is a way of saying all of us are sorry about what happened ... and closing that stain on the city's reputation.... That is not who we are.<sup>83</sup>

Kitchen's lawyers called on Emanuel to establish a \$20 million fund to compensate the survivors who had no legal recourse because of the official cover-up.<sup>84</sup> This amount was equal to the attorneys' fees paid by the city to defend Burge and his subordinates. The city rejected the demand for compensation.<sup>85</sup>

CTJM continued to revise the reparations ordinance to include further input from torture survivors and their families. Mogul and CTJM also looked to international reparations models for inspiration, including adopted models in Chile (discussed earlier in this paper) Argentina, and Kenya.<sup>86</sup> In its final form the ordinance, entitled Reparations for the Chicago Police Torture Survivors, called for an official apology and a fund of at least \$20 million to finance a number of types of reparations, such as compensation to the survivors; tuition-free education at the City Colleges of Chicago for all torture survivors and their families; a center on the South Side of Chicago for psychological counseling, health-care services, and vocational training for survivors; a curriculum about the tortures for

83. Fran Spielman and Tina Sfondeles, "Rahm: 'Sorry' for Burge Torture," *Chicago Sun-Times*, Sept. 12, 2013.

84. Ibid.

85. Fran Spielman, "Rahm's Settlement Plan: Pay Now, Hope to Save Later," *Chicago Sun-Times*, Sept. 24, 2013.

86. G. Flint Taylor and Joey L. Mogul, "'Sorry' Not Good Enough for Chicago Torture Survivors," *In These Times*, Jan. 6, 2014.

Chicago Public School students; and city-sponsored public memorials for torture victims.<sup>87</sup> Aldermen Joe Moreno and Howard Brookins introduced the ordinance to the city council on October 16, 2013, and began a nearly nineteen-month process of shepherding it to a vote.<sup>88</sup>

In October 2014, Chicago activists again traveled to Geneva, Switzerland. Both CTJM and We Charge Genocide sought to bring attention to the police violence in Chicago before the UN Committee against Torture.<sup>89</sup> When US government representatives denied the existence of racist police violence in the United States, We Charge Genocide raised their fists and staged a silent protest.<sup>90</sup> Mogul credits We Charge Genocide with energizing and inspiring CTJM:

They were phenomenal, because they were like “look we understand what this mechanism is: it’s a naming, blaming, shaming mechanism. Nothing that’s said in this report is going to matter more than what we do with it.”... There’s no way I could have done what they did. I mean, sending a delegation of youth of color over to the UN and having them live tweeting, live streaming, and doing

87. “Ordinance Seeks Reparations for Chicago Police Torture Survivors,” Chicago Torture Justice Memorials, [chicagotorture.org/articles/ordinance-seeks-reparations-chicago-police-torture-survivors/](http://chicagotorture.org/articles/ordinance-seeks-reparations-chicago-police-torture-survivors/).

88. G. Flint Taylor, “How Activists Won Reparations for the Survivors of Chicago Police Department Torture,” *In These Times*, June 26, 2015.

89. At the time, the two groups were not officially allied: CTJM focused on the Burge tortures and We Charge Genocide focused on police violence generally.

90. Protestors wore “Justice For Damo” shirts; Chicago police killed Dominique Franklin Jr. with a Taser on May 20, 2014. “We Charge Genocide Holds Historic Protest inside the United Nations during UNCAT Review of US Torture,” press release, We Charge Genocide, Nov. 4, 2014, [wechargegenocide.org/we-charge-genocide-holds-historic-protest-inside-the-united-nations-during-uncat-review-of-us-torture/](http://wechargegenocide.org/we-charge-genocide-holds-historic-protest-inside-the-united-nations-during-uncat-review-of-us-torture/); Mitch Smith and Adam Sege, “Father Remembers Son Who Died after Police Used Taser,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 6, 2014.

videos and basically bringing the communities with them to say “you know what, there’s police violence against youth of color in Chicago and we are not going to be silent about it.” Incredible. They walked out of one of the earlier hearings, and then, at the last hearing, while the US government was speaking basically denying the racist reality that exists in the United States, they all stood up holding their hands together in a silent protest. I mean, it’s amazing. And then to come back and share the results with the community? I mean, they inspired us all.<sup>91</sup>

Back in Chicago, CTJM and We Charge Genocide held a “UN Action Teach-In” for more than two hundred people. Activist Mariame Kaba’s closing remarks emphasized that CTJM was forming new partnerships to get the ordinance passed. We Charge Genocide and Project NIA joined the coalition. At the same time, aldermanic support continued to grow, and, in October 2014, Karen Lewis, the president of the Chicago Teachers Union, announced her support.<sup>92</sup> In December 2014, UNCAT again formally recognized Chicago police torture under Burge and the necessity for at least compensation for the survivors.<sup>93</sup>

In the midst of these victories Jon Burge was released from prison in October 2014 to a Florida halfway house.<sup>94</sup> In response to the release, CTJM held a press conference at which angry and hurt torture survivors,

91. Mogul, interview.

92. James Thindwa, “Karen Lewis Has Already Redefined Chicago Politics,” *In These Times*, Oct. 18, 2014.

93. United Nations Committee against Torture, *Concluding Observations*.

94. Burge remained in Florida as a retiree, collecting a \$4,000-per-month pension until his death in 2018. Jeremy Goner, “Former Chicago Police Cmdr. Jon Burge Released from Home Confinement,” *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 13, 2015; Sam Roberts, “Jon Burge, 70, Ex-Commander in Chicago Police Torture Cases, Dies,” *New York Times*, Sept. 20, 2018.

their lawyers, and other CTJM members called for the city council's Finance Committee to finally hold a hearing on the ordinance.<sup>95</sup>

On February 14, 2015, the expanded reparations coalition organized a large, dynamic protest to coincide with Burge's release from the halfway house, and only a week after Burge had evoked the Fifth Amendment during a tense deposition with a lawyer representing a torture survivor.<sup>96</sup> Coalition members drilled home the message that they needed reparations *now*. They organized a light show in front of the mayor's house that spelled out "Reparations Now," a sing-in at city hall, church presentations, community teach-ins, and demonstrations throughout the city. On February 17, the City of Chicago's Corporation Counsel Steve Patton suggested a meeting with CTJM representatives to discuss the ordinance.<sup>97</sup> Over the next month, CTJM's Joey Mogul and G. Flint Taylor haggled with Patton over money. CTJM wanted \$20 million and the city only wanted to give \$2 million. The city agreed to \$5.5 million and CTJM made the difficult decision to exclude deceased survivors from the reparations package and remained faithful to its bottom line of \$100,000 per survivor.<sup>98</sup>

Meanwhile, support for the ordinance kept building. In April 2014, Amnesty International joined the reparations coalition and took the lead in organizing a protest in downtown Chicago during its national convention. Each protestor carried a black flag designed by CTJM with the name of a Burge torture survivor and the date of his torture. Survivors' names

95. Jason Meisner, "Ex-Cop Burge Leaves Prison, but Torture Victim is Left Seeking Reparations," *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 2, 2014.

96. "History of the Campaign," Chicago Torture Justice Memorials, accessed July 20, 2019, [www.chicagotorture.org/?page\\_id=615](http://www.chicagotorture.org/?page_id=615); G. Flint Taylor, "To Catch a Torturer: One Attorney's 28-Year Pursuit of Racist Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge," *In These Times*, Apr. 8, 2015.

97. Steve Mills, "Burge Reparations Deal a Product of Long Negotiations," *Chicago Tribune*, May 6, 2015.

98. *Ibid.*

were read aloud at the end of the rally, and corresponding flags were displayed facing city hall.<sup>99</sup>

On May 6, 2015, Alderman Moreno presented the Resolution and Reparations for Burge Victims Ordinance to the city council.<sup>100</sup> Mayor Emanuel then took the stage and officially apologized on behalf of the City of Chicago:

This is another step but an essential step in righting a wrong, removing a stain on the reputation of this great city. Chicago finally will confront its past and come to terms with it and recognize when something wrong was done and be able to be strong enough to say something was wrong. [Addressing the torture survivors and their families.] I want to thank you for your persistence. I want to thank you for never giving in and never giving up and allowing the city to join you on that journey to come face-to-face with the past and be honest enough and strong enough to say when we are wrong and try to make right what we've done wrong. This stain cannot be removed from the history of our city. But it can be used as a lesson of what not to do and the responsibility that all of us have.<sup>101</sup>

Together with the \$5.5 million monetary reparations fund, the package included many services for survivors and their families: legal services, free tuition at the City Colleges of Chicago, and prioritized access to city support programs (such as health, housing, job training, food, and

99. Jasmine Heiss, "Introducing Amnesty's New Global Campaign against Torture," *Human Rights Now* (blog), Amnesty International, May 12, 2014.

100. Fran Spielman, "City Council Committee Approves \$5.5 Million in Reparations for Burge Torture Victims," *Chicago Sun-Times*, May 5, 2015; Hal Dardick and John Byrne, "Mayor: Approval of Burge Victims Fund a Step toward 'Removing a Stain,'" *Chicago Tribune*, May 6, 2015.

101. Flint Taylor, *The Torture Machine: Racism and Police Violence in Chicago* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2019).



transportation services).<sup>102</sup> Chicago Public Schools agreed to teach all eighth- and tenth-graders about the Burge's tortures.<sup>103</sup> The curriculum was unveiled in January 2017 and is now being implemented. The Chicago Torture Justice Center opened in May 2017.<sup>104</sup>

## Analysis of Reparations Package for Burge Torture Survivors

As soon as I began scheduling interviews, it quickly became clear to me that fewer of the Burge torture survivors were out of prison than I thought would be, and, by the same token, that few had been helped by the Burge reparations package than I thought had been. I initially thought I would interview ten torture survivors. Instead, I interviewed four torture survivors, Darrell Cannon, Mark Clements, Jaime Hauad, and Vincent Wade Robinson; and five mothers of torture survivors, Rose Cade (mother of Antonio Porter), Bertha Escamilla (mother of Nick Escamilla), Anabel Perez (mother of Jaime Hauad), Jeanette Plummer (mother of Johnny Plummer), and Armanda Shackelford (mother of Gerald Reed). I also interviewed four reparations organizers (Cindy Eigler, Joey Mogul, Sarah Ross, G. Flint Taylor) and a journalist (John Conroy).

As I listened to these inspiring individuals' stories, hundreds of questions sprung into my head. The questions I puzzled over most during the first interviews were: Why weren't Gerald Reed and Antonio Porter offered reparations? Why was Johnny Plummer offered reparations while Reed and Porter were not? Was valuation of suffering employed? Armanda

102. City of Chicago, Reparations Ordinance.

103. Chicago Public Schools, "Reparations Won: A Case Study in Police Torture, Racism, and the Movement for Justice in Chicago" (US history curriculum for tenth grade, 2017), [www.scribd.com/document/358713213/Burge-Torture-Lesson-Plan#download&from\\_embed](http://www.scribd.com/document/358713213/Burge-Torture-Lesson-Plan#download&from_embed).

104. "Our Funders," Chicago Torture Justice Center, accessed July 20, 2019, [chicagotorturejustice.org/about-us/our-funders/](http://chicagotorturejustice.org/about-us/our-funders/).

Shackelford, Rose Cade, and Jeanette Plummer did not know the answers to these questions. What's more, Cade and Shackelford felt wronged and used by CTJM and by the terms of the ordinance:

They didn't help us. They used us ... I didn't get none of that. My son didn't get none of that ... I mean I wasn't looking for it. But I mean we're not the ones that sitting in prison. If it should have went to anybody it should have went to them. Because they was going through a lot.<sup>105</sup>

For the reparations, they just used us to get it ... they used me. Had me going down there protesting and speaking and marching and going on.<sup>106</sup>

## Scope

The official reparations ordinance reads:

As used in this Ordinance, the following definitions shall apply: "Burge victim" or "victim" means any individual with a credible claim of torture or physical abuse by Jon Burge or one the officers under his command at Area 2 or Area 3 Police Headquarters between May 1, 1972 and November 30, 1991. "Credible claim" means a credible claim of torture or physical abuse by Jon Burge or one of the officers under his command at Area 2 or Area 3 Police Headquarters between May 1, 1972 and November 30, 1991.<sup>107</sup>

105. Rose Cade, interview with the author, Jan. 21, 2018.

106. Jeanette Plummer, interview with the author, Jan. 23, 2018.

107. City of Chicago, Reparations Ordinance.

These qualifications limited the scope of the reparations package compared to the number of broad universe of torture survivors. According to many interview subjects, there are approximately five hundred survivors rather than the 120 recognized by the reparations package and the fifty or sixty living survivors who benefited from the reparations package. The package does not cover anyone tortured before 1972 or after 1991, like Nick Escamilla who says he was tortured in 1993.<sup>108</sup> It does not cover anyone tortured outside of Area 2 or Area 3. According to Mark Clements, if torture happened “at a different police station, unfortunately, you were not considered as a torture survivor under this package.... All of the torture survivors should have been included.... Oh man, this was widespread. But for money purposes the attorneys only wanted to make it appear as if it was isolated.”<sup>109</sup> Finally, by covering only living survivors, the package fails to reach the families and descendants of torture survivors who have died.

## Completeness

According to journalist John Conroy the reparations package is complete for the torture survivors it sought to address, even if it is not complete for the broader universe of torture survivors:

The package was complete for that set. I mean, it didn't reach everybody in that set. But, you know, a fair number of men got something for their horrific experience.... I would urge you to consider the idea that there was a group of torturers who were active in that period, and they were, you know, you could identify them,

108. Sarah Macaraeg and Yana Kunichoff, “‘Nothing Happens to the Police’: Forced Confessions Go Unpunished in Chicago,” *Manchester Guardian*, Jan. 28, 2016.

109. Mark Clements, interview with the author, Jan. 27, 2018.

and then some people who were active [in Areas 2] in that period went down to Area 1, and later Area 3, and they achieved the same number, and even greater numbers of false confessions without what many people would call torture. So if you look at the false confessions from the Englewood Four, for instance, or the false confessions from, you know, we represented a guy named Jerry Gillespie when I was over at DePaul legal clinic. He was slapped; he had a chair kicked out from under him; he was detained for many hours. And he signed a confession for a crime he didn't commit. He hasn't been exonerated. Now, in the UN definition of torture, that would be torture: getting slapped or psychological pressure being brought to bear. But it's in some ways a different kettle of fish—and when you're trying to convince somebody about a group of people who were abused, and you say electric shock, plastic bags over your head, typewriter covers, people get that. But people don't get "they told you to sign something and you could go home, and you signed it?" as torture, you know. So it's sort of torture lite. In some ways, it's much more insidious, because [police] get away with it, you know. I think that you will find, when all is said and done, twenty years from now, that the people who tortured Nick Escamilla will have tortured many more people than group one. But, nonetheless, that's not to discount what benefits were won for the victims of group one.<sup>110</sup>

Mogul and G. Taylor Flint focused on reparations for torture by Burge and his subordinates, since Burge had just been convicted; they did not seek reparations for the broader universe of torture survivors and believed they would not have been successful if they had tried:

110. Conroy, interview. The "Englewood Four" were four teenagers convicted in 1994 of rape and murder, based on false confessions. See, "'Englewood Four' Sue Over Wrongful Conviction For 1994 Rape, Murder," CBS News, Nov. 15, 2012.

We chose Burge survivors because we were focused on Burge. We weren't really at that point looking into torture in general. We were looking primarily at cases that fit the UN's definition of torture. We were really focused a lot on electric shock, on the suffocation, on the mock executions, on the racist nature of the brutality. It wasn't that we were trying to exclude other people necessarily but it would have been too difficult to try to get reparations also for [Burge subordinates] Boudreau, Halloran, etc., in some circumstances. In other circumstances, though, like if a survivor was tortured while Boudreau was at Area 3—that survivor got reparations. But, as a whole, the city also was focused on and responsive to Burge because Burge had been convicted by the time we were doing reparations. So there was a clear reason for the city to accept reparations by people directly victimized by Burge. I'm pretty sure they wouldn't have accepted a broader definition.<sup>111</sup>

So we picked the Burge torture cases because there has been so much work to document and unearth the evidence that there was this racist pattern of torture. And the fact that Burge had then been convicted in June 2010 meant that there was really no way for the city to deny that folks had been tortured. So we had—post-Burge's conviction—brought a class action in the criminal courts seeking relief, evidentiary hearings for all of the individuals who had been tortured under Burge's command. And, you know, so the fact is there is a continual dispute whether someone in fact was tortured, or physically abused, or coerced, but there was really no dispute to claim that someone didn't have a credible claim that they were tortured under Burge's command.... So that's why the class of people was created. I mean, honestly, it's upsetting and disappointing because there are other people who were tortured. You know,

111. G. Flint Taylor, interview with the author, Mar. 2, 2018.

I think a lot of people are upset. Like, what, you didn't get reparations for everybody? But we never said we were trying to get reparations for everybody. What we did was establish a precedent for giving reparations to people, and people should use our precedent and try to get reparations for others.<sup>112</sup>

The intentionally designed reparations package is quite complete for a subset of torture survivors; it remains true, however, that when one considers the broad universe of torture survivors the reparations package appears far less complete. Unfortunately, some survivors of police torture in Chicago and some of the general public do not understand this, because the media did not publicize the specific qualifications adequately.

I reviewed reports in the *Nation*, DNAinfo, the *Washington Post*, the *Guardian*, NPR, the *Chicago Tribune*, *In These Times*, Vice, and the *Chicago Sun-Times*.<sup>113</sup> Except for the *Sun-Times*, all either misreported facts or failed to report the specific qualifications in the ordinance. The *Sun-Times* did pay attention to the language of the ordinance and explained the package's criteria carefully:

112. Mogul, interview.

113. Zach Stafford, "Chicago Is About to Offer the Nation's First Reparations Program for Victims of Police Violence," *Nation*, Apr. 22, 2015; Ted Cox, "Chicago Kids to Be Taught about Burge Torture as Part of Reparations Deal," DNAinfo, Apr. 14, 2015; Michael E. Miller, "Cop Accused of Brutally Torturing Black Suspects Costs Chicago \$5.5 Million," *Washington Post*, Apr. 15, 2015; "Chicago Offers \$5.5M Reparations Package to Victims of Police Torture," *Manchester Guardian*, Apr. 14, 2015; David Schaper, "Chicago Creates Reparations Fund for Victims of Police Torture," *The Two-Way*, NPR, May 6, 2015; Mills, "Burge Reparations Deal," *Chicago Tribune*; Taylor, "How Activists Won," *In These Times*, June 26, 2015; Alison Flowers, "As Part of a Reparations Deal, Chicago Teens Will Learn about Police Brutality in School," *Vice Magazine*, May 6, 2015; Spielman, "City Council Committee Approves \$5.5 Million," *Chicago Sun-Times*.

The ordinance now on track for final approval by the full city council on Wednesday includes a \$100,000 cap on individual awards. If the \$5.5 million fund is insufficient to pay all claims, it will be divided evenly among the victims. It defines victims as “any individual with a credible claim of torture or physical abuse by Jon Burge or one of the officers under his command at Area 2 or 3 between May 1, 1972, and Nov. 30, 1991. Criteria to be considered in determining whether a claim is credible include: “when and under what circumstances the claim of torture or physical abuse was first made or reported to someone; the consistency of the claim over time and any credible affirmative proof rebutting the claim” other than denials by Burge and cohorts who have repeatedly invoked their Fifth Amendment rights to avoid being questioned. “Using these criteria, if an individual is deemed to have a credible claim, he or she shall be entitled to financial reparations.... The nature and severity of the torture or physical abuse and the claimant’s guilt or innocence of the underlying crime shall not be considered when determining either eligibility for or the amount of financial reparations,” the ordinance states.<sup>114</sup>

The other news outlets were less successful. *Nation* wrote that “the city and the negotiating team agreed to lower that number based on an estimate that just 50 to 65 people will be eligible to apply, rather than the initial estimate of more than 100,” but the article does not explain what makes a survivor eligible to apply.<sup>115</sup> The *Washington Post* reported that the reparations package is for “as many as 120 African-American men on Chicago’s South Side who were allegedly tortured by Burge between 1972 and 1991,” which neglects that the men were not *just* African-American, that the reparations package did not reach 120 men, that

114. Spielman, “City Council Committee Approves \$5.5 Million,” *Chicago Sun-Times*.

115. Stafford, “Chicago Is About to Offer,” *Nation*.

torture occur on both the West and the South Sides, and that not only Burge, but his specific subordinates were torturers.<sup>116</sup> Even the politically progressive *In These Times* report did not explain how the pool of survivors was determined beyond that it excludes those who had died:

Based on an estimated pool of 120 potential survivors, CTJM adjusted its demand to \$12 million. The city responded with an offer of \$2–3 million. Shortly before the hearing, the negotiating team re-evaluated the size of the pool, reluctantly decided to remove the deceased survivors from eligibility for financial compensation, and calculated that in all likelihood the actual compensation pool would be more in the neighborhood of 50 to 60 people, making the \$100,000 per survivor realizable at \$5–6 million.<sup>117</sup>

## Valuation of Suffering

Many do not understand why only some torture survivors received reparations and think that the designers of the reparations package deemed some survivors more worthy of reparations than others. Even after extensive reading, this was my perception until deep into my interviews. More importantly, as mentioned, the mothers of torture survivors, Shackelford, Cade, and Plummer, remain confused and hurt. Shackelford even cried that Plummer was the most deserving and that Plummer's son, of everyone, should have received reparations.<sup>118</sup>

In reality, as recorded in the ordinance, the qualifications were related to where torture occurred, who inflicted it, and when it was inflicted—it was not related to how much or how little survivors suffered. Conroy and Taylor both mentioned that Burge and his subordinates used harsher forms of torture than other detectives. Perhaps the designers of the reparations

116. Miller, "Cop Accused of Brutally Torturing Black Suspects," *Washington Post*.

117. Taylor, "How Activists Won," *In These Times*.

118. Armanda Shackelford, interview by the author, Jan. 19, 2018.



package subconsciously evaluated who suffered more while drafting the ordinance, but, in the official ordinance, the qualifications are not related to valuation of suffering. What's more, once survivors were deemed eligible, they all received the same monetary and nonmonetary benefits.<sup>119</sup>

## Comprehensiveness and Complexity

The compensation of \$100,000 per torture survivor is very low relative to what the survivors experienced. Most torture survivors served a few decades in prison. If a torture survivor served twenty-seven years for a crime he did not commit, one could argue that he should be compensated as much as he would have made (\$407,160) if he were working for the national minimum wage (\$7.25 per hour). Arguably, he deserves even more.

However, the amount for the Burge reparations package is unsurprising when compared to my four case studies. While municipalities and states do have budget constraints to consider, Chicago, fought especially hard to keep monetary reparations as low as possible.

Survivors instructed Mogul and Taylor that they were only interested in a reparations package that included the top dollar offer; otherwise they would instead sue the city upon release from prison. Mogul explained:

I reached out to every single Burge survivor I could find in prison. And I actually set up phone calls with them and asked them, "do you want us to take this deal or not?" We tried to contact every single person. Could we get every single one? No we could not. But I think we talked to at least twenty people and they all universally said, "take whatever top dollar offer you can get." And so we did.... But then, let me also be clear: you didn't have to take reparations. You know, John Plummer didn't. I flew down to Menard [Correctional Center], and I went and discussed with him whether he wanted that or not. And he made his decision. This was not forced on anyone. If someone thinks that they're entitled to more and they

119. City of Chicago, Reparations Ordinance.

have a legal means for going to get it, they can, but if you took the reparations package, you were saying “I’m never going to sue the city of Chicago again.”... And that’s because why would the city of Chicago agree to pay all this money to people and then be able to face a lawsuit at a later date? To be honest, I thought that was a fair tenet.<sup>120</sup>

The three torture survivors I spoke with who received monetary compensation, Darrell Cannon, Mark Clements, Vincent Wade Robinson, expressed commonly that the money was inadequate compared to how much they suffered but that it was still helpful (see appendix 3).<sup>121</sup> They also said that they cared less about the money and more about the many survivors still in prison.<sup>122</sup> Cannon, the most positive of the three, did not dwell on unsatisfactory parts of the package but on the work yet to be done:

The reparations we received are something that black people in the United States have never been awarded until today. If you ask me am I totally satisfied? No I am not.... When we started the fight, the glass was empty. The glass is now half full because of the hard work of so many people. We still have another half to fill before the glass can be totally full. And that other half is getting the other men who are still in prison back with new trials and new hearings. That mission is ongoing until at least thirty-five men who are still in prisons receive their hearings. We still have a ways to go.<sup>123</sup>

120. Mogul, interview.

121. Darrell Cannon, telephone interview, Apr. 3, 2018; Clements, interview; and Vincent Wade Robinson, interview with the author, Mar. 10, 2018.

122. Ibid.

123. Cannon, interview.

Ultimately, the monetary portion of the reparations package was inadequate but unavoidably so.

The broad array of other provisions, which rival the Chilean or German packages, help increase the Burge reparations package's overall comprehensiveness and complexity. In fact, CTJM seemed to stress the need for a range of services. Mariame Kaba, a CTJM organizer, described CTJM's vision as "imagining a new way, perhaps through art":

The focus of abolition is addressing needs of people most affected. We were looking for an abolitionist revival—that's why we included all these services in the ordinance. I will go *all* in to fight for that vision. I will fight to the death for that vision. But not for prosecuting cops. I will never fight to the death for prosecuting cops. Because it is not enough. It will never be enough. Services that provide those affected what they need are where we must focus our attention.<sup>124</sup>

Given the importance of nonmonetary reparations to the organizers and some of the survivors, I chose to analyze each major service for how well it has (or will) meet the needs of survivors.

## Memorial

In 2011, the Chicago Torture Justice Memorials started doing charettes, or presentations, about memorials around the world that responded to state violence. At that time, hundreds of artists responded to CTJM's call for proposals. Ross explain that "there's a lot of process involved. At least that's how we're handling it. We hope to commission five or six really good artists to come up with ideas but even then we don't know where it will go."<sup>125</sup>

124. Mariame Kaba, "The Aesthetics of Abolition in the 21st Century" (discussion sponsored by the For the People Artist Collective at Hairpin Arts Center, Chicago, IL, Feb. 3, 2018).

125. Ross, interview.

During CTJM interviews, survivors said that having their names included in the memorial is important to them, which rules out a Chicago Park District site. (The district does not permit memorials to living people.) Ross explained:

We've been thinking of just buying private land and having it on private land so we can say what we want. Otherwise [there] will be a huge battle with the city or park district or whatever. All of the memorials in the city are super whitewashed. That is not our vision. This whole thing is to try to force the city to be accountable.<sup>126</sup>

In spring 2019, the University of Chicago's Arts Incubator Gallery exhibited design images and maquettes by six finalists for the memorial. CTJM selected the artists "based on their experience making monumental public art works and their history of connecting art with social justice struggles." A jury of survivors, their families, community organizers, architects, and others will select the winning design soon, and "the next step will be finding a site and raising the several hundred thousand dollars needed for the creation of the monument."<sup>127</sup>

CTJM has been extremely thoughtful and intentional about working to meet the comprehensive needs of survivors in the construction of the memorial. Isis Ferguson of CTJM described the memorial's collaborative process as taking the time to "build consensus and authentic relationships."<sup>128</sup> Organizers should to be just as thoughtful in finding and including the many torture survivors who were left out of the

126. Ibid.

127. Maya Dukmasova, "Chicago Torture Justice Memorials Is Pushing Ahead to Create a Site of Remembrance for Burge Victims," *Chicago Reader*, Mar. 13, 2019.

128. Ibid.

reparations package.<sup>129</sup> Anabel Perez, the mother of Jaime Hauad, expressed how she was hurt that her son's name was not included in an earlier art-based protest: "They were putting the names of all the ones that were [tortured by] Burge on the floor. And I was like, my son's name should be there because my son was tortured. I don't remember but I think I put my son's name there anyway."<sup>130</sup>

### **Chicago Torture Justice Center**

The city provides free space for a Chicago Torture Justice Center (CTJC) in the Englewood Health Center that is small, relatively unwelcoming, and has no windows. The building has limited hours (9 am–5 pm weekdays, one Saturday each month for shorter hours), but it is close to train and bus lines and CTJC offers survivors transportation passes. CTJC is working with local architect Monica Chadha of Civic Projects to design a larger, welcoming, and comfortable space, which will remain in the South Side with easy access to transportation.<sup>131</sup>

CTJC offers a range of services. Its staff prioritizes individual services to Burge torture survivors and their families, but they have recently open the center to anybody affected by police violence.<sup>132</sup> Services include therapy and holistic casework (reintegration services, job training, help locating housing and health services, etc.) at CTJC or survivors' homes. CTJC consistently sends letters and cards to imprisoned survivors. CTJC also offers support groups for survivors of torture, for family members of survivors, and for anybody affected by police violence. CTJC is working to build partnerships with other organizations in the community such as

129. The *Reader* article only mentions "125 African American" Burge survivors. See, *ibid.*

130. Anabel Perez, interview with the author, Feb. 17, 2018.

131. Cindy Eigler, interview with the author, Feb. 28, 2018.

132. "Our Work," Chicago Torture Justice Center, 2019, [chicagotorturejustice.org/programs-and-services/](http://chicagotorturejustice.org/programs-and-services/).

Bridge to Freedom, a halfway house; CTJC plans to host support groups there and in at least three other locations in the community. CTJC cannot meet survivors' every need, and these partnerships will help CTJC refer survivors to other community providers.<sup>133</sup>

CTJC's advisory council, Realizing and Implementing Strategies to End Police Violence (RISE), is comprising of seven survivors and family members. For limited compensation, RISE members inform the majority of center initiatives, lead monthly community meetings (CTJC has held seven to date), and hold other community events such as film screenings, discussions on policing, parties, and art events. A speakers bureau trains survivors and family members to tell their stories, which educates audiences and proves therapeutic for the speakers.<sup>134</sup>

Cindy Eigler, CTJC director of policy and strategic initiatives, says that

healing services are our foremost focus since not many organizations provide that. And we recognize that healing can look a lot of different ways and try to provide every venue for healing possible: therapy, restorative justice, support groups, events, political work. We believe healing work can be deeply political and political work can be deeply healing.<sup>135</sup>

After 2018, the city's initial three years of funding CTJC ends. In the latest round of funding, CTJC asked the city for \$400,000, but received only \$287,000 (transferred from the Public Health Violence Prevention Budget). Fund-raising and grant applications covered the remaining 40 percent of the operating budget. The loss of city funding and the cost of a new center would need to be met by other sources.

133. Eigler, interview.

134. Ibid.

135. Ibid.

Despite valiant outreach efforts, CTJC has failed to reach and serve some of the torture survivors and family members with whom I spoke. Cannon, Clements, and Robinson, who are RISE advisory council members, were the only survivors who use CTJC's resources regularly. CTJC did reach Shackelford, but not Cade, Escamilla, and Plummer. Plummer emotionally conveyed her sense of hurt:

I didn't know they had opened up this torture center.... I had to hear [about it] from somebody else.... I think they gave us a dirty deal. Had us marching and pushing for this and then they didn't even tell me it had opened. That's wrong.<sup>136</sup>

CTJC's services are uniquely inclusive in that they are geared toward all survivors, even those not included in the reparations package. CTJC should expand their outreach efforts and their home-visit services to meet the critical needs of more survivors and their families.

### **Chicago Public Schools Curriculum**

The American Bar Foundation, Black People against Police Torture, Chicago Public Schools Department of Social and Emotional Learning and Office of Safety and Security, the Chicago Teachers Union and its foundation, the Chicago Torture Justice Center, Chicago Torture Justice Memorials, and the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago created the historic Reparations Won curriculum. Every Chicago Public School is mandated to teach the curriculum.

The 116-page curriculum comprises six parts and a unit assessment, spanning about fifteen class periods. Part 1: Unit Launch uses a "talking circle" to introduce the curriculum and begin building a safe environment for the discussion of difficult issues. Part 2: What Is the Burge Torture Scandal? introduces basic facts. Part 3: How Did the Burge Torture Scandal Affect Survivors? asks students to read testimonies from torture

136. Plummer, interview.

survivors and their families, including Darrell Cannon, Anthony Holmes, and Mary Johnson, and to use words from the testimonies to create found poetry. Part 4: How Did This Happen? examines institutional racism, individual racism, concerns about crime, the tension between the Chicago Police Department and communities of color, and the role of political leaders. Part 5: How Did the Community Respond? examines the role of activists, torture survivors, lawyers, journalists, and groups beyond Chicago, who organized to seek justice. Part 6: Reparations and Reflections asks students to read the reparations agreement and to reflect on what they have learned. The unit assessment asks students to develop a plan for a memorial that will educate the public about the Burge scandal.<sup>137</sup>

The curriculum is being successfully taught in majority African American and/or Latinx communities but has been delayed in majority white communities where parents, many with ties to the Chicago Police Department, are extremely resistant to the curriculum.<sup>138</sup> Taylor noted:

Once it was announced, you had the forces of the FOP [Fraternal Order of Police], and, in particular in the Northwest and Southwest Sides, the parents being resistant. So you had to fight all of the internal political forces to work out the curriculum, and then you had the resistance. I don't know if it's going down in the white communities where the parents, some of them are cops. But I know I went to Pilsen.... In the communities of color there's a tremendous interest and acceptance and the teachers are very up for it.<sup>139</sup>

I attended a meeting at Wildwood Elementary on the Northwest Side where 65 percent of students are white. The administration was holding

137. Chicago Public Schools, "Reparations Won."

138. Alex Nitkin, "Teaching Kids about Burge 'Deplorable,' Parents in Police-Heavy 'Hood Say," DNAinfo, Sept. 14, 2017.

139. Taylor, interview.



a series of community forums to try to ease tension regarding the curriculum. The forum I attended included Norman White, Chicago commissioner on human relations, William Looney, the local police commander, the chair of Wildwood's Department of Social Studies, the chief of schools for the Northwest District, and Wildwood's principal. All panelists discussed the benefits of the curriculum and said it would not disrespect police officers; however, most were interrupted by audience members shouting complaints, even though the principal made clear that complaints should be in writing and not spoken. Parents called the curriculum "insane," lamented that they had "to be here to hear this garbage," and screamed that the police were the true victims while the survivors were criminals "with rap sheets as long as this table." They discussed pulling their kids from school on the days the curriculum would be taught. Some wrote statements, like "Burge never convicted of torture—yet a monument to alleged victims will be erected! How does that teach kids that crime doesn't pay?!! These alleged victims were criminals" and "Why isn't the background of the 'alleged' victims *included* in the curriculum?"<sup>140</sup>

For his part, Darrell Cannon, whom teachers frequently invite into their classrooms to speak, is confident that white parents' resistance will subside. Moreover, he believes that he can change such parents' minds simply by engaging in conversation with them:

Well, eventually issues will be ironed out. I've been into a couple of schools where some of the students' parents were police and they were very concerned about me coming in to speak about the curriculum. I have had teachers whose husbands or wives were police officers. And I taught the curriculum to them. And they came in very narrow minded and then once they heard me speak they gave me a hug and said "hey, this is alright here." So I said "hey, thank

140. "Reparations Won Forum" (community forum at Wildwood Elementary School, Apr. 2, 2018).

you.”... And I have offered to come to any PTA meeting—North Side, suburbs, wherever—where they have a group of parents who have police members of their family. I have offered to come to their PTA to give them a crash course in what I teach in schools, and I’m willing to do that at any given time.<sup>141</sup>

Darrell is so committed to changing minds about the curriculum in part because visiting schools to talk about his experiences has been incredibly rewarding and healing for him:

As far as I’m concerned, the most potent part of all of this is when we got the right to have the curriculum taught in public schools. That is something that has never been done in America.... It is beautiful. I have already seen personally over 125 letters. And every one of them was positive, upbeat—the whole works. Every time I go into a school to speak to children, I am honored by being able to do so, because their teachers are allowing me to come in and put just a little taste of something in their minds for them to think about and review and that is an awesome responsibility that I do not take lightly at all. And every school that I have been in has been more than receptive to me. It has been fantastic. I’ve had students that ask me can they hug me? And I tell them yes. I’ve had students that ask me can I autograph their forehead, write something on their arm, write something on their book bag. I mean they have made me feel like I’m a star.... I left there feeling as if I was on top of the world.<sup>142</sup>

All told, the Reparations Won curriculum is impressive in its depth and comprehensiveness, and its honesty about harsh realities like torture and institutional racism. Because the curriculum is mandated in ever

141. Cannon, interview.

142. Ibid.

CPS school, even students with resistant parents will learn about these harsh realities and, hopefully, be more conscious. Importantly, survivors receive the gratification of knowing that a large population of young people in Chicago acknowledge their suffering and are learning what they went through, after decades of no one believing them. Almost all of the survivors communicated to me how miraculous, validating, and healing they found the CPS curriculum.

### **Higher Education and Health Services**

The city provides free education at the City Colleges of Chicago for torture survivors, their family members, and their descendants. The torture survivors I spoke with had earned the equivalent of community college degrees while they were in prison. Upon reentering society, they were either seeking employment or higher education. Robinson, for instance, left prison seeking an arts degree and was rejected by several colleges, before being accepted by Northeastern Illinois University, which is not a city college. Robinson was frustrated by this oversight in the reparations package:

They had a portion there talking about community college. Y'all couldn't have thought this out? Why y'all automatically assume that none of us were taking advantage of the academic programs while we was incarcerated? We were able to get Pell Grants. They didn't think it out. Now [my tuition has] got to come out of pocket. So, no, its not helping me none.<sup>143</sup>

The city provision of health services is also lacking. Torture survivors and their families can only jump to the front of health-care wait lists, but the package does not cover their health-care expenses. Cade, Escamilla, Plummer, and Shackelford all have health ailments that are not covered by the package. Escamilla was especially moved by Plummer's plight:

143. Robinson, interview.

They didn't give her no therapy... I talked to her yesterday and it was a couple of weeks ago she told me they finally approved her to get therapy at Rush.... But if anybody deserves something from the reparations ... they don't even call her. And they used her. It hurts. [sobbing] ... They could have done something toward her. Not toward me. I don't want it. I want you to help somebody who really could use the help.<sup>144</sup>

Ultimately, health and education services are the least comprehensive in the whole package, failing to meet survivors' and their family members' needs in major ways.

## Continuity

The individuals I interviewed believe that members of the Chicago Police Department remain abusive. Cade and Plummer separately decided that when their sons are freed, they will move out of Chicago. Cade said to me,

Chicago police is so corrupted that they take people, they put murders on them, they put drugs on them, they put guns on them. They do what they want to do. Because they can get away with it. Code of silence, they call it.... [When my son comes home,] I'm probably going to sell my house and move to another city. A city that's not so corrupt.... Torture and police misconduct is not in the past. It continues every day. Every day. And it's sad. I know every city is corrupted and they do things under the rug and stuff, but, I mean, Chicago is just really corrupted. Really.<sup>145</sup>

Plummer fears for her son's safety: "[Johnny] probably can't stay in Chicago. He's gonna have to move. Because the police won't leave him

144. Shackelford, interview.

145. Cade, interview.

alone.”<sup>146</sup> And, for their part, Both Clements and Escamilla moved to the suburbs in order to feel safer; Clement said, “really I should save myself... I got to get on up out ... so I wouldn’t be a statistic.”<sup>147</sup>

It is unsurprising that the survivors and family members share this conception. The US Department of Justice’s 2017 special investigation condemned the Chicago Police Department as excessively violent in a lengthy report,<sup>148</sup> which

found reasonable cause to believe that the Chicago Police Department (CPD) engages in a pattern or practice of using force, including deadly force, in violation of the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution. The department found that CPD officers’ practices unnecessarily endanger themselves and result in unnecessary and avoidable uses of force. The pattern or practice results from systemic deficiencies in training and accountability, including the failure to train officers in de-escalation and the failure to conduct meaningful investigations of uses of force.<sup>149</sup>

The report noted that the “egregious uses of deadly force” by CPD officers largely went unpunished due to a lack of accountability: “The City received over 30,000 complaints of police misconduct during the five years preceding our investigation, but fewer than 2 percent were sustained,

146. Plummer, interview.

147. Clements, interview.

148. US Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and the US Attorney’s Office Northern District of Illinois, *Investigation of the Chicago Police Department* (Washington, DC: Department of Justice, Jan. 13, 2017), [www.justice.gov/opa/file/925846/download](http://www.justice.gov/opa/file/925846/download).

149. US Department of Justice, “Justice Department Announces Findings of Investigation into Chicago Police Department,” press release no. 17-057, Jan. 13, 2017, [www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-findings-investigation-chicago-police-department](http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-findings-investigation-chicago-police-department).

resulting in no discipline in 98 percent of these complaints.”<sup>150</sup> One recent example of CPD’s continuing abuse is Homan Square. Over the past decade, “police used punches, knee strikes, elbow strikes, slaps, wrist twists, baton blows and Tasers” on at least fourteen men.<sup>151</sup> Despite extensive documentation, CPD denies wrongdoing at Homan Square, where the mayor says police “follow all the rules.”<sup>152</sup>

In conclusion, CPD abuse is continuous, but there is some hope: survivors agreed that CPD abuse is less pervasive now. Anabel Perez, mother of Jaime Hauad, commented on how Kim Foxx, the new Cook County state’s attorney, is doing important work and righting the wrongs of her predecessor:

I’m super grateful for Kim Foxx for what she’s doing not only for me but what she’s doing for a lot of people.... In these thirteen months she did more than Anita Alvarez did in eight years. So its just a blessing to see that she’s truly looking out. She’s bringing justice. She’s trying to do the right thing. Police abuse has slowed down: we’re not exactly where we used to be. But there’s still definitely a lot of room for it to be fixed.<sup>153</sup>

150. *Ibid.*, 7.

151. Spencer Ackerman, “‘I Was Struck with Multiple Blows’: Inside the Secret Violence of Homan Square,” *Manchester Guardian*, Apr. 11, 2016.

152. Curtis Black, “Mayor Sticks to Script on Reports about West Side Police Facility,” *Chicago Reporter*, Mar. 3, 2015.

153. Perez, interview. Anita Alvarez delayed releasing evidence and charging a CPD officer for the murder of Laquan McDonald, which lead to Alvarez losing reelection to Kim Foxx. See, Monica Davey, “Prosecutor Criticized Over Laquan McDonald Case Is Defeated in Primary,” *New York Times*, Mar. 16, 2016.

## Moral Awakening

In the case of the Burge reparations package, I believe it is fair to say that progressive Chicagoans and young Chicagoans experienced a moral awakening due to the media coverage of the reparations package and the Chicago Public Schools curriculum, respectively. I believe less progressive Chicagoans (congregated in majority white neighborhoods) did not experience a moral awakening, as evidenced by the parents at Wildwood Elementary. They either do not believe torture occurred, think that the torture survivors deserved tortured because some were “criminals,” or turn a blind eye to CPD’s transgressions based on loyalty to the police. The journalist John Conroy said “I don’t know that if you went to different neighborhoods if you would find that there was any kind of moral awakening.... If you went to Beverly or the far Northwest Side where a lot of cops live I don’t know that there’d be a great moral awakening.”<sup>154</sup>

I do not believe the Chicago Police Department as a whole has experienced a moral awakening. Certainly, some officers are good, nonviolent, acknowledge CPD’s past and present abuse, and try to change CPD from the inside. However, racially motivated violence and a lack of accountability continues in the force. The US Department of Justice’s investigation of CPD, conducted in early 2016, found that “some Chicago police officers expressed discriminatory views and intolerance with regard to race, religion, gender, and national origin in public social media forums, and that CPD takes insufficient steps to prevent or appropriately respond to this animus. As CPD works to restore trust, ... it must recognize the extent to which this type of misconduct contributes to a culture that facilitates unreasonable force and corrodes community trust.”<sup>155</sup>

Within city government, officials refused to acknowledge, stop, or apologize for the Burge tortures for decades. Only in 2015, as mandated by the reparations package, did city officials, most notably, Emanuel, offer

154. Conroy, interview.

155. US Department of Justice, *Investigation*, 15

an adequate and sincere apology. According to Sarah Ross, the apology “felt really genuine” and “people felt really moved.”<sup>156</sup> Conroy commented that there was “a moral awakening among members of the Emanuel administration.”<sup>157</sup> Taylor offered the most nuanced argument that city officials experience a change of consciousness:

I think there was a change of mind.... I think it was a gradual thing. And, you know, we were able to get certain progressive alder-people on our side back in the early 2000s and even back in the late eighties.... We had certain people within city council that supported us, ... and it reached a critical mass around the time just before Burge was indicted and then more people accepted it.... I think you could see incrementally more politicians became either believers that the torture happened and that these men were victimized by torture, that it was a racist operation. But, you know, politicians are opportunists as well.... It became more and more obvious and the media became more and more on our side, so to speak (although that's a little bit strong) you know, but it became an issue that the media was interested in, was editorializing about, putting on the front pages, you know, things like that. And it became more comfortable for politicians to be on the side of the tortured rather than on the side of the torturers. So, yeah, that's a progression.... We're now reached a point that ... for a lot of politicians, that they really do believe that these men were tortured and that it was wrong and that they deserve to be recognized and compensated. So, that's kind of a seismic shift from back in the eighties when we started to get involved.<sup>158</sup>

156. Ross, interview.

157. Conroy, interview.

158. Taylor, interview.



Emanuel apologized in May 2015, in the most seemingly genuine way he could muster, because the activist movement had reached a head—it would have been deeply unpopular at that point for him not to apologize. Moreover, he hoped to relegate CPD abuse to the past by “closing this dark chapter in the history of the City of Chicago.” However, a month prior to this apology, the city’s “dark chapter” was not closed. In April 2015, the city settled with the Laquan McDonald’s family for \$5 million, nearly the same amount as the Burge reparations package; and in February 2015, the mayor denied recent torture allegations against police in Homan Square.<sup>159</sup> I am, therefore, not convinced that the mayor or other city officials, who resisted reparations for so long, truly experienced a moral awakening.

More importantly, almost all of the torture survivors and their family members do not believe the city’s apology was sincere. With words I believe most of the torture survivors and their family members would agree with, Bertha Escamilla, mother of Nick Escamilla, said that the city’s apologies remain worthless to her; instead, she wants action: “Everybody knows about these police officers, and nobody did anything. The state’s attorney didn’t do anything. The mayor didn’t do anything... You know what I want? Put those cops in jail. That would make me feel better. I don’t want your apology.”<sup>160</sup>

159. Monica Davey, “Chicago Pays \$5 Million to Family of Black Teenager Killed by Officer,” *New York Times*, Apr. 15, 2015; Black, “Mayor Sticks to Script,” *Chicago Reporter*.

160. Escamilla, interview.

## Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

The question that began my research was simple: how effective is the Burge reparations package? After extensive data collection and complex analysis, my multipart argument is that the reparations package 1) is lacking in scope; 2) is adequate in completeness for the defined class of torture survivors but inadequate in completeness for the entire universe of police torture survivors in Chicago; 3) is impressive in its complexity; 4) is comprehensive in nonmonetary aspects but incomprehensive in monetary aspects; 5) has little to no valuation of suffering; 6) addresses abuse that is continuous; and 7) evoked a moral awakening for some individuals but not for most government officials or the Chicago Police Department.

In terms of typology the Burge reparations package was an attempt at an octopus package, but was not entirely successful. A successful octopus package is complete or still working toward completeness, the abuse it responds to is not continuous, and it evokes a widespread moral awakening. None of this is true for the Burge reparations package. The Burge reparations package could be considered a mix of a health-focused and an education-focused reparations package. However, its health-care services are not as comprehensive and complex as those of a reparations package that is distinctly health focused, like Chile's for the Pinochet Regime, and its education services are not as comprehensive and complex as those of a reparations package that is distinctly education focused, like the United States' after the Japanese internment. Perhaps the Burge reparations package warrants its own subcategory. In keeping with the deep-sea theme of the octopus reparations package, we could call the Burge reparations package a five-armed starfish reparations package: not quite as effective as an eight-armed sea creature.

Is it possible for organizers to make up for these metaphorical missing arms? I asked survivors for recommendations to improve the plight of

torture survivors and their families. Based on their responses, I recommend improving the Burge reparations package in the following ways: organizers should 1) advocate for expanded funding for independent investigations of police officers linked to torture; 2) advocate for expanded funding to CTJC and for health-care services; 3) rethink certain aspects of CTJC services, the memorial, and education services to make them more inclusive for all survivors and their family members.

## **Recommendation I: Independent Investigations of Police Officers**

This recommendation offers a feasible way to remove abusive police officers from the CPD and to exonerate survivors. In 2009, the Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission was established to investigate tortures by Burge and his officers; in 2016, the commission expanded to include officers not connected to Burge.<sup>161</sup> The commission is underfunded, has a backlog of over four hundred cases, and must rely on private attorneys working pro bono on its multiyear investigations.<sup>162</sup>

Organizers should press the State of Illinois for adequate funding for the commission. At its current rate of investigation, the commission “would need more than 23 years to make it through the cases currently before them.”<sup>163</sup> This is unacceptable for the torture survivors still in prison and for the young people of color in Chicago who might have the misfortune of being interrogated by a police officer whose past tortures went undisclosed for lack of funding. Numerous torture survivors have

161. “Mission and Procedures Statement,” Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission, 2019, <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/tirc/Pages/default.aspx>.

162. Duaa Eldeib, “Claims Overwhelm Commission Investigating Burge Torture,” *Chicago Tribune*, Apr. 17, 2017.

163. Ibid.

successfully sued detectives—several have already retired with pensions before ever being investigated by the commission.<sup>164</sup>

The city should establish an independent review committee of civil rights lawyers to investigate any detective who has been sued for torture. If the investigation finds that a detective has a patterns of civilian complaints, this information should be shared with the state's commission, which could prioritize investigations involving that detective. A truly independent committee would go a long way towards building trust between communities of color and the police. It would also be in the best interest of the city, by avoiding future lawsuits, and in the best interest of the police department, by removing “bad apples” who lower the morale and morality of the force. A low percentage (1–10 percent) of Chicago's more than 12,000 police officers receive multiple civilian complaints; and, of all complaints, 20 percent involve the First Amendment or illegal arrests.<sup>165</sup> The city should thoroughly investigating and remove officers from the force who repeatedly violate civil rights. Investigations should be as transparent as possible and decisions shared with other police officers. These types of actions will begin to develop a culture of high standards, supervision, and accountability.

It is worth noting that, according to attorney Joey Mogul, it is easier to remove an officer from the CPD than to pursue an exhaustive and futile indictment or be stymied by the statute of limitations (as was the case with Burge). Mogul has fought to remove the statute of limitations on torture without success:

A long time ago, I drafted, or helped draft, legislation seeking a new federal crime of torture with no statute of limitations.... There's no way [it's] going to pass through a Jeff Sessions DOJ or

164. Andy Grimm, “Retired Detective Accused of Abusing Suspects Testifies in George Anderson Case,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, Feb. 4, 2019.

165. Rob Arthur, “How to Predict Bad Cops in Chicago,” *FiveThirtyEight*, Dec. 15, 2015.

under the Trump administration and where you have Blue Lives Matter bills out there. I think that's unlikely. I think the same with the state legislation. But, I also have to say that I'm not quite clear I think prosecutions of police officers are really effective means, and I think, personally, more time and energy has been thrown into trying to prosecute police officers and often with no results whatsoever ... in the last four or five years which cops have been successfully prosecuted, let alone indicted?... I think we should be asking for their removals before their prosecutions. Like the campaign right now should be why aren't we demanding that Boudreau and Halloran [Burge associates] be removed from the CPD?<sup>166</sup>

## **Recommendation II: Expanded Funding to CTJC and Health-Care Services**

This recommendation responds to CTJC's severe lack of funds for health-care services.

Organizer should urge the city to continue funding CTJC beyond the promised first three years. Perhaps a matching program can be established in which the city guarantees a certain budget based on a level of money raised by the center itself. Such a matching grant might encourage donations to support CTJC's new center.

The reparations package only gives survivors and their family prioritized access to health-care services ("jumping the line"), but does not fund the services themselves. Organizers should advocate for funds from the city devoted to giving survivors and their family members the same basic health-care services that city employees receive.

166. Mogul, interview.

### **Recommendation III: Inclusivity of CTJC Services, the Memorial, and Education Services**

This recommendation stems from survivors and their family members experiences with CTJC services, the memorial, and education services that they found unhelpful or hurtful.

Some survivors and family members of survivors told me that CTJC's services do not reach them, either because CTJC never contacted them, CTJC is too far from their homes, or their health prevents them from travelling to CTJC. I recommend that CTJC improve outreach efforts and make more home visits. Regarding education services, many survivors have already studied at the community-college level while in prison; they cannot take advantage of the package's free tuition at a Chicago City College without repeating coursework. I recommend that the city give survivors and their families a subsidy equal to their city college tuition, which they can use at a college or university of their choice.

Regarding the memorial, survivors or family members who were not covered by the Burge reparations package lamented that they were left out of Chicago Torture Justice Memorials' art projects to date and worry that they will not be represented in the official memorial. The Chicago Torture Justice Center has already extended its services to all torture survivors, I recommend that Chicago Torture Justice Memorials do the same. ○

# Appendix 1

## Verbal Recruitment and Consent Forms

### Form 1: Non-Torture Survivor

**University of Chicago:**

Verbal Recruitment and Consent Form for Research

**Study Title:** Jon Burge Torture Survivors Reparations (IRB17-1714)

**Principle Investigator:** Forrest Stuart, Associate Professor of Sociology

I am a student at the University of Chicago in the Department of Public Policy Studies. I am planning to conduct a research study, which I invite you to take part in. This form has important information about the reason for doing this study, what I will ask you to do if you decide to be in this study, and the way I would like to use information about you if you choose to be in this study.

*Why are you doing this study?* The purpose of this study is to understand your opinions about and experiences in designing the Jon Burge reparations package. I especially want to study how you perceive the reparations package to be unsatisfactory or satisfactory.

*What will you do if you choose to be in this study?* If you choose to be in this study, we will begin with an interview. You don't have to answer any questions you don't want to.

*Study time:* Interviews will last between 30 and 90 minutes.

*Study location:* All study procedures will take place at a location of your choice. I would like to take an audio recording of this interview so as to make sure that I remember all the information you provide. I will keep these audio records, my notes regarding the interview, and my

transcriptions of the interviews on a thumb drive that will only be used by me and will normally be stored in a locked safe box. If audio recording this interview makes you uncomfortable, I can take handwritten notes.

*What are the possible risks or discomforts?* The only risk I anticipate is your possible discomfort in discussing difficult experiences you may have had.

*What are the possible benefits for you or others?* You are not likely to have much of a direct benefit from being in this research study. Ultimately, the study results are to be used to help other people in the future via propelling the creation of more effective reparations packages.

*How will I protect the information I collect about you, and how will that information be shared?* Results of the study may be used in publications and presentations. Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible.

Again, if you give me permission, I will record the interviews using my iPhone and then transcribe the interview using Trint on my laptop. If not given permission, I will take notes using Word on my laptop. I will then transfer the audio and Word files into UChicago Box. Having transferred them UChicago Box, I will remove them from my phone and computer. Any handwritten notes will be immediately scanned and transferred into UChicago Box and the papers will be destroyed.

When I correspond by email or by phone with you, I will encrypt the emails and phone conversations.

Finally, you will decide if you would like me to use a pseudonym for your name or not. If you would like to me to use a pseudonym, I will use a pseudonym for your name even as I am originally recording and transcribing the interviews. The key revealing your true name will be stored in UChicago Box in a separate password protected document from the data.

I ask that you not provide any information about criminal activity that has not yet been prosecuted, and to be aware that while I will attempt to



maintain all confidentiality, there is always a chance of subpoena. During the interview, if it seems that you are beginning to reveal information about yourself or others that could have legal importance, I will remind you that you should not reveal anything that has not yet been prosecuted.

Please let me know now if you would like me to use a pseudonym for your name or not.

*Financial information:* Participation in this study will involve no cost to you. If you want us to conduct the interview at a café or restaurant, I will offer to buy you a meal up to twenty dollars in cost.

*What are your rights as a research participant?* Participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason you would prefer not to participate in this study, please feel free not to. We can take a break, continue at a later date, or stop altogether. You may withdraw from this study at any time, and you will not be penalized in any way for deciding to stop participation. If you decide to withdraw from this study, I will ask you if the information already collected from you can be used.

*Who can you contact if you have questions or concerns about this research study?* If you have questions, you are free to ask them now. If you have questions later, you may contact me at (312) 206-8715, email me at [madelinea@uchicago.edu](mailto:madelinea@uchicago.edu), or write me at 5328 S. Kimbark Avenue, Chicago, IL 60615.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, you can contact the following office at the University of Chicago: Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board; 1155 E. 60th Street, Room 414; Chicago, IL 60637; Phone: (773) 834-7835; Email: [sbs-irb@uchicago.edu](mailto:sbs-irb@uchicago.edu)

If you agree to participate, please say so.

## Form 2: Torture Survivor

**University of Chicago:** Verbal Recruitment and Consent Form for Research (Torture Survivor)

**Study Title:** Jon Burge Torture Survivors Reparations (IRB17-1714)

**Principle Investigator:** Forrest Stuart, Associate Professor of Sociology

I am a student at the University of Chicago in the Department of Public Policy Studies. I am planning to conduct a research study, which I invite you to take part in. This form has important information about the reason for doing this study, what I will ask you to do if you decide to be in this study, and the way I would like to use information about you if you choose to be in this study.

*Why are you doing this study?* The purpose of this study is to understand your opinions about and experiences as a beneficiary of the Burge reparations package. I especially want to study how you perceive the reparations package to have directly benefited you, and the ways you've experienced the reparations package to be unsatisfactory or satisfactory.

*What will you do if you choose to be in this study?* If you choose to be in this study, we will begin with an interview. You don't have to answer any questions you don't want to.

*Study time:* Interviews will last between 30 and 90 minutes.

*Study location:* All study procedures will take place at a location of your choice. I would like to take an audio recording of this interview so as to make sure that I remember all the information you provide I will keep these audio records, my notes regarding the interview, and my transcriptions of the interviews on a thumb drive that will only be used by me and will normally be stored in a locked safe box. If audio recording this interview makes you uncomfortable, I can take handwritten notes.

*What are the possible risks or discomforts?* The only risk I anticipate is your possible discomfort in discussing traumatic experiences.

*What are the possible benefits for you or others?* You are not likely to have much of a direct benefit from being in this research study. However, you may find talking about your difficult experiences to an engaged listener therapeutic, and you may relish having your story spread to the broader public. Still, ultimately, the study results are to be used to help other people in the future via propelling the creation of more effective reparations packages.

*How will I protect the information I collect about you, and how will that information be shared?* Results of the study may be used in publications and presentations. Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible.

Again, if you give me permission, I will record the interviews using my iPhone and then transcribe the interview using Trint on my laptop. If not given permission, I will take notes using Word on my laptop. I will then transfer the audio and Word files into UChicago Box. Having transferred them UChicago Box, I will remove them from my phone and computer. Any handwritten notes will be immediately scanned and transferred into UChicago Box and the papers will be destroyed.

When I correspond by email or by phone with you, I will encrypt the emails and phone conversations.

Finally, you will decide if you would like me to use a pseudonym for your name or not. If you would like to me to use a pseudonym, I will use a pseudonym for your name even as I am originally recording and transcribing the interviews. The key revealing your true name will be stored in UChicago Box in a separate password protected document from the data.

I ask that you not provide any information about criminal activity that has not yet been prosecuted, and to be aware that while I will attempt to

maintain all confidentiality, there is always a chance of subpoena. During the interview, if it seems that you are beginning to reveal information about yourself or others that could have legal importance, I will remind you that you should not reveal anything that has not yet been prosecuted.

Please let me know now if you would like me to use a pseudonym for your name or not.

*Financial information:* Participation in this study will involve no cost to you. If you want us to conduct the interview at a café or restaurant, I will offer to buy you a meal up to twenty dollars in cost.

*What are your rights as a research participant?* Participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time and for any reason you would prefer not to participate in this study, please feel free not to. We can take a break, continue at a later date, or stop altogether. You may withdraw from this study at any time, and you will not be penalized in any way for deciding to stop participation. If you decide to withdraw from this study, I will ask you if the information already collected from you can be used.

*Who can you contact if you have questions or concerns about this research study?* If you have questions, you are free to ask them now. If you have questions later, you may contact me at (312) 206-8715, email me at [madelinea@uchicago.edu](mailto:madelinea@uchicago.edu), or write me at 5328 S. Kimbark Avenue, Chicago IL 60615.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, you can contact the following office at the University of Chicago: Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board; 1155 E. 60th Street, Room 414; Chicago, IL 60637; Phone: (773) 834-7835; Email: [sbs-irb@uchicago.edu](mailto:sbs-irb@uchicago.edu)

If you agree to participate, please say so.

## Appendix 2: Interview Questions

### For Torture Survivors

- How long were you in prison for and when did your sentence begin?
- Sharing as much or as little as you feel comfortable sharing, what happened that led you to be in prison for that period of time?
- Sharing as much or as little as you feel comfortable sharing, what did you feel like you lost as a result of these experiences?
- What have you personally received as a result of the reparations package?
- Do you feel that the reparations package made up for much of what you lost through your experiences?

### For Authors and Implementers of the Reparations Package

- In what ways were you involved in authoring or implementing the 2015 reparations package for survivors of torture by Jon Burge? Can you tell me some stories from these experiences?
- Why did you get involved in authoring or implementing the reparations package? Why was it an important project for you?

### For Both

- How satisfied are you with how the Burge reparations package turned out? Tell me about particular moments when you felt satisfied with the process.
- In your estimation, how complete is the reparations package in terms of scope? In other words, do you feel that the reparations package reached *all* who were deserving of reparations? Please give me some examples.
- In your opinion, how comprehensive and complex is the reparations package? In other words, do you feel like the reparations package

provided as many different types of redress as it should have and that those types of redress were satisfactory (i.e., was compensation that was offered enough)? Please give me some examples.

- In your estimation, did the reparations package take into account valuation of suffering? In other words, did torture survivors who underwent certain types and durations of suffering receive more reparations? Please give me some examples.
- In your opinion, did the City of Chicago and all of its actors, truly feel sorry for the Burge torture era and did they truly wrestle with their past in a way that resulted in a moral reckoning and consequent change of ways? Please give me some examples.
- On a similar note, in your estimation, are practices of police brutality and torture over within the Chicago Police Department? Is the Burge torture era entirely a chapter in our city's past? Please give me some examples.

## Appendix 3: Portraits of Torture Survivors and Mothers of Torture Survivors



### Rose Cade

Rose Cade's son, Antonio Porter, has been in prison for seventeen years after being charged with murder in 2002 when he was twenty-seven. Police officers arrested Porter for a traffic violation, took him to the Area 5 police station, and charged him for a murder that had been committed on 74th and Dorchester. They kept Porter three days, cursed at him, threatened him, and prevented him from reaching his mother. He confessed. Porter had inadequate representation and was convicted. Porter is not eligible for reparations because the torture occurred outside of Area 2 or 3 and outside the timeframe (1972–1991) of the reparations ordinance.<sup>1</sup>

Attorney Kathleen Zellner has taken Porter's case pro bono. Based on the lack of DNA evidence linking Porter to the crime and the recanted testimony of witnesses, Zellner submitted a request for Porter's exoneration to the Cook County Integrity Unit. To date, prosecutors say that there is "insufficient new evidence to demonstrate that he is probably innocent of the crime."<sup>2</sup>

1. Rose Cade, interview with the author, Jan. 21, 2018.

2. Gregory Pratt, Cook County Prosecutors Rebuff Inmate's Innocence Claim, *Chicago Tribune*, Apr. 17, 2018.



### **Darrell Cannon**

At fifteen, Darrell Cannon, then a member of the Blackstone Rangers street gang, shot and wounded two rival gang members and received juvenile detention. Soon after leaving detention, at the age of twenty, in 1971, he was convicted of killing a storeowner and was released on parole in 1983. While on parole, he witnessed a fellow gang member kill a drug dealer and dispose of the body. Sergeant John Byrne and Detectives Peter Dignan and Charles Grunhard, all Burge subordinates, arrested Cannon on November 2, 1983, for murder. Using racial slurs and pointing a gun at him, the detectives took him to an isolated area in Area 2 and tortured him. They beat him with a flashlight, suffocated him with a plastic bag, shocked his testicles and mouth with a cattle prod, and placed a shotgun in his mouth—repeating this mock execution three times. Cannon confessed. The judge refused to allow the submission of the torture evidence, including Cannon's drawing of the torture site. (The judge, Thomas Maloney, was later convicted of fixing murder cases around the time Cannon appeared before him.<sup>3</sup>) Based on the tortured confession, and no other evidence, Cannon was convicted to natural life in prison. He was thirty-three and served twenty-four years.

3. John Conroy, "Poison in the System," *Chicago Reader*, June 24, 1999.



After decades of litigation, which included a minor settlement from the city of \$3,000, the Cook County State's Attorney's Office dismissed his criminal charge in 2004. Unfortunately, the parole board, after twenty-one years, charged him for violating his parole in 1983; he remained in prison until 2007. Veronica Messenger, an investigator with the Chicago Police Office of Professional Standards, sustained allegations of the torture of Cannon against Byrne, Dignan, and Grunhard.<sup>4</sup>

After prison, Cannon work for Ceasefire Chicago, a nonprofit that teaches gang members alternatives to violence. He turned down a multimillion dollar settlement from the City of Chicago:

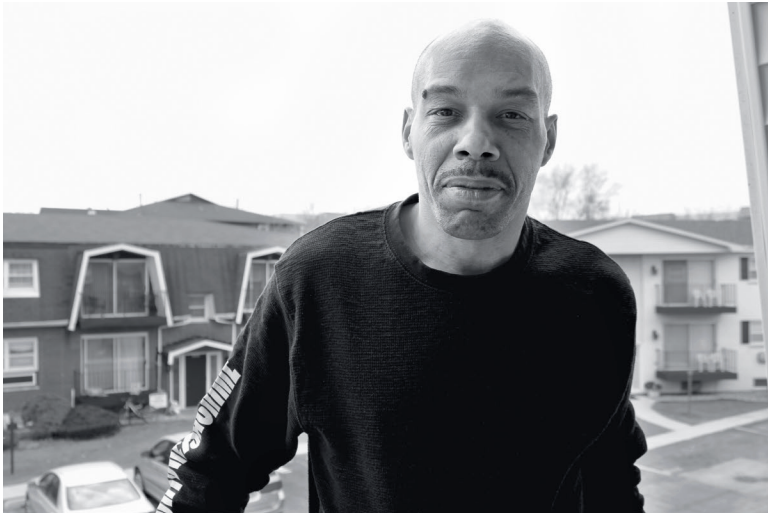
I refused it because it's a matter of principle. I have to look at me everyday in the mirror and I don't ever want to see a man who allows money to silence him from speaking about the ugly chapter involving black people. Therefore I made the decision right away not to accept the money because I had people in prison, other black men, depending on me to remain strong and help them get another hearing in front of the judge.<sup>5</sup>

Cannon's refusal of the settlement and freedom to speak helped organizers design and articulate the reparations package. Cannon received \$100,000 in reparations. He used part of the money to pay for his brother's burial in 2016, to support his daughters, and to buy a car for himself and his wife. Cannon is a member of the RISE Advisory Council of the Chicago Torture Justice Center and Chicago Torture Justice Memorials. He speaks to students at dozens of CPS schools as part of the Reparations Won curriculum.<sup>6</sup>

4. Darrell Cannon v. Illinois Prisoner Review Board et al., Circuit Court of Cook County (Oct. 19, 2004).

5. Darrell Cannon, telephone interview with the author, Apr. 3, 2018.

6. Ibid.



### **Mark Clements**

Mark Clements was in prison for twenty-eight years after being charged with setting a fire that killed four people in 1981 when he was sixteen. In order to collection a \$10,000 award, a teenager falsely accused three men, Clements, Kenneth Miner, and James Robinson, of setting the fire. Clements was taking to the Area 3 police station where Detectives Daniel McWeeny, James Higgins, and John McCann, who were openly drinking, spent over an hour kicking and punching him, hitting him with telephones, and squeezing his genitals. Clements, who was functionally illiterate, signed a confession that he could not read. Robinson and Miner passed lie detector tests and were not charged, even though Clements's false confession implicated them. Clements received four life sentences without the possibility of parole. While in prison, Mark learned to read, received high school and college degrees, and studied the law.

In 2007, Bernadine Dohrn, clinical associate professor of law at Northwestern University, interviewed Clements and connected him with Skadden Arps, a New York law firm, which represented him pro bono.

In August 2009, Mark was released after twenty-eight years in prison. The state agreed to vacate the four convictions if Clements plead guilty to one count of murder and received time served.<sup>7</sup> Clements says he accepted the plea deal on advice of counsel and maintains his innocence. Clements received \$100,000 in reparations. He now works as an activist fighting against police torture and for term limits for convicted minors. He is a member of the RISE Advisory Council for the Chicago Torture Justice Center and Chicago Torture Justice Memorials.<sup>8</sup>

7. Steve Bogira, "A Convict's Odyssey," *Chicago Reader*, May 5, 2011.

8. Mark Clements, interview with author, Jan. 27, 2018.



### **Bertha Escamilla**

Bertha Escamilla's son, Nick Escamilla, was in prison for over fourteen years after being charged for his role in a 1993 murder when he was twenty years old. Detectives Kenneth Boudreau, John Halloran, and James O'Brien arrested Escamilla, Miguel Morales, and Tyrone Reyna for the murder of Hector Olague, a rival gang member. At the Area 1 police station, the detectives separately interrogated each man, told each to confess to the murder, and beat them when they refused. Escamilla confessed after fifteen hours of interrogation in which the detectives threatened to send his pregnant wife to jail and take away his baby girl. The men received inadequate representation and were convicted. Escamilla was paroled in 2008. He did not qualify for reparation because he was not tortured in Area 2 or 3. His mother is working to get Boudreau, Halloran, and O'Brien indicted, so that Escamilla can file a civil suit.<sup>9</sup>

9. Bertha Escamilla, interview with author, Jan. 27, 2018.



### **Jaime Hauad and Anabel Perez**

Jaime Hauad was charged with a double murder in 1997 when he was seventeen and served twenty-one years. A member of a street gang, Hauad was arrested for the murders, which resulted from a gang rivalry in a bar. Prior to his arrest, Hauad was harassed at his house by a police officer who threatened to lock him up when he turned seventeen. Jaime was tortured at the Area 5 police station. Police cut off the tips of his sneakers with a paper cutter and threatened to cut off his toes. He refused to confess. Hauad's lawyer did not introduce the shoes into evidence, called no witnesses, and did not introduce the bar's security camera video, which showed that Hauad wasn't present. Hauad is suing for ineffective representation.<sup>10</sup>

The Illinois Torture Justice Commission ruled that Hauad had been tortured, based in part on police lineup photographs showing the damaged sneakers. Hauad had obtained the photographs through a Freedom of Information Act request. Hauad's sentence was reduced to time served,

10. Jaime Hauad and Anabel Perez, interview with author, Feb. 17, 2018.

and he was released in 2018. Haud reluctantly agreed to this deal:

I didn't want to have to take time served in order to come home. I always told my family that I was going to fight and prove my innocence.... [But] my daughter was nine months pregnant and ... a whole bunch of things is going on, so it kind of forced my hand. It's kind of bittersweet. It's bitter because I was forced to do that ... and its sweet because now that I'm home I don't regret it at all.<sup>11</sup>

Hauad is not eligible for reparations because torture occurred outside of Area 2 or 3 and outside the timeframe (1972–1991) of the reparations ordinance. Hauad and Northwestern University's Bluhm Legal Clinic are currently seeking a full exoneration.<sup>12</sup>

11. Jaime Hauad, interview with author, Feb. 17, 2018.

12. Annie Sweeney, "After 21 Years, Inmate Who Says He Was Abused by Police Goes Free," *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 21, 2018.



### Jeanette Plummer

Jeanette Plummer's son, Johnny Plummer, has been in prison for twenty-seven years after being charged with a murder in 1991 when he was just fifteen. At the Area 3 police station, after Plummer refused to sign an incriminating statement, Detectives Michael Kill and Kenneth Boudreau stripped Plummer naked and beat him with a flashlight on the face, stomach, side, and back until he confessed to murder. Plummer was offered \$100,000 in reparations, but he rejected the monetary offer as insufficient. He has accepted legal help from the People's Law Office and is still fighting his conviction.<sup>13</sup>

13. Jeanette Plummer, interview with author, Jan. 23, 2018.



### **Vincent Wade Robinson**

Vincent Wade Robinson was convicted of four natural life sentences for armed robbery, home invasions, and murder in 1984 when he was twenty-one. He served thirty-one years. Robinson was in a street gang, and fellow gang members committed the crimes for which he was arrested. Unable to find the true criminals, one of John Burge's subordinates brought Robinson to the Area 1 police station, tortured him, and broke his nose. Robinson confessed. In prison, he learned art from fellow inmates and Mark Merritt of the Pace Art Program in the Cook County Jail. Robinson sold paintings and greeting cards to other prisoners to keep himself afloat financially. He received a culinary arts degree and studied the law. He sued the prisons in which he was held a number of times.

Robinson received \$100,000 in reparations and was released in August 2015. He is on the RISE Advisory Council at the Chicago Torture Justice Center and is a student at Northeastern Illinois University, starting as a sophomore with college credits earned in prison. Robinson used part of his reparations money to buy tattoo equipment; his dream is to open a



combined tattoo parlor, art gallery, and restaurant in Nevada.<sup>14</sup> Robinson is a member of Chicago Torture Justice Memorials and received a 2019 Artist as Activist residential fellowship from the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.<sup>15</sup>

14. Vincent Wade Robinson, interview with author, Mar. 10, 2018.

15. "Past Residents," Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, accessed July 30, 2019, [www.rauschenbergfoundation.org/residency/past-residents](http://www.rauschenbergfoundation.org/residency/past-residents).



### Armanda Shackelford

Armanda Shackelford's son, Gerald Reed, has been in prison for twenty-seven years after being charged with two counts of murder in October 1990 when he was twenty-seven. A man's body was found in an apartment on 68th Street and Perry Avenue, and a woman's body was found under a nearby viaduct. Reed and David Turner were separately, and seemingly randomly, arrested for the crime. When Reed was arrested, Area 3 Detectives Michael Kill and Victor Breska gave him a typed confession to sign. Reed refused. The detectives tortured him for three nights. The first night, they beat him. The second night, they drove him far from the station and told him to run; knowing he would be killed if he ran, Reed stayed in the car; the detectives held a gun to his head and told him to confess. The third night, they handcuffed Reed to a chair and beat him until a rod in his leg from a prior injury broke, causing a permanent hip injury. The detectives threatened to kill his mother. Finally, Reed confessed.<sup>16</sup>

16. Armanda Shackelford, interview by author, Jan. 19, 2018.

In 2012, the Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission found Reed's allegations credible.<sup>17</sup> In December 2018, a judge granted Reed a new trial. As of July 2019, his retrial is ongoing.<sup>18</sup> Reed has yet to receive the reparations package.

17. G. Flint Taylor, "Illinois Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission—Defunded but Not Forgotten, Huffington Post, Nov. 25, 2012.

18. Rosemary Sobol, "Alleged Victim of Jon Burge's 'Midnight Crew' Must Wait a Little Longer for Possible Taste of Freedom, *Chicago Tribune*, July 12, 2019.

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# Motherhood *en Acción*





## Gender, *Latinidad*, and Community Action in Pilsen, 1973–1987

ELIZABETH DIA, AB'18

### Introduction

“We alienated people by our wildness. We were unconventional. Many of us were not married or [were] divorced or even living with someone. We would hang out in bars, weren’t in church associations. We were feminists. We didn’t fit the mold of stable family life.”<sup>1</sup> This is how María Mangual described the early days of *Mujeres Latinas en Acción* (*Mujeres* or *MLEA*),<sup>2</sup> a community organization in Chicago’s Pilsen neighborhood that she helped found in the early 1970s. From its beginning, *Mujeres* struggled to gain community acceptance because of its reputation for rejecting social norms in its quest for women’s empowerment. Roughly twenty years after the founding of the organization, another *Mujeres* member remembered the obstacles facing a new community organization focused on Latinas, what it had accomplished, and the non-

1. María Mangual quoted in Debra Westlake, “*Mujeres Adelante: The Early History of ‘Mujeres Latinas En Accion,’ 1973–1980*,” 1992, box 1, folder 5, *Mujeres Latinas en Accion Records*, Special Collections and Archives, DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois. (Hereafter *MLEAR*.)

2. *Mujeres Latinas en Acción* is Spanish for “Latin Women in Action.”

conformity of its members:

The first one [is what the]...community expects of us. Because of our name, we carry a lot of negative feelings. Women in Action, yeah, well, so we have problems communicating because they [community members] see us as crazy women, as macho women. Women that encourage divorce or that put ideas in the heads of our wives, our mothers, our sisters, basically the woman population. Two, if I am not mistaken, we are like 22 or 23 years old. We have come a long way. I mean, in the beginning, we had the burning of the agency, a lot of crimes, and [threatening] phone calls [targeting Mujeres members]. I have been working here for ten years and I remember when we started...we had a benefit to get funding for the operations of the agency [and] on the reply card they [community members] said, "I am not going to give you any money because you support abortion" or "because you are evil." You know, they said some awful things.<sup>3</sup>

Before the establishment of Mujeres, most community organizations in Pilsen focused on issues affecting young men, including gang involvement and violence.<sup>4</sup> The staff and volunteers of Mujeres strove to make obvious the need for a group that explicitly served Latina women. Mujeres faced a wide range of opposition, from conservative members of the Catholic Church who saw its work as undermining traditional family structures to participants in the Chicano movement for civil rights who thought that the creation of Mujeres was dividing the movement.<sup>5</sup>

3. Unnamed youth and family coordinator quoted in Michelle Teresa García, "A Preliminary Ethnographic Study of a Latin Feminist Grassroots Organization in Chicago," c. 1993, box 1, folder 11, MLEAR.

4. Lilia Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 243–44.

5. Ibid, 241.

As a result, Mujeres staff and volunteers had to consider their identities as both Chicanas/Latinas<sup>6</sup> and women when considering their needs and anticipating how their activism would be perceived. Eventually, Mujeres received more community acceptance by framing its work in ways that acknowledged traditional gender roles.

In this thesis, I argue that Mujeres broadened the practice of motherhood to involve supporting the entire Latina/o community. Mujeres' culturally and historically specific conception of motherhood resonated with traditional ideas of ethnic identity and gender while it engaged in new and sometimes radical practices within Pilsen. Outside of Pilsen, Mujeres projected a unified view of the Latina/o community that deemphasized disagreements about gender and ethnic identity within Pilsen and the Latina/o community. The intersection of gender and ethnic identity in Mujeres' work contributes to and complicates the historiography of both women's history and Latina/o history.

## Historiography

### Women's History

Women's history includes the study of the contributions of women to historical developments and the impact of those developments on women. Much of the work in the field of women's history involves addressing gaps in the historiography where women's experiences have been neglected. This thesis will focus primarily on the women's movement in the 1970s and 1980s and the experiences of Latinas and Chicanas in the United

6. This thesis's terminology reflects the usage of the 1960s–80s. Latina/o was a pan-ethnic term for people in the United States, with origins in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and Central America. Depending on context, Chicana/o is a person in the United States with origins in Mexico or a person who participated in the Chicano political movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Generally, I avoid the term Mexican-American, which activists considered derogatory. See "Latina/o History" in the "Historiography" section and the section, "Social Activism and Ethnic Identity in Pilsen," for a further explication of terms.

States. However, Mexican women's history is also relevant, since many of Mujeres' clients were recent migrants from Mexico, and Mexican culture had a strong influence on many of the volunteers and staff members.

Historians of Chicano history and US women's history have understudied the participation of Chicanas in political activism. Historian Vicki L. Ruiz writes that women's participation in the Chicano movement "has been reduced to a cursory discussion of sexism within the movimiento by the authors of the leading monographs on the Chicano movement."<sup>7</sup> Her work on Mexican American women's history begins to address this gap. She outlines the limited roles available for Chicanas, both symbolically and practically, in the Chicano student movement of the 1960s. The movement drew heavily on Aztec motifs, which generally depicted women as sexual symbols, conquered virgins, or *la Malinche* (a slave given to Hernán Cortés).<sup>8</sup> Women's participation in the movement and was often limited to typing and cooking.<sup>9</sup>

To address their concerns as both women and Chicanas, some decided to form their own organizations. Historian Virginia Espino details the emergence of the Comisión Femenil and other groups opposed to sterilization abuse in Los Angeles in the early 1970s. Chicano organizations run by men did not see sterilization abuse as a priority, while white women saw sterilization as a consensual right.<sup>10</sup> She writes: "at the same time that Mexican women fell victim to eugenic sterilization, the cultural nationalism of the Chicano movement and the universalist ideology of

7. Vicki L. Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America*, 10th Anniversary ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 100.

8. *Ibid.*, 106.

9. *Ibid.*, 108.

10. Virginia Espino, "'Women Sterilized As Gives Birth': Forced Sterilization and Chicana Resistance in the 1970s," in *Las Obreras: Chicana Politics of Work and Family*, ed. Vicki L. Ruiz (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Publication, 2000), 71–72.

the women's rights movement subsumed Chicanas into nonpersons."<sup>11</sup> As a result, Chicanas began participating in grassroots activism and a class-action suit against the doctors who had performed sterilization procedures without the patients' consent.<sup>12</sup>

Chicana activism should be contextualized within the US women's movement of the 1970s. Historian Ruth Rosen, who studies changes in the American women's movement between the 1950s and 1980s, argues that much of women's activism emerged from women's experiences in the Civil Rights movement, the anti-war movement, and the New Left.<sup>13</sup> Women involved in activism felt that men underappreciated their needs and contributions. Roth comes to similar conclusions about the origins of Chicana feminist organizing:

Chicana feminism needs to be understood as not a mere variation on white or Black feminism but as a consequence of Chicanas' participation in the Chicano movement of the 1960s and 1970s.... Chicana feminists organized an interstitial politics, in opposition to... antifeminist forces in their parent movement.<sup>14</sup>

According to Roth, women involved in Chicana feminist organizing saw their work as supporting the Chicano cause and as part of a tradition of social activism among Mexican women.

Nikki Craske, a scholar of comparative government, highlights how women's activism and gender roles in Mexico had shifting meanings

11. Ibid., 69.

12. Ibid., 67.

13. See Ruth Rosen, "Leaving the Left," in *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Penguin, 2006).

14. Benita Roth, *Separate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in America's Second Wave* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 21.

throughout the twentieth century.<sup>15</sup> For instance, during the regime of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911), women organized in order to gain increased access to education. Many women claimed a right to education based on their roles as mothers and educators of the next generation.<sup>16</sup> By the 1970s and 1980s, the Mexican state acknowledged the power of women's political participation, which had been demonstrated through social protest.<sup>17</sup> By the late twentieth century, women had equal political rights but were not able to fully utilize these rights because of their responsibilities for reproductive labor.<sup>18</sup> Twentieth-century Mexican culture idealized women's domestic and maternal roles. As a result, women who took a more active roles in public life, still acknowledged traditional gender roles and values.

Traditional gender roles also influenced how female activists in the United States framed their public involvement during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Historian Barbara Welter explores how idealized gender roles counterintuitively promoted women's participation in public life. Welter refers to the attributes that ideal women were supposed to have as True Womanhood: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.<sup>19</sup> Though these traits were encouraged in popular culture, social and economic changes such as westward migration and the Civil War drove women's increased participation in public life. Welter argues: "the very perfection of True Womanhood, moreover, carried within itself the seeds of its own destruction. For if woman was so very little less than

15. Nikki Craske, "Ambiguities and Ambivalences in Making the Nation: Women and Politics in 20th-Century Mexico," *Feminist Review* 79 (2005): 116–33.

16. *Ibid.*, 119–22.

17. *Ibid.*, 126.

18. *Ibid.*, 130.

19. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 152.

the angels, she should surely take a more active part in running the world, especially since men were making such a hash of things.”<sup>20</sup> Sociologist Nancy Naples makes similar claims about the community involvement of low-income urban mothers of color in the United States of the late twentieth century. She uses the term “activist mothering” to describe these mothers’ work, which blurred the boundaries between mothering, political activism, and community work.<sup>21</sup> Like the women Welter studied, these women saw their public participation as an expansion of their traditional maternal and feminine roles. This paper builds on the work of Welter and Naples by offering *Mujeres* as a further example of women framing their activism as an expansion of motherhood, a task that was complicated by the role of ethnic identity.

## Latina/o History

An important aspect of Latino history is how Latina/o identity has been constructed and used by external forces, including the US government and the media. Sociologist Rubén G. Rumbaut focuses on the role of the US government in creating racialized labels and how ethnic descriptors of populations that would today be considered Latina/o or Hispanic have changed over time. He describes how the census utilized Hispanic as an ethnic category separate from race.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, he emphasizes the importance of understanding how these imposed labels affected people’s self-perceptions and self-identification. He argues that race is socially, historically, and spatially constructed because there are variations

20. *Ibid.*, 174.

21. Nancy A. Naples, “Activist Mothering: Cross-Generational Continuity in the Community Work of Women from Low-Income Urban Neighborhoods,” *Gender & Society* 6, no. 3 (Sept. 1992): 448.

22. Rubén G. Rumbaut, “Pigments of Our Imagination: On the Racialization and Racial Identity of ‘Hispanics’ and ‘Latinos,’” in *How the U.S. Racializes Latinos: White Hegemony and Its Consequences*, ed. José A. Cobas, Jorge Duany, and Joe R. Feagin (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2009), 9.

in how Hispanic and Latina/o people identify based on where they live, their immigration status, their age, and other factors.<sup>23</sup> Sociologist G. Cristina Mora argues that in order to fully understand the emergence of pan-ethnic labels like Hispanic and Latino in the 1970s, one must appreciate the interactions between the government, the media, and advocacy groups.<sup>24</sup> Like Rumbaut, she acknowledges the importance of the Census Bureau and other government agencies.<sup>25</sup> However, she emphasizes the role of organizations like the National Council of La Raza and Univision in translating Latino and Hispanic from primarily government categories to personally and culturally relevant categories of identification.<sup>26</sup>

Historian David A. Badillo posits that the development of Latina/o identity within Chicago was a result of the historical changes experienced by the city's Spanish-speaking community.<sup>27</sup> Chicago's Mexican and Puerto Rican populations increased between the 1920s and 1970s, leading to the establishment of organizations serving those communities. He identifies the 1970s as a turning point, because community action activities took place under the "umbrella ethnicity" of Latina/o, instead

23. *Ibid.*, 14.

24. G. Cristina Mora, *Making Hispanics: How Activists, Bureaucrats, and Media Constructed a New American* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 3–10.

25. See "'The Toughest Question': The US Census Bureau and the Making of Hispanic Data," chap. 3, and "Civil Rights, Brown Power, and the 'Spanish-Speaking' Vote: The Development of the Cabinet Committee on Opportunities for Spanish Speaking People," chap. 1, in *ibid.*

26. See "The Rise of a Hispanic Lobby: The National Council of La Raza," chap. 2, and "Broadcasting Panethnicity: Univision and the Rise of Hispanic Television," chap. 4, in *ibid.*

27. David A. Badillo, "From La Lucha to Latino: Ethnic Diversity and Political Identity in Chicago," in *La Causa: Civil Rights, Social Justice and the Struggle for Equality in the Midwest*, ed. Gilberto Cárdenas (Houston: Arte Público Press, 2004).



of under the aegis of nationality-based community organizations.<sup>28</sup> Historian Lilia Fernández also considers the 1970s a turning point in the history of Latinas/os in Chicago, because of an increase in social activism. She argues that the rapid increase in the city's Spanish-speaking population and rising awareness of the Chicano movement fueled this change.<sup>29</sup> Mexican residents of Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood were further motivated to participate in social activism because of municipal neglect and a lack of assistance from Anglo-run social-service agencies: "Mexicans saw themselves racialized in similar ways regardless of their citizenship status, tenure in Chicago, or how far back their immigrant roots originated."<sup>30</sup>

## Early Scholarship on Mujeres Latinas en Acción

Scholarship from the 1990s on Mujeres stressed the extent to which Mujeres challenged gender and family norms. This early scholarship underscores tension surrounding how Mujeres navigated gender-based expectations in Pilsen and class-based expectations in the women's movement in its quest to find an understanding of womanhood that was both culturally meaningful and empowering.

Debra Westlake's paper for a US women's history course at the University of Chicago in 1992 argues that many of Mujeres' founders challenged cultural and social gender norms in their personal behaviors and in the organization's feminist mission.<sup>31</sup> Mujeres members' visits to local bars after their meetings was highly controversial: this "invasion of male space in a highly traditional and Catholic environment was one of the many

28. Ibid., 52.

29. Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City*, 208–10.

30. Ibid, 225.

31. Debra Westlake, "Mujeres Adelante: The Early History of 'Mujeres Latinas en Acción' 1973–1980," 1992, box 1, folder 5, MLEAR.

factors which led the group to being seen as the ‘bad women’ of Pilsen.”<sup>32</sup> Westlake also describes how various Mujeres’ members understood the term *feminist* and came to use it to describe themselves. In contrast, Diana Salazar, in a 1996 student paper, argues that Mujeres did not identify as a feminist organization, because the term had negative connotations and described the needs of middle-class white women, not Latinas: “I agree with the concerns that Latinas have in regards to the Women’s movement [such] as [it] not taking into account those women who do not want to be career women or do not want to give up their roles as wives.”<sup>33</sup> Instead, she argued that Mujeres emphasized how being a wife and mother could be empowering.<sup>34</sup>

## My Intervention

My thesis explores the relationship between gender, activism, and the construction of pan-ethnic identity. I consider how Mujeres Latinas en Acción mobilized ethnic or national identity differently depending on context and how the use of pan-ethnic identifiers did not remove divisions within the Latina/o community. My thesis contributes to the fields of women’s history and Latina/o history by offering Mujeres as an example of a Latina women’s organization in the urban north. Much of Latina/o history has focused on the Southwest and the male-dominated Chicano movement. This thesis addresses the gap in scholarship on Latinas’ community involvement in Chicago. I investigate how traditional gender roles, such as motherhood, complicated the construction of ethnic identities and how those identities were mobilized during activism.

32. Ibid.

33. Diana Salazar, “Mujeres Latinas en Acción: In Action,” 1996, box 1, folder 10, MLEAR.

34. Ibid.

## Gender Norms in Pilsen in the 1970s

Typical expectations for women in Pilsen in the 1970s must be reconstructed and understood in order to assess the extent to which the women of *Mujeres* diverged or conformed to social norms related to gender in their cultural context. Some of the most vivid depictions of the strength of patriarchal traditionalism in Pilsen come from the ethnographies of Ruth Horowitz and Gwen Stern.<sup>35</sup> Both demonstrate that the most culturally acceptable role for women was to be a mother and that strict, traditional gender roles regulated women's social, sexual, and economic activities.

In Pilsen during the 1970s, young Chicanas<sup>36</sup> were socialized to conform to traditional gender roles. Girls often cared for their younger siblings, which allowed them to perform a maternal role vicariously. This role was often seen positively. For instance, Celia, age fifteen, said:

Man, I want my mother to have a kid so I can take care of it. I love babies. I like to baby-sit for the little kid next door, she's so smart.

35. Ruth Horowitz, *Honor and the American Dream: Culture and Identity in a Chicano Community* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983). Horowitz conducted research in Pilsen between 1971 and 1977 through the Institute for Juvenile Research and the National Institute of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. She studied primarily violence, conceptions of personal and family honor, and the American Dream. Gwen Louise Stern, "Ethnic Identity and Community Action in El Barrio" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1976). Stern's ethnography was based on participant-observation and interviews conducted between 1970 and 1972. She worked at community organizations in Pilsen, including *Mujeres*.

36. Horowitz referred to all people of Mexican heritage in the United States as Chicanas/os: "while not all those of Mexican ancestry prefer this term, it seems best to embody the varying mixtures of United States and Mexican cultures today in the United States." Horowitz, *Honor and the American Dream*, 237.

Now my mother's *comadre*<sup>37</sup> is having a kid so maybe I'll be able to help.<sup>38</sup>

Gender roles were maintained through same-gender, family-based social activities, such as cooking together or Tupperware parties. One woman said of these activities: "they're lots of fun. We girls get together and play lots of games, talk, laugh a lot, and buy too many things."<sup>39</sup> Stern similarly observes that most women socialized with their female relatives, their husbands, or, less commonly, with female friends.<sup>40</sup> All-female activities were often inter-generational and transmitted expected behavior from women to girls by example. In general, women were expected to be demure, submissive, and motherly. Gender norms also limited the expression of women's sexuality. For instance, one woman named Ramona behaved carefully to ensure a public perception of virginity and loyalty to her boyfriend. She did not express physical affection in public, she primarily spent time with her boyfriend where others could see them, and she did not talk to other men.<sup>41</sup>

Women who violated traditional gender norms were treated harshly in attempts to force them to conform. For instance, one woman behaved in a manner perceived as unfeminine because she insulted a man and pulled a knife on him. The man took her knife and punched her until she fell down, even though she was no longer a threat once he had taken the knife. He justified his actions by saying, "I don't like it when girls try

37. *Comadre* describes fictive kinship, specifically the relationship between a child's mother and godmother. The term often had a religious connotation.

38. Horowitz, *Honor and the American Dream*, 72.

39. *Ibid.*, 58.

40. Gwen Louise Stern, "Ethnic Identity and Community Action," 40, 47.

41. Horowitz, *Honor and the American Dream*, 127.

to act like men. If they do, you got to treat them like men.”<sup>42</sup> According to this perspective, women must behave in a feminine manner in order to “deserve” positive treatment and violence was a legitimate response when women transgressed gender norms. This perspective also informed how men perceived representations of women in popular culture who violated sexual norms:

In one movie, a married woman overtly flirted with another man.... The man with whom the wife had been flirting raped her, which the Lions [gang] thought was a legitimate action to maintain his honor because she was tempting him and acting as though she controlled his life. Raping her was domination of her by dishonoring her husband. Even youths who do not generally subscribe to the code of personal dominance through violence saw the rape as virtuous and honorable.<sup>43</sup>

Among this peer group, gender norms were intimately tied to personal honor and power and violence against women who transgressed social norms was legitimate. For men who ascribed to such beliefs, individuals or organizations challenging violence against women would be seen as undermining traditional notions of male honor.

Even when men did not respond to women’s violation of gender norms with violence, there was an assumption that a man’s treatment of a woman depended upon her adherence to social expectations. Given the importance of family within the community, marriage and motherhood were critical social milestones, which Horowitz illustrates by a comparing two couples who had children before marriage. Lena was faithful to her husband and was an attentive mother. As a result, her husband often

42. *Ibid.*, 134.

43. *Ibid.*, 83.

spent time with her at home and took her out to dinner.<sup>44</sup> In contrast, Rita had relationships with other men and did not take good care of her baby; her husband reasserted his dominance in the relationship by seeing other women. Lena and Rita were both judged by ideals of marriage and motherhood. Lena used motherhood to transform how her identity was perceived by being publicly devoted to her child. However, becoming a mother did not change Rita's reputation, since she was seen as not being devoted enough.<sup>45</sup> Motherhood could change one's identity positively despite having a child out of wedlock, but only if one fulfilled the ideals associated with motherhood.

Male dominance extended beyond social and sexual spheres of life into economic domains. Men were expected to be the primary—or only—breadwinner for their families in order to maintain a dominant position.<sup>46</sup> One man described this view by saying, “I would never let my wife work while I got this good job, but a lot of guys are getting laid off now and my wife didn't get bad money before we got married.”<sup>47</sup> In general, women were expected to prioritize family roles over employment. Women's spheres were further limited to the home in cases where they could not drive or did not have the opportunity to learn English.<sup>48</sup> Pilsen women did work outside the home due to economic necessity, but patriarchal traditionalism frowned on women who used employment as a route to financial independence, which challenged cultural norms and male dominance.

Historian Lilia Fernández highlights how gender traditionalism in Pilsen, like that described by Horowitz, Stern, and Daniels, prevented women from participating in the public life of their community or

44. *Ibid.*, 120.

45. *Ibid.*, 120.

46. *Ibid.*, 60.

47. *Ibid.*, 63.

48. Stern, “Ethnic Identity and Community Action,” 23, 38.

receiving outside assistance during family crises. Gendered divisions of labor prevented women from participating in activities outside of the home like community activism.<sup>49</sup> For Latinas facing domestic violence, organizations that aided abused women were criticized for undermining male authority and encouraging divorce, despite the Catholic Church's prohibition; these difficulties were often combined with challenges related to the English language, finances, or immigration status, making it even more difficult for women to receive help.<sup>50</sup> As historian Benita Roth demonstrates, Chicanos sometimes adhered to gender traditionalism as a form of "cultural preservation" that was necessary in the struggle against Anglo domination.<sup>51</sup> Under these circumstances, women who opposed patriarchal traditionalism in Pilsen had to engage in complex, interlocked conversations about culture and ethnic identity in their community and the role of women in the United States in the 1970s.

These traditional gender norms were also noticed in the media. In 1970, *Chicago Tribune* reporter Mary Daniels described male dominance in Chicago's Latino communities, with a focus on Mexican communities.<sup>52</sup> She highlighted the conflict between traditional gender norms and the economic realities of Chicago, where many Latina/o families were lower income and relied on women's wages: "what happens when a family from a Latin culture, where the man is the undisputed king, comes to live in the United States, where women have more power by the hour?"<sup>53</sup> According to Daniels, men were ashamed to have their wives working outside the home, refused welfare assistance out of pride, and engaged in domestic violence. Daniels quoted a priest who said that

49. Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City*, 242.

50. *Ibid.*, 257–59.

51. Roth, *Separate Roads to Feminism*, 139.

52. Mary Daniels, "Machismo Comes to Chicago," *Chicago Tribune*, April 12, 1970.

53. *Ibid.*

Mexican women in Chicago were not interested in “liberation” because of their submissive nature, which was “an inborn thing, perhaps because of her Indian racial background.” Though today’s scholars would reject Daniels’s biological essentialism, the *Chicago Tribune*’s coverage of patriarchal traditionalism in Pilsen attested to the reputation of Mexicans as exponents of machismo.

## Social Activism and Ethnic Identity in Pilsen

What was the social context of other community organizations into which Mujeres entered? How did these organizations mobilize ideas about ethnic identity in their activism? Gwen Stern’s ethnography offers a vivid picture of how community activists in the early 1970s manipulated ideas about ethnic identity in order to achieve their goals.<sup>54</sup> Community activists in Pilsen used ethnic labels and stereotypes to differentiate themselves from outside professionals and government employees who wanted to intervene in Pilsen. Inside of Pilsen, activists tended to use terms which recognized the diversity of identities and experiences in the neighborhood.

Activists often described themselves as community people in meetings in order to highlight their close connection to and knowledge of Pilsen and to create a dichotomy between themselves and outside experts.<sup>55</sup> They used Spanish strategically during meetings with outsiders in order to reaffirm differences, to give the perception of community unity, or to allude to the symbolism of the Chicano movement. Activists would also use negative stereotypes to differentiate themselves from experts, especially during adversarial meetings, and to express distrust of the experts’ intentions and ability to understand the nuances of life in Pilsen. For instance, one activist said, “we don’t need professionals to tell us what the problems are.... We’re tired of being guinea pigs for graduate students....

54. Stern, “Ethnic Identity and Community Action,” 80–111.

55. *Ibid.*, 143.



We've been 'social-worked' to death."<sup>56</sup> Another activist said, "White people are so stuck-up.... You can't trust White people."<sup>57</sup> In these instances, activists stereotyped experts and white people to express their distrust of outsiders intentions and ability to understand the nuances of life in Pilsen.

When interacting with nonprofit employees and government officials, activists emphasized the size of their constituency and certain aspects of their community, while minimizing others. Activists broaden their potential constituency beyond Mexicans, the primary population in Pilsen, by referring to themselves as Latinos almost exclusively when interacting with representatives of outside institutions.<sup>58</sup> Latino was a more neutral term than Mexican, which could have negative connotations, or Chicano, which could imply political leanings. Less commonly, activists would use the term Spanish-speaking for its neutral connotations, although this term was mainly used by outside officials.<sup>59</sup> Activists also sometimes used the term bilingual-bicultural.

Among themselves in Pilsen, activists would use different terms that emphasized intra-ethnic differences, instead of community unity and shared values. Terms like *brazero* (from *bracero*), or *recién venido* defined people by their length of residence in the United States and were often associated with stereotypes.<sup>60</sup> Traditional described a person who was religious, superstitious, and adhered to strict gender roles.<sup>61</sup> Other terms

56. Ibid., 143.

57. Ibid., 150.

58. Ibid., 159.

59. Ibid., 161.

60. *Bracero* is Spanish for "laborer" and *recién venido* is Spanish for "recently arrived [person]." Stereotypically, *brazeros* only spoke Spanish and were heavy drinkers. See, Stern, "Ethnic Identity and Community Action," 163–64.

61. Ibid., 165.

described a person's place of origin, such as Mexican or *Tejano* (Texan).<sup>62</sup> Political divisions adhered to the terms Chicano and Mexican-American, which both described people of Mexican heritage who were born and raised in the United States. Chicano was linked to the Chicano movement and opposition to Anglo domination, whereas activists used Mexican-American as a derogatory term to describe people who were politically conservative, successful in the Anglo world, and overly sympathetic to the interests of Anglos.<sup>63</sup> Activists used other offensive terms for Pilsen residents such as Tico Taco, *vendido*, or coconut.<sup>64</sup> According to Stern, a Tico Taco is equivalent to an Uncle Tom; a *vendido*, Spanish for sell-out, has sided with Anglos for personal gain, betraying his or her presumed ethnic community in the process; and a coconut, "Brown on the outside but White on the inside," is Mexican in appearance but Anglo in values and behavior.<sup>65</sup> Questions about representation necessarily included debates about authenticity and identity. In general, the use of these offensive terms reflected the tensions and divisions inside Pilsen and, for activists, implied disagreements over who had the right to represent Pilsen in interactions with the outside community.

Whether speaking among themselves or with outsiders, activists used terms that centered around ethnic identity, not gender. Gender did not play a large role in community descriptions, given the small number of women activists. An estimated fifty to seventy people were involved in community activism in leadership positions in Pilsen in the early 1970s.<sup>66</sup> However, only ten to twenty women were active at this level; most were in their thirties, had children in elementary or high schools, and were active

62. Ibid., 167. A *Tejano* was stereotypically considered unsophisticated.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid., 168.

65. Ibid., 168–69.

66. Ibid., 115.

in education, such as in parents' organizations.<sup>67</sup> As Stern observes: "all heads of agencies in the community are males, and the majority of all staffs are male."<sup>68</sup> As a result, men often represented Pilsen when interacting with outside institutions. This calls into question if issues that affected women in Pilsen were priorities in these meetings and activism.

## Founding of Mujeres and Their Pseudo-Maternal Role

Inspiration for the founding of Mujeres Latinas en Acción came from "La Mujer Despierta: Latina Women's Education Awareness Conference," which was hosted on June 9, 1973, at El Centro de la Causa, an established community organization in Pilsen.<sup>69</sup> Even though Pilsen was a primarily Mexican neighborhood, the conference organizers consciously used the term Latina to indicate their pan-ethnic focus. Conference organizers and attendants had both Mexican and Puerto Rican backgrounds.<sup>70</sup> According to an internal Mujeres document, a small group of women in Pilsen, many of whom had attended "La Mujer Despierta," founded Mujeres Latinas en Acción in the summer of 1973. They wanted to form a women's organization that would fulfill the lack of adequate services for Latinas:

Even community-based organizations have not delivered programs for women that take into consideration the needs and problems of women emerging in non-traditional roles, which are a reality in Chicago. Women seem to participate mainly in crisis-oriented services such as counseling, crisis intervention, but there are few

67. Ibid., 123–24.

68. Ibid., 124.

69. Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City*, 248.

70. Ibid.

services providing alternatives to life styles, such as manpower training, educational and recreational programs, and advocacy. Moreover, the staffing of non-counseling services tends even in community organizations to be predominantly male.<sup>71</sup>

By the fall of the 1973, *Mujeres* was hosting twelve educational workshops for women in the community.<sup>72</sup> Its goal in organizing these workshops, and later other social services, was to

effect the necessary changes in the social and organization structures within the community in such a way as to guarantee greater and more significant participation of the Latino female leadership in the decision-making processes that affect the community.<sup>73</sup>

Female leadership could have posed a challenge to the existing power structure of other Pilsen organizations, which were dominated by males. However, the radical nature of this goal was tempered by suggesting that supporting women was a method of helping the larger Latina/o community, as opposed to a gendered goal in of itself:

We believe that working toward the fulfillment of our mission and main purpose is one of the greatest and lasting contributions M.L.E.A. can make to the welfare of the Latino Community in Chicago.<sup>74</sup>

71. "Mujeres Latinas en Accion, Inc.: Plans for FY 1976-77 and Tentative Plans for FY 1977-78," 1976, box 7, folder 8, MLEAR.

72. Ibid.

73. "What is Latin Women in Action?" 1977, box 7, folder 8, MLEAR.

74. Ibid.

This appeasement strategy is consistent with historian Benita Roth's argument that "early Chicana feminist organizing was characterized by the express desire to stay linked to men and existing Chicano organizations while promoting a greater role from women in service to the Chicano cause."<sup>75</sup> Chicana feminists challenged the belief that gender traditionalism was necessary to preserve Chicano culture by arguing that more egalitarian families would help in the fight against Anglo dominance.<sup>76</sup> As a result, many Chicana feminist organizations emphasized the importance of maintaining family unity,<sup>77</sup> a priority Mujeres would also come to emphasize.

Mujeres contracted with El Centro de la Causa to use its two-story building as a women's center beginning in the winter of 1973.<sup>78</sup> During the next year, one of Mujeres' main priorities was to expand day care in the neighborhood by working with a community day-care center.<sup>79</sup> Helping mothers allowed the organization's women to participate in activities outside of the home in a way that would be nonconfrontational to conservative members of the neighborhood.

Mujeres experienced a setback in the fall of 1974 when the Centro de la Causa building burned down.<sup>80</sup> Historians Lilia Fernández and Martha Zurita have linked the fire to the hostility Mujeres faced because of its opposition to patriarchal traditionalism. Fernández's evidence indicates that a local gang may have set the fire, because they had used the location

75. Roth, *Separate Roads to Feminism*, 12, 139.

76. *Ibid.*, 163.

77. *Ibid.*, 164

78. "Mujeres Latinas en Accion, Inc.: Plans for FY 1976–77 and Tentative Plans for FY 1977–78," 1976, box 7, folder 8, MLEAR.

79. *Ibid.*

80. *Ibid.*

previously to deal drugs and did not believe Mujeres' use of the space was legitimate.<sup>81</sup> Zurita considers the fire part of a larger trend of opposition and violence against the women of Mujeres: Mujeres members had been receiving suspicious phone calls in the weeks before the fire, and one member was physically assaulted by gang members while at a local bar.<sup>82</sup> Zurita argues that these threats support the theory that community members opposed to the organization had set the fire intentionally.<sup>83</sup> Regardless of the exact details surrounding the fire, it is clear that there was an environment of opposition and intimidation towards Mujeres. The organization supported women's independence, which some in the community found threatening to traditional gender roles and the patriarchal status quo. Patriarchal traditionalism, as described by Horowitz, created an environment where threats and violence were seen as appropriate ways to try to restore male dominance.

Despite the fire and opposition from some parts of the community, Mujeres acquired another space, which opened on April 1, 1975.<sup>84</sup> It established an informal, yet supervised drop-in center for young women to socialize among themselves, to receive support, and to participate in recreational and educational activities.<sup>85</sup> Mujeres considered the gender norms of the community when creating the programs at the drop-in center: a staff member noted that "because of certain cultural values many

81. Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City*, 251.

82. Martha Zurita, "Mujeres Latinas en Acción: A Case Study of Latina Civil Rights," in *La Causa: Civil Rights, Social Justice, and the Struggle for Equality in the Midwest*, ed. Gilberto Cárdenas (Houston: Arte Público Press, 2004), 180.

83. *Ibid.*, 180.

84. "Mujeres Latinas en Accion, Inc.: Plans for FY 1976–77 and Tentative Plans for FY 1977–78," 1976, box 7, folder 8, MLEAR.

85. "Mujeres Latinas en Accion," 1976, box 1, folder 1, MLEAR.

young girls are not allowed out unless their parents are sure they will be adequately chaperoned.”<sup>86</sup>

One of the aims of the drop-in center was to allow volunteers and staff members to intervene if young women were experiencing a crisis. All *Mujeres* members working with the drop-in center had completed a six-week counseling course through the Institute for Juvenile Research.<sup>87</sup> *Mujeres* also referred girls to more specialized services, and *Mujeres* volunteers or staff members would accompany the young woman to the other agency and do any necessary follow-up.<sup>88</sup> The relationships between the girls and *Mujeres* staff and volunteers were long-term and social and offered emotional support. By accompanying young women to appointments with other agencies, the staff and volunteers went beyond just counseling and referrals—they acted like mothers or sisters. The drop-in center became like a second home that was an appropriate place for young women to spend time without challenging social norms. It allowed *Mujeres* to empower women in Pilsen in a way that did not alienate traditional members of the community.

## Mujeres' Work with Runaway Girls: Expansion of Motherhood

In May 1975, *Mujeres* proposed the creation of services for runaway girls, in response to growing rates of runaways in Pilsen. In 1974, the 12th Police District (which included the neighborhoods of Pilsen and Heart of Chicago) recorded ninety-one cases of runaway girls: *Mujeres* noted: “in view of the traditionally tight-knit Latino family, and the chaperoning of young girls, we feel that 91 runaways in one year constitutes an

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid.

alarmingly high rate.”<sup>89</sup> Mujeres attributed girls’ decisions to run away to dysfunction in the household, such as disagreement with a parent or domestic abuse. However, running away often led girls to face other challenges, like petty theft, homelessness, rape, or drug and alcohol use.<sup>90</sup> For Mujeres, drugs or alcohol were a symptom of gender-based discrimination, and it was dedicated to addressing the root causes that drove girls to run away: “we feel that a primary goal of the program is to keep families intact when possible and involve parents in the treatment plan.”<sup>91</sup> Mujeres implemented the program for runaway girls in 1977, offering temporary housing to on average of nine runaways a month in two homes in Pilsen, in addition to other services.<sup>92</sup>

Both Mujeres’ field workers and the foster parents acted as maternal figures for runaway girls. The field workers recruited new foster families, ensured the proper licensing of foster homes, and met directly with the girls in order to provide services.<sup>93</sup> The field workers were responsible for creating schedules for the runaway girls once they were in the program, such as schooling and recreational activities.<sup>94</sup> The field workers also handled activities, such as girls’ medical emergencies and accompanied

89. “Program Proposal: Runaway Services at the Drop-In Center in the Pilsen Community,” May 1975, box 7, folder 10, MLEAR. Chicago’s Human Services counted ninety-one runaways who came into contact with the police or other authorities and probably underestimated the actual number of runaways in the 12th District.

90. Ibid.

91. Ibid.

92. “List of Activities/Events Sponsored by Mujeres Latinas en Accion 1975–77,” c. 1977, box 7, folder 8, MLEAR.

93. “What is Latin Women in Action?” 1977, box 1, folder 3, MLEAR.

94. Lourdes Sullivan, “Guidelines for Youth Placement,” memorandum to David Reed, executive director, Chicago Area Project. Apr. 23, 1985, box 20, folder 8, MLEAR.



them to appointments, which would normally be the prerogatives of the girls' parents. The field workers also tried to maintain contact with the runaway girls' biological parents in order to see if reunification would be possible and what support the parents needed. Though the field workers were temporarily fulfilling maternal roles, their ultimate goal was to maintain family unity.

The field workers placed the girls into foster homes only when the girls could not be reunited immediately with their biological families. This underscored their commitment to family as an important social and cultural unit. Through their programs for runaway girls, *Mujeres'* use of domestic places and feminine practices positioned women as uniquely capable of solving a community problem. Traditionalism in Pilsen honored women's maternal practices and domesticity. The *Mujeres'* field workers and staff reimagined the possibilities for these respected traits and expanded what was considered part of the domestic sphere to include girls who were not their biological daughters and, more generally, the entire community.

Foster parents extended their domestic spaces to include those who were not biological family members by opening their homes to runaway girls on a temporary basis until they could be reunited with their parents or found safe alternative housing.<sup>95</sup> Foster parents integrated runaway girls into their household routines, blurring the boundary between the home (motherhood and household labor) and the world (professional/volunteer work and community service). This is consistent with what sociologist Nancy Naples calls "activist mothering" to describe women's work that combines traditional mothering and community activism.<sup>96</sup>

Foster parents' mothering extended beyond providing a place for girls to sleep. They provided a link to runaway girls' culture and language,

95. Lourdes Sullivan, "Length of Placement with Temporary Housing Program," memorandum to Lilian Cruz, supervisor, Pilsen Team, Apr. 16, 1985, box 20, folder 8, MLEAR.

96. Naples, "Activist Mothering," 441–63.

which Mujeres saw as closely related to ideas of ethnic identity: “we hope that by providing bilingual staff and volunteers that our runaway service could accept referrals of Latinas from other areas of the city where services are not available and placement in a Latin family is preferable.”<sup>97</sup> Though the program proposal is not explicit about why a “Latin family” would be preferable, several are implied. First, having foster parents fluent in both Spanish and English would be ideal since the runaway girl and her biological parents might not be proficient in both languages. Second, Latina/o foster parents would have been better equipped to understand the cultural context, place of origin, and gender norms that may have affected the girl’s decision to run away:

One area where the diversity of the population is clear is with runaways. Since many families in the community have migrated here from Texas or Mexico, there are often still ties there and girls may run away to Texas or Mexico. The traffic also works in the reverse, when families move back to Texas or Mexico, and the girls return alone to Chicago.<sup>98</sup>

In general, Pilsen residents had diverse international and domestic migration experiences, as some were recent arrivals and others were long-time Chicagoans. Mujeres may have believed these personal experiences of migration, cultural adjustment, and shared knowledge of Spanish would make it easier for foster parents to relate to the girls and uniquely positioned them to be ideal foster parents for runaway Latina girls.<sup>99</sup>

97. “Program Proposal: Runaway Services at the Drop-In Center in the Pilsen Community,” May 1975, box 7, folder 10, MLEAR.

98. Ibid.

99. Mujeres’ efforts in the mid-seventies coincided with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services’ violation of the civil rights of Latino families whose children were in the foster-care system. See, *Burgos v. DCFS*, 1:75-cv-03974 (N.D. IL 1975). The subsequent consent decree required placement of

Mujeres' emphasis on the importance of families revealed a degree of underlying conservatism, despite its reputation for nonconformity in Pilsen. In placing runaway girls with families, Mujeres reinforced norms about the ideal household, such as the importance of the relationship between parents and children. None of its publicity or internal documents about the foster family program mentioned nontraditional families, such as households headed by single women or same-sex couples. This silence allowed traditional families norms to remain unchallenged, and its foster family program could have reinforced certain hierarchies and orthodoxies related to gender roles and parental authority.

Mujeres' services to runaway girls illustrated how the organization extended its practices of motherhood outside of biological families and expanded practices associated with domesticity and femininity to include the entire community. This conferred an important pseudo-maternal identity on its staff and volunteers. In Pilsen, becoming a mother was a significant change in status, and even the transgression of becoming pregnant outside of marriage could be transcended by becoming a devoted mother.<sup>100</sup> Perhaps Mujeres members believed that emphasizing the maternal aspects of their work would allow the organization to achieve a similar transformation. In founding an organization dedicated to women's empowerment and women's participation in public life, they transgressed gender norms in Pilsen associated with patriarchal traditionalism. The organization's members tempered this transgression by becoming "mothers" to the community, whose maternal devotion to runaway girls and the community more broadly allowed Mujeres to situate its work into a culturally appropriate framework.

The work of Mujeres volunteers and foster families is reminiscent of historian Barbara Welter's argument that the association between femininity

Spanish-speaking children with Spanish-speaking foster parents, the use of bilingual consent forms, and the hiring of bilingual staff.

100. Horowitz, *Honor and the American Dream*, 120.

and moral goodness allowed nineteenth-century women to justify their involvement in public life. Society supposed that women would participate only in “morally uplifting tasks,” such as teaching children or caring for the sick.<sup>101</sup> Welter identifies social changes, such as westward migration and industrialism, that propelled women into new roles, and, in response to these changes, some women “tried to keep the virtues [associated with traditional women’s roles] and enlarge the scope of womanhood.”<sup>102</sup> Though separated by a century and influenced by different demographic conditions, *Mujeres* volunteers and foster mothers used similar strategies. They justified their public involvement by describing it as an expansion of motherhood and traditional women’s roles, such as caring for children. Social changes, like migration and drug abuse, made these new roles necessary to maintain community well-being. In both cases, women used language and imagery associated with the ideals of womanhood to expand public roles for themselves in the face of social changes.

## Mujeres’ Use of Ethnic Identity in Pilsen-based Programs

Ethnic identity and ethnic pride permeated *Mujeres*’ programming at two levels. First, its use of ethnic identity distinguished its services from those offered by women’s groups outside of Pilsen. *Mujeres* believed that outside groups were not adequately providing services to the Latina community, because they disregarded factors specific to that community, like language and cultural norms. Second, *Mujeres*’ programs supported the transmission of culture between generations based on an idea of shared ethnic identity and history. This cultural transmission mimicked what may normally be expected to happen within a family. The relatively recent arrival of many families to Pilsen would have heightened the need

101. Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood,” 164.

102. *Ibid.*, 174.

for this inter-generational cultural transmission in the face of cultural adaption and integration. Mujeres emphasized the importance of supporting cultural transmission in order to give clients a positive sense of self, which could empower them.

In public documents describing its services, Mujeres highlighted the organization's ability to integrate ethnic identity into its work. Mujeres argued that social-service organizations in Pilsen run by outsiders operated "without appropriate consideration of cultural differences," whereas Mujeres and other "Latino organizations in Pilsen provide services that are more accessible because of having staff and boards with cultural backgrounds similar to the client populations, and who live in the community."<sup>103</sup> Mujeres acknowledged its clients' cultural backgrounds by celebrating and raising awareness about Latina/o culture. Mujeres' executive director, Luz Maria Prieto, listed organizing cultural awareness workshops as a goal for the 1976–1977 financial year in an internal planning document.<sup>104</sup> Mujeres also offered classes about gender and Latina/o culture, such as "Women and Culture," that explored "Latin women as seen in this culture through music, literature, and art [and] our changing roles."<sup>105</sup> The reference to "changing roles" hinted that the course would do more than summarize the cultural contributions of Latinas by offering a framework for empowerment that took into account culture and gender, the immigrant experience, and integration into American culture.

Mujeres' partnerships within Pilsen demonstrate the importance it placed on ethnic identity. Members of Mujeres helped with the planning and implementation of the Latino Drug Intervention Program, a program not run by Mujeres that offered culturally informed counseling, informational outreach in the community, and educational and vocational

103. "What is Latin Women in Action?" 1977, box 1, folder 3, MLEAR.

104. Luz Prieto, "Action Steps, Organization Unit: Social Services Component," c. 1976, box 7, folder 8, MLEAR.

105. "What is Latin Women in Action?" 1977, box 1, folder 3, MLEAR.

classes.<sup>106</sup> Though the program had the pan-ethnic term Latino in its name, most of its everyday programming emphasized Chicano culture and Mexican heritage. During a Latino Youth Drug Intervention Program staff meeting in early 1974, Ruth Horowitz and Mauro Castro gave a presentation about incorporating Chicano culture into counseling sessions. In general, counselors were supposed to create a trusting relationship with clients, to identify how clients' values and beliefs affected how the clients saw their life and their difficulties, and to support the clients in using their values to solve problems.<sup>107</sup> The staff of the Latino Youth Drug Intervention Program understood Chicano culture as influencing all aspects of this therapeutic process:

The Chicano culture of Pilsen–Heart of Chicago differs from the Anglo culture in many ways. The nature of family relationships is different, the social character and traditions of the community are different and the ethnic identity is different. This necessitates development of a counseling system and set of alternatives which are adaptive to the Chicano population we are dealing with.<sup>108</sup>

The agenda also noted that counseling must consider the importance of “sex roles” in Chicano culture: “because of the rigid separation of sex roles and the man’s role as dominant, it is essential that the client and his or her counselor be of the same sex.”<sup>109</sup> This adherence to cultural and gender norms did not address how strict patriarchal traditionalism may

106. “Proposed Second Week Agenda—Latino Youth Drug Intervention Program’s Training Information Cycle,” 1974, box 20, folder 14, MLEAR. Staff members of the Latino Drug Intervention Program met with groups of girls at Mujeres’ drop-in center, further demonstrating their close working relationship.

107. *Ibid.*

108. *Ibid.*

109. *Ibid.*

have been the underlying cause of some community difficulties, such as the unique vulnerability of runaway girls that led some to abuse drugs. As a result, individual counselors, especially in all-female settings, may have challenged gender norms more than this official policy indicated.

The Latino Youth Drug Intervention Program embraced ethnic identity through its educational and cultural programming. It offered classes on Chicano history, perceptions of Latinas/os in the dominant culture, inter-ethnic conflict, and the relationship between city services and the Latina/o community.<sup>110</sup> As implied by these class topics, the Latino Youth Drug Intervention Program had a politicized understanding of ethnic identity and linked Chicano identity to issues of structural inequality and discrimination, which it outlined in a planning document: “classes in Chicano awareness will help both the staff and the youth involved in the program discover who they are, where they are coming from and where they are going.”<sup>111</sup> Its goals linked learning about Chicano identity to fostering political and cultural solidarity within the community and a positive self-image. It believed that this positive self-image would motivate clients to make more constructive choices in their personal lives and give back to the community, such as a plan for the youth to organize celebrations in honor of Mexican Independence Day and the *Día de la Virgen de Guadalupe*.<sup>112</sup>

The Latino Youth Drug Intervention Program emphasized the importance of having staff members from the community to whom the clients could more easily relate and, perhaps, so clients could have role models of their ethnic background. Gwen Stern and Maria Heinz interviewed fifteen Latino Youth Drug Intervention Program staff members in January

110. “Proposed 3rd Week Agenda—Latino Youth Drug Intervention Program Training & Information Cycle,” 1974, box 20, folder 15, MLEAR.

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid.

1975 about their background, including their ethnic identity.<sup>113</sup> Stern was a volunteer with Mujeres and Mangual, whose married name was Maria Heinz,<sup>114</sup> helped found Mujeres. The interviews revealed that staff were between the ages of seventeen and twenty-six and that five out of fifteen staff members were women.<sup>115</sup> Stern and Heinz considered eleven staff members Latino, but noted that the term Latino was used by the researchers even when the staff members used different words to describe themselves: “the category ‘Latino’ was used by the researchers to include anyone with one or both parents of Mexican descent.”<sup>116</sup> Staff members self-identified as Mexican, Mexican-Norwegian, Chicano, and Mexican-American.<sup>117</sup> Staff members also discussed their language ability, place of birth, and residence during the interviews. Most indicated that they were somewhat or completely bilingual in English and Spanish and were long-term residents of Chicago or born in the city: “nine staff members were born in Chicago, which is 60% of the staff. This indicates that at least 60% of the staff is second or third generation in terms of migration to Chicago from Mexico” (emphasis in the original).<sup>118</sup> This emphasis on length of residence in Chicago demonstrates that concerns about ethnicity, national identity, and cultural adaption remained relevant, even for those with no personal experience of migration. The Latino Youth Drug Intervention Program’s staff statistics may not be similar to other community organizations in Pilsen, as the program wanted to recruit staff who could easily relate to the clients. This may have also led the program

113. “Staff Interviews,” Jan. 1975, box 20, folder 17, MLEAR.

114. Trevor Jensen, “Maria T. Mangual: 1944–2007,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 24, 2007.

115. “Staff Interviews,” Jan. 1975, box 20, folder 17, MLEAR.

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid.

118. Ibid.



to hire younger staff. However, the types of questions asked during the interviews reveal what community organizations like Mujeres found important: ethnic identity, language skills, immigration history, and length of residence in Chicago.

In its partnership with other Pilsen organizations, Mujeres demonstrated a nuanced understanding of identity within the Latina/o community (by national origin, pan-ethnicity, political engagement, length of residencies in Chicago, etc.), and it was open to allowing client to self-identify as they saw fit. This is consistent with Stern's claim that the most salient identity labels within Pilsen were the ones which indicated distinctions within Pilsen's Latina/o community.

## Mujeres' Use of Ethnic Identity Beyond Pilsen

Mujeres had to make choices about how to utilize ethnic identity when interacting with organizations outside of Pilsen. When interacting with a Latino group, like National Council of La Raza, Mujeres (and other Pilsen community organizations) often used a broad ethnic label to emphasize size and importance; when interacting with a non-Latino group, like Planned Parenthood, Mujeres de-emphasized ethnic identity; and when interacting with a radical feminist group, like Committee to End Sterilization Abuse, it used a combined and complex approach.

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) was founded in 1968 as a regional Chicano organization in Phoenix, Arizona, which went by the name Southwest Council of La Raza (SWCLR).<sup>119</sup> According to sociologist G. Cristina Mora, the organization's founders chose the term *la raza*,<sup>120</sup> because they believed labels like "Spanish-speaking" or "Spanish-

119. Mora, *Making Hispanics*, 54.

120. *La raza* is Spanish for "the race." The term was embraced by participants in the Chicano movement and was often used as a synonym for Hispanic or Latina/o people.

surnamed” excluded many people who ought to be included.<sup>121</sup> Initially, SWCLR focused on funding projects initiated by its member organizations. However, by the time *Mujeres* began working with the organization in 1987, it had changed names to National Council of La Raza, moved to Washington, DC, broadened its focus from regional to national issues, and emphasized Hispanic pan-ethnicity.<sup>122</sup> The NCLR’s definition of Hispanic was inclusive, but ambiguous, based on the idea that different groups were connected by a shared culture and experiences of socioeconomic disadvantage.<sup>123</sup>

In its 1987 application for affiliation with the National Council of La Raza, *Mujeres* requested assistance with resource development, planning and goal-setting, financial management, and working with the private sector.<sup>124</sup> (This reflected the NCLR’s shift from direct financial assistance to offering technical and other support after its move to Washington, DC, in 1970.) The application’s statement of purpose clearly communicated the role of ethnic identity and Spanish to *Mujeres*’ mission, which was “to provide social services to Latinas (most of whom have multi-problem families and are mono-lingual, Spanish-speaking).”<sup>125</sup> In response to the application’s question about the ethnic background of its board, *Mujeres* answered that four out of seven board members were Hispanic and that its goal was to increase the size of the board to twelve to eighteen members total, with at least ten Hispanic members.<sup>126</sup> *Mujeres* also responded that approximately 85 percent of its clients were Hispanic.

121. Mora, *Making Hispanics*, 54.

122. *Ibid.*, 58, 60–61.

123. *Ibid.*, 67–69.

124. “National Council of La Raza Affiliate Network Application for Affiliation,” 1987, box 20, folder 19, MLEAR.

125. *Ibid.*

126. *Ibid.*

The NCLR Board of Directors approved Mujeres' affiliation request unanimously on April 10, 1987.<sup>127</sup>

Through its affiliation with the NCLR, Mujeres became part of a national network of organizations that advocated for a Latina/o pan-ethnic constituency. The NCLR did have affiliate members that represented specific national groups as there was no requirement for affiliates to represent or serve pan-ethnic constituencies.<sup>128</sup> Its communications often used the terms Hispanic, Latino, and *la raza* interchangeably.<sup>129</sup> In a letter from the NCLR's president, Raul Yzaguirre, to Mujeres, he refers to Mujeres' clients as "Latinas" and "Hispanic women"—both labels acknowledged gender and a sense of pan-ethnicity.<sup>130</sup> However, the fact that Mujeres joined the NCLR as an affiliate does not imply that it used the same definition of Hispanic/Latina/o pan-ethnicity as the NCLR. Despite using "Latinas" in its name, Mujeres remained focused on the women and girls of Pilsen, who were primarily of Mexican descent.

Mujeres did not stress ethnic identity in its collaboration with Planned Parenthood and initially placed a white woman, Gwen Stern, on Planned Parenthood's Chicago board. According to Fernández, this was a "strategic" decision, which helped Mujeres distance itself from an organization that supported abortion.<sup>131</sup> Mujeres never publicly promoted abortion, which would have alienated opponents to abortion in Pilsen.<sup>132</sup> It was also difficult to reconcile the right to abortion (and other feminist radical options) with Mujeres' somewhat conservative image as symbolic "mothers" of the Pilsen community.

127. Letter from Raul Yzaguirre, Apr. 13, 1987, box 20, folder 19, MLEAR.

128. Mora, *Making Hispanics*, 81.

129. *Ibid.*, 79–82.

130. Letter from Raul Yzaguirre, Nov. 17, 1987, box 20, folder 20, MLEAR.

131. Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City*, 346–47.

132. *Ibid.*, 256.

In 1976, Planned Parenthood of Chicago unanimously elected Luz Maria Prieto, Mujeres' executive director, to its Board of Directors.<sup>133</sup> Prieto served as board secretary<sup>134</sup> and represented Mujeres on the Planned Parenthood Association Chicago Area Client Services and Volunteer Committee in 1977 and 1978.<sup>135</sup> Prieto attended Client Services and Volunteer committee meetings and provided feedback and recommendations on existing Planned Parenthood programming, such as pregnancy counseling programs and recruiting volunteers.<sup>136</sup> According to the committee meeting minutes for April 1977, most of Prieto's contributions focused on event logistics and planning: "Luz Prieto suggested that arrangements be made with host organizations for provision of baby-sitting services. This is used at other agencies to stimulate attendance."<sup>137</sup> Meeting minutes for the next month recorded that Prieto was involved in organizing events for youth.<sup>138</sup>

The Client Services and Volunteer Committee meeting minutes did not record Prieto mentioning ethnic identity. It is possible that Prieto did mention ethnic identity, but in more subtle ways that were not recorded by the meeting minutes. Prieto, as a Latina, may have felt secure in her role representing a Latina organization and did not need to establish her dedication or legitimacy. The absence of Latina issues may also reflect the limits of coalitional politics in the 1970s, which had yet to

133. Letter from David C. Hilliard, July 1976, box 21, folder 9, MLEAR.

134. Letter from Luz Maria Prieto, Feb. 14, 1978, box 21, folder 9, MLEAR.

135. Planned Parenthood Association/Chicago Area Client Services and Volunteer Committee 1977-78 Contact List, box 21, folder 8, MLEAR.

136. Jean Nielsen, Direct Services Committee Meeting Minutes, Nov. 10, 1976, box 21, folder 8, MLEAR.

137. Jean Nielsen, Direct Services Committee Meeting Notes, Apr. 14, 1977, box 21, folder 8, MLEAR.

138. Jean Nielsen, Direct Services Committee Meeting Minutes, June 8, 1977, box 21, folder 8, MLEAR.

integrate a diversity of perspectives, including ethnic identity. Regardless, the very presence of Prieto on the board and at Client Services and Volunteer Committee meetings reflected a change in how *Mujeres* engaged with outside organizations, which advocated for policies that some more conservative members of the Pilsen community might have found objectionable.

The Committee to End Sterilization Abuse (CESA) arose from the work of the Chicago Women's Liberation Union (CWLW) in the 1970s. CWLW, a socialist, second-wave feminist organization, promoted many women's issues, including abortion and women's health more broadly.<sup>139</sup> Maritza Arrastia of New York CESA came to Chicago in July 1975 to discuss efforts to end sterilization abuse in Puerto Rico and population control in general.<sup>140</sup> Community groups in Chicago, including CWLW, became interested in learning about sterilization in Chicago hospitals and the local prevalence of sterilization abuse.<sup>141</sup>

*Mujeres'* interactions with CESA highlight the complexity of *Mujeres'* position in the 1970s. While CESA's concerns about sterilization aligned with the church's anti-contraception efforts, CWLW's radical feminism misaligned with Pilsen's religious and macho cultures. *Mujeres* was a feminist organization that helped Latina women and girls outside of the traditional family structure. Its members describe themselves metaphorically as mothers of the community and their work as a continuation, not

139. CWLW Herstory Project, accessed June 25, 2019, <https://www.cwlwherstory.org/>.

140. Author unknown, CESA meeting minutes, Sept. 15, 1975, and Sept. 22, 1975, box 4, folder 5, Jenny Knauss Collection, Manuscript Series XCIII, Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, Northwestern University Library.

141. *Ibid.* Activists defined sterilization abuse as sterilizations that occurred without free and informed consent, including medical professionals requesting consent in a language that the patient did not understand or government officials threatening the loss of welfare benefits to a woman who refused sterilization.

a disruption, of the family. This strategic tactic reduced antagonism from religious and gender traditionalists in Pilsen and allowed Mujeres to expand programming and associate with local and national groups. Given these circumstances, Mujeres had to maintain a careful balancing act in its association with CESA.

Mary Tully represented Mujeres at CESA's September 1975 meetings. Tully was a white progressive, active in community organizations in Pilsen.<sup>142</sup> Fernández argues that having white women represent Mujeres distanced it from the more radical aspects of CESA's work.<sup>143</sup> But white representation was a double-edged sword that prevented Mujeres' Latina members from gaining direct experience in coalitional politics and limited Mujeres' options for activism outside of the neighborhood. The double-edged nature of Tully's representation of Mujeres is demonstrated in one disagreement between Mirtha N. Font and Tully at a CESA meeting on September 15, 1975:

From the floor, Mirtha N. Font bought up the issue of "focus" in presenting the work of C.E.S.A. to the public.... Font mentioned that it was important to consider that an audience of "poor whites," for example, might not see sterilization as their problem if presented as a U.S. tool to control Puerto Ricans, but might recognize their position as victims if other aspects of sterilization are also emphasized.<sup>144</sup>

Tully responded "that poor whites and others could respond to the issue of imperialism and that she wouldn't like to see the problem of sterilization presented in a fragmented fashion."<sup>145</sup> Tully did contradict Font's

142. Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City*, 253.

143. Ibid.

144. Ibid.

145. Ibid.

hypothetical argument that poor white women might not make the connection between sterilization and US imperialism, but Tully's "poor whites and others" does not make it clear who these "others" are—a significant omission for the representative of a Latina organization.

After this exchange, someone not identify by name suggested that the group should finish discussing updates before debating goals and strategy. Interestingly, Puerto Rico was not explicitly discussed again—even during the section dedicated to goals and strategy: "1) consciousness raising through health education," "2) action—focusing primarily on enforcing, reforming, or changing regulations," and "3) Building community organization for an alternative health care system."<sup>146</sup> Population control and imperialist policies were only mentioned as a subpart of the first goal, consciousness-raising.

## Conclusion

Members of *Mujeres Latinas en Acción* expanded the practices associated with motherhood to include caring for all of Pilsen, with a focus on helping young Latinas. The meanings associated with motherhood were influenced by both ethnic identity and the gender traditionalism that existed in Pilsen during the 1970s and 1980s. *Mujeres* members acted as "mothers" for young women by creating a pseudo-domestic space in the drop-in center and through its foster program. By embracing certain practices associated with motherhood, *Mujeres* members gained increased community acceptance while still engaging in radical practices, such as entering previously male-dominated spaces, leading community organizations, and forming coalitions with city and national groups—in short, participating in public life. Just as becoming a mother could transform the status of an individual woman, *Mujeres*' embrace of mothering practices changed the organization's institutional identity to become more acceptable to the community, despite its work challenging gender

146. Ibid.

traditionalism and male dominance. However, its choice to prioritize its reputation within Pilsen limited its ability to engage in certain types of activism outside of the neighborhood, such as having Latina members represent the organization in certain situations. Instead, it sought to create working relationships with organizations outside of Pilsen in a manner that avoided controversy and projected a unified view of the Latina/o community, despite disagreements within Pilsen about gender and ethnic identity.

Mujeres members justified their participation in activism as an expansion of their traditional feminine roles, which is reminiscent of Welter's argument about women's participation in public life in the nineteenth century. In both cases, larger social forces motivated women's entrance into public life. For Mujeres' members, the male-dominated Chicano movement did not address the needs of Latina women, and this context influenced how they constructed and mobilized a pan-ethnic identity to fulfill their goals as both women and Latinas inside and outside of Pilsen.

Today, Mujeres is proud to be the "longest-standing Latina organization in the country, serving to empower Latinas through services which reflect their values and culture."<sup>147</sup> In March 2018, Mujeres celebrated forty-five years of service to Chicago's Latina community. As the organization continues its work and looks to the future, it echoed the words of one of its founders, María Mangual: "our fighting days are not behind us—but once again ahead of us. It will require cross-generational efforts.... We need to ensure that we remain vigilant to protect the rights of our daughters and granddaughters."<sup>148</sup> Mujeres continues to use the language of motherhood to frame its activism.

Mujeres' choice to engage in practices associated with motherhood influenced the possibilities associated with coalitional politics both inside and outside of Pilsen. This strategy provided it a means to gain community

147. "Our History," *Mujeres Latinas en Acción: Empowering Latinas and Their Families*, accessed Mar. 3, 2018, <https://mujereslatinasenaccion.org/history/>.

148. *Ibid.*



support despite the strength of gender traditionalism in Pilsen. As a result, Mujeres collaborated successfully with community organizations, formed coalitions around its shared interest in issues affecting Latina/o Chicagoans, and ensured that gender was considered in programmatic decisions. Mujeres members also worked with feminist organizations outside the neighborhood, highlighting the perspectives and priorities of Latina communities. In these situations, their maternal practices played less of a role, but still gave them the authority to speak on behalf of their community. Mujeres strove to create a new version of motherhood and family, one free of patriarchy and inequality. Mujeres' success offers an important example for others engaged in coalitional activism that reaches across borders of ethnicity and gender to create new spaces that embrace a person's whole identity. ○

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# Chicago on the Aisle



## Claudia Cassidy's Music Criticism and Legacy

HANNAH EDGAR, AB'18

### Introduction

Criticism of value is not a provincial art. It has nothing whatever to do with patting undeserving heads, hailing earnest mediocrities as geniuses, or groveling in gratitude before second-rate, cut-down or broken-down visitors for fear they might not come again. It is neither ponderous nor pedantic, virulent nor hysterical. Above all, it is not mean-spirited.

Then what is it? Ideally, criticism is informed, astute, inquisitive, candid, interesting, of necessity highly personal. Goethe said, "Talent alone cannot make a writer. There must be a man behind the book." There must be a person behind the critic. Nobody reads a nobody. Unread criticism is a bit like an unheard sound. For practical purposes it does not exist.

— Claudia Cassidy<sup>1</sup>

1. Claudia Cassidy, "The Fine Art of Criticism," *Chicago*, Winter 1967, 34.

In June 1956, *Chicago* magazine ran an eye-catching cover story. A castle composed of colorful shapes, as though rendered through collage, overlap over a parchment-white backdrop. In the form of one of the shapes is a black-and-white photo of a woman of indeterminate age: fair-faced, high cheekbones, half-lidded eyes, a string of pearls around her neck and a Mona Lisa smile on her lips. She is named, coronated, and damned in one headline: “Claudia Cassidy: The Queen of Culture and Her Reign of Terror.”<sup>2</sup> When Bernard Asbell wrote this profile, Claudia Cassidy was the chief music and drama critic of the *Chicago Tribune* and at the height of her career. She joined the *Tribune* staff in 1942 after stints at the *Journal of Commerce* (1924–41) and the *Chicago Sun* (1941–42) and was named the *Tribune*’s chief arts critic in 1943, a title she would hold until 1965. Her frequent *Tribune* columns, *On the Aisle*, reached more than a million readers, but her popularity preceded her tenure there. Cassidy’s columns were wildly popular at the *Journal of Commerce*, and Chicagoans devoured her *Sun* reviews “in the way that kids read Dick Tracy.”<sup>3</sup> After more than twenty years at the *Tribune* and forty on the job, Cassidy didn’t retire. She continued as a critic-at-large at the *Tribune* and as an active freelancer, contributing to *Chicago* magazine, the *Chicago Daily News*, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s and Lyric Opera’s program notes, and more. Between 1968 and 1983, she hosted a half-hour program of arts commentary and criticism on 98.7 WFMT, which ended with a skirmish between her and program director Norman Pellegrini in 1983. Pellegrini had asked her to curb her critiques of performances at the Chicago Symphony (CSO) and Lyric Opera; Cassidy refused, accusing him of censorship. Then eighty-three, she quit.

Born in Shawneetown, Illinois, on November 18, 1899, Cassidy was introduced to the performing arts as a child through traveling showboats

2. *Chicago*, June 1956, cover.

3. Bernard Asbell, “Claudia Cassidy: The Queen of Culture and Her Reign of Terror,” *Chicago*, June 1956, 26.

lazing down the Ohio River, then again during visits to Chicago as a teenager. As a girl, Cassidy was “fascinated by curtains waiting to be lifted.”<sup>4</sup> Thus began a lifelong love affair with the stage, though Cassidy seemed to recognize early on that her preferred role was in the audience. Instead of majoring in theater or music performance at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Cassidy graduated in 1921 with a degree in journalism—one of the few women in her class to do so—but studied music privately.<sup>5</sup> She moved to Chicago after graduation, where Glenn Griswold, the editor of the *Journal of Commerce* hired her as his secretary. She soon became a second-string reporter and sought advice from resident performing arts critic Paul Martin in her spare time. Double-booked one summer night in 1924, Martin assigned Cassidy to review a new play, *The Amber Fluid*. Cassidy’s first review ran on July 1, 1924. Her bylines increased, and her vibrant prose and trenchant wit began to catch readers’ eyes. Even her copy editors noticed. “Why the hell don’t you write like Claudia Cassidy?” copy editor Sid Forbes reportedly griped to the *Journal of Commerce* staff.<sup>6</sup>

Audiences who encountered Cassidy two decades later at the *Tribune*, however, found her critical persona maddeningly elusive—and divisive. To her supporters, she was an impregnable judge of quality, consulted before any visit to the box office. To her detractors, she was a villain, embittered, according to rumors, by a luckless love life. (Never mind that Cassidy married stockbroker William J. Crawford in 1929, a union that lasted until Crawford’s death in 1986.<sup>7</sup>) Her lack of public appearances

4. Linda Winer, “Goodbye to a Writer of Passion, Integrity,” *New York Newsday*, July 26, 1996, B3.

5. Gerald Sullivan, “Claudia Cassidy and American Theater Criticism” (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1968), 1.

6. Asbell, 25.

7. Chris Jones, ed., *Bigger, Brighter, Louder: 150 Years of Chicago Theater as Seen by Chicago Tribune Critics* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2013), 98.

—and quick exits from performance halls to meet evening deadlines, recognizable by her elbow-length gloves and flaming red hair—only deepened her mystique.

Asbell's 1956 *Chicago* exposé was a chance to lift the curtain and peer into the personal life and motivations of an enigmatic critic with a reputation for witty, sharp-edged commentary. If readers wanted to know more about the person behind the column, Asbell delivered, or even overshot. Asbell interviewed Cassidy's childhood neighbors, unearthed high school and college transcripts, detailed the layout of her East Walton Street apartment, cruelly revealed her brother as homosexual before graphically describing his death in a stage accident, and even divulged her hair-care regimen ("an application of camomile tea"<sup>8</sup>). Asbell concluded that Cassidy was unqualified, egotistical, an overlooked second child possibly jealous of her brother's stage career, shallow, and power hungry. These accusations went unchallenged for decades. Though Asbell apparently offered, Cassidy declined to participate in his article. "I like to write about people, but I don't like to be written about," she allegedly wrote to him.<sup>9</sup>

If Cassidy ever read Asbell's piece, her reaction is lost to time. However, Asbell's portrait lives on. Those who remember Claudia Cassidy described her with terse phrases and epithets, many of which are gendered: "Acidy Cassidy,"<sup>10</sup> "Catty Cassidy,"<sup>11</sup> "the Executioner,"<sup>12</sup> "that

8. Asbell, 23.

9. Ibid.

10. Jones, 97.

11. Ruth Ray, interview by Kenneth W. Whiteman, Feb. 1, 1986, 7, Samuel and Marie-Louise Rosenthal Archives, Chicago Symphony Orchestra (hereafter Rosenthal Archives).

12. "Exit the Executioner," *Time*, Sept. 3, 1965, 76.



woman at the *Tribune*,”<sup>13</sup> “the hatchet woman,”<sup>14</sup> “Medusa of the Midwest,”<sup>15</sup> “Dragon Lady,”<sup>16</sup> “that old witch,”<sup>17</sup> or, in the words of director Tyrone Guthrie, “that bitch.”<sup>18</sup> Her very notoriety points to a historical moment before the bloom of blogs and social media gave new meaning to “everyone’s a critic” and professional reviewers are being laid off from daily publications across the country. The thought that a critic—and a critic of the fine arts, no less—once garnered a broad enough readership and commensurable scandal to warrant a lengthy exposé in a regional magazine like *Chicago* seems quaint.

However, her long shadow both testifies to and obscures the significance of her legacy. As I have studied Cassidy’s life and criticism, I am increasingly convinced that she was ought to join the likes of Virgil Thomson (*New York Herald Tribune*), Harold Schonberg (*New York Times*), and Andrew Porter (*The New Yorker*) as one of twentieth-century America’s defining classical music critics, though this is a designation scarcely entertained by contemporaries or scholars. Her exclusion may owe to her Midwestern base; though, as the “Second City, Not Second Rate” chapter of this thesis demonstrates, she remained in Chicago even when plum opportunities arose in New York City. However, given the misogynistic tinge of some criticism against her, her gender may have also played a role. Although she wasn’t the first female chief music critic

13. Claudia Cassidy, “Carmen,” in *Bigger, Brighter, Louder*, 97.

14. Claudia Cassidy, interview with Studs Terkel, Nov. 30, 1966, Studs Terkel Radio Archive, Chicago History Museum (hereafter Terkel Radio Archive).

15. Richard B. Gehman, “Claudia Cassidy: Medusa of the Midwest,” *Theatre Arts*, July 1951.

16. Winer, “Goodbye to a Writer of Passion, Integrity,” *New York Newsday*.

17. Elsa Oldberg Zettelman, interview by Elizabeth “Lisbie” Zettelman Goelz, Feb. 9, 1995, 19, Rosenthal Archives.

18. Richard Christiansen, “Obituary: Former Tribune Critic Claudia Cassidy,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 22, 1996.

to write for a Chicago daily—and indeed not even the first at the *Tribune*<sup>19</sup>—she was almost certainly the longest-serving and most widely-read woman in her role at the time she was writing. Considering her wide scope of covering five journalism beats (music, theater, dance, and, later, literature and film), nearly seventy-year-long career, and *Tribune*-funded trips to Europe for two decades (for her column *Europe on the Aisle*, 1949–68), a catalogue of Cassidy’s criticism is a catalogue of the performing arts in the twentieth century. Whether Cassidy wielded her influence for good or ill remains, now as then, up for debate. What I hope to demonstrate is that few critics have done so much to shape the cultural landscape of one city. But how did a woman from small-town Illinois become one of the most powerful and prolific critics in America?

In this thesis, I probe what I believe to be key factors in Cassidy’s rise. The first is her historical moment: Cassidy came of age in an exceptionally vibrant era in print journalism. She joined the *Tribune* at its peak, buoyed by the greatest circulation of any American standard-sized newspaper.<sup>20</sup> Her time at the *Tribune* also coincided with numerous formative developments in Chicago’s musical scene: for example, the seminal directorship of Fritz Reiner at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the emergence of Lyric Opera, which would become Chicago’s longest-running opera company. A second factor is her prose—lyrical, vivacious, and accessible. Avoiding musical terminology and adopting a candid, conversational approach to criticism, her reviews appealed to both the aficionado and the layperson, amplifying her reach. The last factor is Cassidy’s strong

19. That honor seems to go to Ruth Miller, who served as chief critic for just one season, 1920–21. Miller reviewed notable premieres for the paper, including the first US performances of Holst’s *The Planets* and Mahler’s *Symphony No. 7*.

20. “Robert R. McCormick,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, last updated July 26, 2019, [www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-R-McCormick](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-R-McCormick).

advocacy for her home city, which, besides fueling her atmospherically high standards, endeared her to legions of loyal local readers.

The incumbent *Tribune* drama critic, Chris Jones, argues that Cassidy “has been studied at some length,”<sup>21</sup> which is only true to a point. Gerald Sullivan’s 1968 dissertation is a comprehensive study of Cassidy’s theater criticism.<sup>22</sup> However, until very recently,<sup>23</sup> Cassidy’s *music* criticism has gone generally unexamined, despite encompassing some of the greatest scandals of her professional career: her campaigns against CSO leadership, charges that she meddled inappropriately in Lyric Opera’s administration, and her dismissal from 98.7 WFMT. Music criticism is also the sphere in which her expertise was most contested. I will examine the validity of these accusations, many of which have been inflamed by gendered readings of Cassidy’s work. As Sullivan notes in his dissertation, a satisfactory examination of Cassidy’s music criticism would “undoubtedly be a multi-volume work more appropriately explored by music scholars.”<sup>24</sup> I will not attempt to provide a comprehensive, career-long analysis here, but will instead examine the key factors that heightened her influence.

21. Jones, 97.

22. Sullivan’s assessment of her work and career is worth reading, though his impartiality is suspect: he appears to have met or known Cassidy and sent his finished dissertation to her with an affectionate inscription. See, Sullivan, dissertation, box 39, folder 491, Claudia Cassidy Papers, 1880s–1996, Newberry Library, Chicago (hereafter Cassidy Papers).

23. David Hurwitz, “‘Acidy’ Cassidy and the Birth of the Modern Record Review: 1942–1950” (paper presentation, Music Criticism 1900–1950, Barcelona, Spain, Oct. 2016); and Douglas Shadle, “Witch with an Acid Wand: Claudia Cassidy Burns Chicago” (pre-conference panel, American Musicological Society, San Antonio, TX, Nov. 2018).

24. Sullivan, iii.

## Atop Tribune Tower

We need men in high places who know something about the arts, and maybe women in high places who can stir them to do something about it.

— Claudia Cassidy<sup>25</sup>

As a young girl growing up in Shawneetown, Illinois, Cassidy tossed her writing into the family fireplace and watched the smoke snake out of her chimney. That way, she told *Newsday* critic and onetime *Tribune* apprentice Linda Winer years later, her words could “go somewhere.”<sup>26</sup> By the time Claudia Cassidy ascended to the position of chief music and theater critic for the *Chicago Tribune* (then the *Chicago Daily Tribune*), her words were certainly going somewhere—at one point, into the pages of some 1,060,000 copies of the *Tribune* every day.<sup>27</sup>

Cassidy described that period glowingly to Winer as “a marvelous time” for print journalism. Indeed, her long career saw the rise and fall of a pluralistic press landscape—driven more by the fervent ideologies of publisher-tycoons than the whims of the market—but she found a singular kind of security at the *Tribune*, her professional home during the apex of her career. She was hired in 1942 by Robert Rutherford “Colonel” McCormick, the grandson of Joseph Medill, a nineteenth-century editor of the *Tribune* and a Chicago mayor (1871–73).<sup>28</sup> McCormick, a World

25. Claudia Cassidy, “From a Presidential Tribute to a Man of Ideals to Contemporary Bush League Antics that Move Podunk to Chicago,” *On the Aisle*, *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 3, 1965, F7.

26. Winer, “Goodbye to a Writer of Passion, Integrity,” *New York Newsday*.

27. *N. W. Ayers & Son's Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals* (Philadelphia: N.W. Ayers & Son, 1941), 241.

28. “Joseph Medill Is Dead,” *New York Times*, Mar. 17, 1899, 2. Medill told his physician, “my last words shall be ‘What is the news?’”

War I veteran, strident conservative, and unerring advocate of the free press, presided over the *Tribune* as its idiosyncratic publisher and owner from 1911 until his death in 1955. Under McCormick's formidable leadership, the *Tribune* expanded to encompass radio and TV, attracted the greatest volume of advertising of any newspaper in the world, and increased circulation fivefold.<sup>29</sup> *Tribune* readership extended across five states, a territory McCormick dubbed boastfully as "Chicago-land."<sup>30</sup> More than the largest paper in the Midwest, the *Tribune* achieved the largest circulation of any standard-sized newspaper in the United States.<sup>31</sup>

No doubt, McCormick's hiring of Cassidy was a good deal for both sides: McCormick had shrewdly predicted that Cassidy's prose style and flair for bombast would attract a broader readership, while Cassidy was given the biggest critical soapbox in American daily journalism. McCormick's own affinity for Cassidy has been ingrained into local lore, if more in oral history than documented correspondence. Legend has it that McCormick recruited her personally as the *Tribune's* chief drama and music critic, using his paper's financial clout to lure her away from Marshall Field III's *Chicago Sun* just one year after she'd joined its staff. A 1965 *Time* article on Cassidy's departure from the *Tribune* claims that her ending salary was \$19,000, which, in 2017, had approximately the same buying power as \$150,000.<sup>32</sup>

However, Cassidy's move from the *Sun* to the *Tribune* was not motivated purely by money. Her resignation letter to Field describes strife with an

29. "History," *Chicago Tribune*, last updated July 16, 2014, [www.chicagotribune.com/chi-companyhistory-htmlpage-htmlstory.html](http://www.chicagotribune.com/chi-companyhistory-htmlpage-htmlstory.html).

30. "Debates Swirled about McCormick," *New York Times*, Apr. 1, 1955, 17.

31. "Robert R. McCormick," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, last updated July 26, 2019, [www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-R-McCormick](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-R-McCormick).

32. "Exit the Executioner," *Time*. The article claims that Cassidy's last review for the *Tribune* was to be published December 1, 1965. Cassidy actually wrote regularly through the end of the year and continued writing weekly for the *Tribune* as its critic-at-large until about 1968.

imperious colleague and general disillusionment with the quality of the *Sun's* entertainments section.<sup>33</sup> Rebutting Asbell's accusations of opportunism a decade later but affirming her own sharp-tongued reputation, Cassidy wrote to Field again: "It is important to me that you understand this is no erratic whim, but the considered decision of a person who prefers friends to enemies and asks only to be permitted to work in peace. To put it bluntly, I feel that I have been working in a sewer for months, and am just coming up for fresh air."<sup>34</sup> Her application to the *Tribune* also does not indicate that Cassidy expected, at least at the outset, to be paid more than she was at the *Sun*: she lists her *Sun* salary as \$100 a week (meaning her yearly salary was equivalent to approximately \$85,000 today), and writes the same amount in the "Salary expected" section. She filled out a formal application to the *Tribune* four days *after* her letter to Field;<sup>35</sup> it is possible, however, that she had spoken with McCormick in the interim, as she mentions being courted with offers from other papers in her resignation letter.<sup>36</sup>

Other more suspect rumors circulated in the press may well be the stuff of legends, including a persistent rumor that she had an affair with McCormick.<sup>37</sup> An anecdote repeated in a *Time* article, coyly titled "The Colonel's Lady," claims that Cassidy wrote a vitriolic review of Désiré Defauw that attracted two hundred letters to the editor. According to the tale, Cassidy brought the letters to McCormick herself and offered to resign, to which he responded: "Two hundred letters to the music department? You keep right on writing!"<sup>38</sup>

33. Cassidy to Marshall Field III, Sept. 2, 1942, box 2, folder 218 Cassidy Papers.

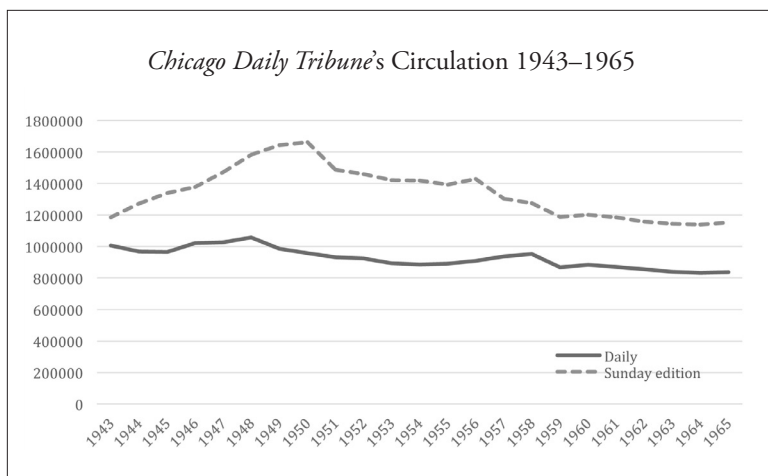
34. Cassidy to Marshall Field III, Sept. 10, 1942, box 2, folder 218, Cassidy Papers.

35. The Tribune Company: Application for Employment, Sept. 14, 1942, box 39, folder 486, Cassidy Papers.

36. Cassidy to Marshall Field III, Sept. 10, 1942, box 2, folder 218, Cassidy Papers.

37. Jonathan Abarbanel, "Legendary Critic, Claudia Cassidy, Dies at 96," *Chicago PerformInk*, Aug. 1, 1996, 2.

38. "The Colonel's Lady," *Time*, Feb. 5, 1951, 44. Of course, there is no way to



**Figure 1:** *Chicago Daily Tribune's Annual Circulation* (*N. W. Ayers & Son's Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals*)

Asbell's *Chicago* profile not only argued that Cassidy's influence was undeserved, a claim that will be investigated later, but that her ascent was, by any measure far too swift: "Claudia Cassidy had moved from a circulation of 21,000 to 310,000 and ... less than a year later ascended to the throne of critic at the *Tribune*, where before 1,150,000 reads she assumed rule over the city's lively arts."<sup>39</sup> By the time Cassidy began at the *Tribune* in 1942, she had already been reviewing for nearly two decades, primarily at the *Journal of Commerce*. However, Asbell is right to characterize Cassidy's ascent to the *Tribune* from the *Journal of Commerce* and the *Sun*—and the enormous increase in audience which accompanied it—as dramatic. In fact, it was more precipitous than Asbell knew: when Cassidy joined the *Sun*, its daily circulation was 58,869, double the *Journal of Commerce's*, but corroborate what appears to have been a private conversation between McCormick and Cassidy.

39. Asbell, 26.

certainly not Asbell's 310,000 figure. (He appears to have combined the circulations of the *Chicago Sun* and *Times*, which wouldn't merge until 1948.<sup>40</sup>) Nor did the daily edition of the *Tribune* break a circulation of 1.1 million during Cassidy's tenure, as he claimed (see fig. 1), though it did far outstrip any daily newspaper in the Midwest.

Despite these impressive circulation figures, Cassidy's omnipresence in Chicago's arts scene owes as much to her sheer productivity as it does her platform. In her twenty-three seasons covering music, theater, and dance for the *Tribune*, Cassidy wrote nearly a column a day, resulting in a massive and varied output. A *Time* article written near the end of her tenure spoke as much to the gender roles of Cassidy's era as to the extraordinariness of her career, when it wryly observed: "When [Cassidy] retires, the Trib will pay a high compliment to her energy and enterprise. It will assign two men to cover the beat that until now has been handled by one woman."<sup>41</sup>

Cassidy's career coincided with something of a Goldilocks period for Chicago's musical life. She oversaw its transformation from a fledgling, parochial scene to the home of internationally recognized civic institutions. Before the Gilded Age, Chicago's cultural life was predominantly fueled by traveling performers and troupes; the impermanence and general lack of large venues in Chicago made it difficult for dedicated local companies to take root. Like so much of the city's identity, however, Chicago's musical life jump-started after the construction boom following the Great Chicago Fire in 1871, which produced downtown venues like the now demolished Central Music Hall, the Art Institute (including the 370-seat Fullerton Hall), the Studebaker Building, and the Auditorium Theatre, then the country's largest building.<sup>42</sup> Orchestra Hall, built as the

40. N.W. Ayers & Son's *Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals* (Philadelphia: N.W. Ayers & Son, 1941), 217, 225–26.

41. "Exit the Executioner," *Time*, 76.

42. For an exhaustive examination of the relationship between institutions, spaces, and civic identity, see Mark Allan Clague, "Chicago Counterpoint: The Auditorium Theater Building and the Civic Imagination" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2002).



home of the Chicago Symphony, would follow in 1904. Thus, what performing arts institutions rose out of the late nineteenth century were still relatively young when Cassidy covered them in the *Journal of Commerce* and *Sun*, and much more class stratified. More than any development before it, the postwar economic boom would bring concerts within reach of an expanding, suburbanizing middle class. Though employed for propagandistic purposes, Cold War educational programming also brought music appreciation into the home via radio and television broadcasts, instilling Western classical music as a cultural signifier for young Americans. These broader societal shifts in American life indicate that Cassidy might have benefitted from her place at the intersection of two swelling potential audiences: her readership at the *Tribune* and Chicago-area residents who were likely to attend concerts at downtown venues.

Though Cassidy couldn't have known it when she joined the *Tribune*, Chicago's musical life was about to undergo several esteem-boosting developments. The first was the appointment of Fritz Reiner as music director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. As a critic for the *Journal of Commerce*, Cassidy had covered the latter half of Frederick Stock's seminal tenure at the CSO, where he was music director for nearly forty years (1905–42). Like his predecessor, founding music director Theodore Thomas, Stock was German and championed high musical standards and innovative programming. Under his leadership, the CSO was the first American orchestra to produce a commercial recording, in 1916 for Columbia Graphophone; his aggressive recording crusade did much to boost the orchestra's reputation beyond Chicago.<sup>43</sup> In the ensuing years, he left behind a then remarkably long discography of 105 different recorded works with the Chicago Symphony and an even longer shadow.<sup>44</sup> To Cassidy and many other Chicagoans, his directorship was synonymous

43. Steven Smolian, "Which Orchestra First Recorded When (1887–1925)? So Victor's the Victor on Victor," *Classic Record Collector*, June 2006, 38.

44. "The Archival Discography of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra," Rosenthal Archives.

with orchestral excellence, a reputation that wouldn't be reprised until Reiner's appointment.

When Stock died, of a heart attack at the beginning of the 1942–43 season, Cassidy wrote the music director's obituary only a month into her tenure at the *Tribune* and the day after his death: "The bottom dropped out of Chicago's music life.... What Chicago will do now that Frederick Stock has left his beloved city in the only way he would have consented to leave it—that is something Chicago is too deeply saddened to think about. But Chicago knows one irreparable fact: He cannot be replaced."<sup>45</sup>

Over the next decade, Cassidy used the *Tribune's* pages to promulgate that sentiment. She was routinely unimpressed by subsequent music directors Désiré Defauw (1943–47) and Rafael Kubelík (1950–53), and the single successor she deemed worthy, Artur Rodziński (1947–48), was promptly dismissed for clashing with orchestra management.<sup>46</sup> Cassidy felt her job as a music critic entailed more than just reviews: as the steward for Chicago's performing arts, the policies, performance, and personalities of the CSO's management, Orchestral Association, and trustees were as fair targets of her criticism as were the orchestra's performances.<sup>47</sup> To the CSO's chagrin, readers were taking Cassidy's assessments seriously, and ticket sales dropped when she embarked on her campaign against Defauw.<sup>48</sup> Though he was no fan of Defauw either, Robert C. Marsh, Cassidy's main rival at the *Sun-Times*, had his own theory for Cassidy's influence in the conductor's deposition:

45. Claudia Cassidy, "Chicago's Music Circles Mourn Frederick Stock," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 21, 1942, 7.

46. "Arthur Rodzinski," 2010, Rosenthal Archives.

47. Philip Hart, *Fritz Reiner: A Biography* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1994), 153.

48. Kenneth Morgan, *Fritz Reiner: Maestro and Martinet* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 147.

The reason Miss Cassidy was so unusually powerful in this situation was in this period [the orchestra] was playing more subscription matinee concerts than evening concerts.... Miss Cassidy and the *Tribune* had an overwhelmingly female readership and a great many of the women subscribers simply took her word as law. The result was that she was able to control an extraordinarily large amount of influential opinion. When she wrote week after week that Defauw was a pathetic incompetent and had to go people believed it.<sup>49</sup>

Reiner, who led the CSO from 1953 to 1963, appeared to be the perfect antidote to the previous decade of conductors. A terrifying, exacting maestro cut from the same cloth as his contemporaries Toscanini, Klemperer, and Szell, Reiner was often at odds with his musicians in rehearsal. On the podium, however, he was even-keeled; Cassidy praised his tight, conservative, “vest-pocket beat” on more than one occasion. Igor Stravinsky once called the Chicago Symphony under Reiner “the most precise and flexible orchestra in the world”;<sup>50</sup> thanks to the advent of commercial recorded sound, the world was able to hear that orchestra for itself. Reiner’s RCA Victor recordings drew international attention to both himself and the orchestra, becoming practically synonymous for quality among collectors.

Cassidy and Reiner first met in November 1948. Knowing Cassidy’s influence in Chicago, Reiner’s press agent briefed him in a long letter about how to prepare for the meeting, which went well; Cassidy especially hit it off with Reiner’s wife Carlotta, an actress. After he appeared with the CSO, in March 1950, Cassidy would become enthusiastic about a hypothetical Reiner-CSO partnership.<sup>51</sup> When he did receive an offer to

49. Robert Marsh, interview, Feb. 16, 1985, Rosenthal Archives.

50. Jonathan Horrocks, *Also Sprach Zarathustra: Fritz Reiner and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra*, Washington, DC, Library of Congress, 1954), [www.loc.gov/programs/static/national-recording-preservation-board/documents/AlsoSprach.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/programs/static/national-recording-preservation-board/documents/AlsoSprach.pdf).

51. Hart, 156.

become the orchestra's music director, Reiner—in a gesture of either friendship or strategic flattery—consulted Cassidy about the offer. She wrote about the episode after Reiner's death: "Reiner had asked me in New York, 'Shall I come to Chicago?' I said, 'Yes, if you have an iron-clad contract.' ... He narrowed his eyes at me, and we both laughed, knowing how likely Reiner was to move a finger without having it amply protected."<sup>52</sup>

Whether or not Cassidy's respect for Reiner was genuinely reciprocated by the maestro, Reiner seemed to have understood that her goodwill paved the way for his acceptance in Chicago. Under his tenure, CSO management made announcements "on *Tribune* time," meaning Cassidy received orchestra news before other newspapers.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, Orchestral Association president Eric Oldberg hired Cassidy's assistant at the *Tribune*, music critic Seymour Raven, as orchestra manager during Reiner's tenure, where, according to the *Sun-Times*'s Robert Marsh, he "conducted affairs as if the Chicago Symphony was a wholly owned property of the *Chicago Tribune*."<sup>54</sup> Despite her coverage of Reiner's tenure, Cassidy remained friends with Carlotta. According to Reiner biographer Philip Hart, Carlotta and her husband occasionally disclosed sensitive information about the orchestra to Cassidy.<sup>55</sup> Cassidy never published information granted in confidence, but was known to pursue the Reiners' leads on the record.<sup>56</sup> Ultimately,

52. Claudia Cassidy, "Farewell to Reiner Who Came to Visit and Left Chicago the Great Gift of Making It a Better Place in Which to Live," On the Aisle, *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 24, 1963, D9.

53. Hart, 166.

54. Robert Marsh, interview, Feb. 16, 1985, Rosenthal Archives.

55. Hart, 167.

56. Cassidy's personal relationship with the Reiners is troublesome. An optimistic reading of Cassidy advising Reiner on his pending contract and recounting it in the pages of the *Tribune* speaks to a much different standard of reporting conflicts. A pessimistic reading is that, then and now, it represented an egregious conflict of interest, and Cassidy simply did not care.

Cassidy only turned on Reiner towards the end of his tenure for his failure, in her eyes, to embrace Chicago as it had embraced him.

The second great development, which coincided with Cassidy's *Tribune* tenure and which promised to shake up musical life in Chicago, occurred just four months later, due west at the Civic Opera House: the founding of Lyric Opera.<sup>57</sup> Opera has been heard consistently in Chicago since 1850—thanks to touring companies and productions, primarily from New York—but resident companies existed only in fits and starts. The Chicago Grand Opera Company (1910–14) and the Chicago Opera Company (1915–22) were the first resident opera companies, both mounting productions in the Auditorium Theatre. When world-renowned Scottish diva Mary Garden took over the Chicago Opera Company as music director in 1921, her decisive gamble to secure the rights to the world premiere of Prokofiev's *A Love for Three Oranges* ultimately ran the company under. After being fished out of bankruptcy by a principal stockholder, the company was rechristened the Civic Opera Company in 1922. It, too, performed in the Auditorium Theatre for seven years, before the Civic Opera House was completed in 1929, funded by business magnate Samuel Insull. Unfortunately, the building was completed just in time for the Great Depression; the Civic Opera Company, like its predecessors, fell, as would a second iteration of the Chicago Grand Opera Company (1933–35), the Chicago City Opera Company (1935–39), and a second Chicago Opera Company (1940–46, on hiatus 1943) in the same space.

On February 5, 1954, a new company, the Lyric Theater of Chicago, gave its premiere performance in the Civic Opera House. The woman behind the venture was Carol Fox, a twenty-eight-year-old impresario and trained singer with Garden's daring, plus the fortune and wealthy allies to back it up. She teamed up with Lawrence Kelly, a real-estate agent

57. This account of Chicago's operatic history has been adapted and condensed from Robert C. Marsh and Norman Pellegrini, *150 Years of Opera in Chicago* (Chicago: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006), 68–121.

and insurance broker, and Nicola Rescigno, a conductor who had led Chicago Opera Company productions. Fox led as general director, Kelly as treasurer of the Board of Directors, and Rescigno as artistic director. The triumvirate's formula worked, and the performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* inaugurated what would become Chicago's longest-lasting opera company.<sup>58</sup> The opening of its first full season that autumn was similarly fortuitous: in a major coup, Fox had secured the US premiere of Maria Callas, singing the title role in *Norma*. Cassidy wrote lavishly about the occasion: "If the Lyric Theater of Chicago turns out to be a mirage, at least it was lovely while it lasted.... But after last night's *Norma*, which opened the Lyric's first season in the Civic Opera house—well, don't wake me if I'm dreaming."<sup>59</sup>

As with the CSO, Cassidy allegedly used her clout to intervene in Lyric Opera's managerial affairs. Lyric's future was uncertain only two years later, barely riding out financial difficulties and plagued by squabbling among Fox, Kelly, and Rescigno. A draft of Rescigno's contract included a "veto clause" over repertory and guest artists, to which Fox objected, believing it was deliberately meant to undercut her power as general director. Kelly, for his part, refused to sign salary checks until the contract conflict was resolved. After continued ugliness, with the men at this point as allies, Fox asked Lyric's board on February 22, 1956, to authorize her to circumvent Kelly and sign the checks herself. Allegedly present at the meeting were Claudia Cassidy and her assistant Seymour Raven. (Cassidy had long been a friend of Fox, with Fox regularly consulting Cassidy on artistic matters.) During a deadlocked meeting, with the board split three-to-three, Cassidy allegedly told Rescigno that she would "run him out of town" if he did not waive the veto clause. Though other Chicago journalists were unaware of the *Tribune's* involvement with negotiations, the press did weigh in: predictably, Cassidy sided with Fox;

58. Ibid.

59. Claudia Cassidy, "Callas' Brilliant Debut Sparks the Lyric's Stunning 'Norma,'" On the Aisle, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Nov. 2, 1954, A1.

Roger Dettmer and the *Chicago American* landed in Kelly and Rescigno's camp; and the *Sun-Times* and *Chicago Daily News* remained neutral.<sup>60</sup>

In his damning profile for *Chicago*, Asbell, too, claimed that Fox had initially agreed to vesting the veto power in Rescigno, but had changed her mind after consulting Cassidy. According to Asbell's sequence of events, Rescigno then took his contract to Cassidy, who gave him unsolicited advice not to sign it. Asbell wrote that "a few days later, Miss Cassidy attacked Rescigno in her column, proudly setting forth the details of how Rescigno came to ask her what to do." Asbell also wrote that Cassidy had ordered that the minutes of that fateful February 22 meeting be destroyed, but that they had been reconstructed after the meeting. Kelly threatened to use the reassembled minutes as evidence in future litigation, which would prove Cassidy had attended the meeting on behalf of the *Tribune*—a fatal conflict of interest.<sup>61</sup> This threat was enough for Cassidy to avoid reporting on the conflict further.<sup>62</sup>

Cassidy, for all her apparent involvement with the Lyric maelstrom, did not sound off on it much in the *Tribune*—perhaps lending credence to Asbell's claim that Kelly threatened her with litigation. However, Asbell appears to have mischaracterized the tone of these columns, which, while conspicuously omitting any criticism of Fox, cannot rightly be called attacks on Rescigno. Cassidy's first mention of the controversy on February 25, 1956, doesn't even make the headline of her *On the Aisle* column. In it, she outlines compromises made by the Lyric board to keep Rescigno, including salary increases and a "publicity clause" guaranteeing him "full credit for all services to the company." She notes that the three-year contract, with its veto clause intact, have remained ungranted, but does

60. The account of this episode is mostly taken from Marsh and Pellegrini, *150 Years of Opera in Chicago*, 137.

61. Just before my thesis deadline, Lyric Opera transferred its archives, which includes the meeting minutes of Board of Directors, to the Chicago History Museum. The archive was closed temporarily, making it impossible to corroborate this account.

62. Asbell, 29.

not editorialize further.<sup>63</sup> Her March 3 column outlining the conflict (for which Rescigno and Kelly apparently refused to comment) reveals her partisanship more clearly:

What's wrong is this. Nicola Rescigno ... has been absent from his post since he was refused power of veto over all artistic decisions more than two weeks ago. Lawrence V. Kelly ... seems to support Mr. Rescigno's ambitions, and since the latter's walkout has appeared in the Lyric's offices so sketchily that some of the corporation's pressing business has not been completed. Carol Fox ... is on the job where she always has been.<sup>64</sup>

This is, too, the column which troubled Asbell for its mention of Rescigno approaching Cassidy for advice. Not unlike a similar conversation with Reiner, which supposedly happened a few years before, Cassidy's decision to divulge her involvement in the pages of the *Tribune* seems jarring today. However, if her narrative is to be treated as testimony, the whole affair becomes less clear-cut than characterized, with Rescigno also acting deceptively:

About two weeks ago Mr. Rescigno read me that trouble-making veto clause, here in my office. I said I thought it was unwise, that the public trust was vested in the three who had done the job so superbly ... and why toss it over now? Mr. Rescigno agreed most amiably, said he didn't care about the clause at all, and added, "I give you my word that it will come out." I am sorry he changed his mind. I would be sorrier if this rift, so unwise and so unnecessary,

63. Claudia Cassidy, "Ballet Theater Off to Happy Start in the Civic Opera House," *On the Aisle*, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Feb. 25, 1956, 11.

64. Claudia Cassidy, "Lyric Rift Finds Carol Fox on Job Rescigno, Kelly in Walk-out," *On the Aisle*, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Mar. 3, 1956, 15.



could damage or destroy what we so proudly call the Lyric Theater of Chicago.<sup>65</sup>

Cassidy's column a few days later articulated her specific reservations about the clause: it would vest more power in Rescigno than was—and continues to be—conventional for the artistic director of an opera company. She anonymously quoted “a friend high in opera administration” who affirmed that an artistic director's exercise of veto power was rare, saying he knew only one conductor who wielded it: New York City Opera director Joseph Rosenstock, who resigned in 1955. According to this source, even Bruno Walter and Arturo Toscanini had not possessed veto power, except in special assignments (e.g., the Bayreuth and Salzburg Festivals).<sup>66</sup> Whether Cassidy genuinely feared the clause would allow Rescigno to become Lyric's “dictator”<sup>67</sup> or if this is simply the narrative she presented in the *Tribune's* pages remains open to interpretation. However, personal affinities aside, she presented her arguments against the veto rationally in her columns, in contrast to the screed Asbell depicted in *Chicago*. Her main point of distress, at least publicly, was the unconscionable stalling of Lyric's operations for five weeks.<sup>68</sup>

In his foreword to Cassidy's illustrated history of Lyric, Saul Bellow observed that “the real mountains of Chicago are its cultural institutions.”<sup>69</sup> Cassidy covered the city's towering performing arts institutions at the *Tribune* in the midst of their renaissance, and, due in part to her social

65. Ibid.

66. Claudia Cassidy, “Lyric Impasse in which Rescigno Wants More than Toscanini,” On the Aisle, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Mar. 8, 1956, C5.

67. Cassidy, “Lyric Rift,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

68. Claudia Cassidy, “Guarantors Slash Lyric Stalemate, Offer Fox, Kelly Contracts,” On the Aisle, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Mar. 24, 1956, 15.

69. Saul Bellow, forward to *Lyric Opera of Chicago* by Claudia Cassidy (Chicago: Lyric Opera of Chicago, 1979), 7.

connections and friendships, she was in a position to exercise enormous influence on them. Not unlike her partnership with McCormick, this influence went both ways. In some ways, then, the Claudia Cassidy story is one of someone being in the right place at the right time. But unlike many such stories, her influence had staying power. Tracing the imbrications between power brokers and institutions gives us a rich perspective on Chicago's music network in the golden age of print journalism. Yet, what gave Cassidy her staying power was not simply her connections and influence. It was also the power of her words—the subject of the following chapter.

## “Quotable Phrases, Sometimes Purple”

As long as I can remember, I have been lured by, and oddly at home in strange places.... It might explain why I became irrevocably stage struck, especially in the sense that if the world's a stage, then it works the other way around, too.

— Claudia Cassidy<sup>70</sup>

Seymour Raven once described Claudia Cassidy's prose as that of “an Irish poet.”<sup>71</sup> In his *Chicago* magazine exposé, Bernard Asbell disagreed, writing that it “link[ed] lustrous, jingling phrases into outstretched and bumpy sentences which often beg for the momentary relief of a comma.”<sup>72</sup> *Time* pithily described it as comprising of “quotable phrases, sometimes purple.”<sup>73</sup>

70. Claudia Cassidy, prelude to *Europe on the Aisle* (New York: Random House, 1954), not numbered.

71. Linda Winer, telephone interview with the author, Feb. 24, 2018.

72. Asbell, 22.

73. “The Colonel's Lady,” *Time*.

Regardless of how Claudia Cassidy's prose style was characterized, it was certainly singular, ensuring that no column under her byline was ignored. Plenty of her peers matched her in wit—look no further than Virgil Thomson's legendary dismissal of a violin recital by Jascha Heifetz as "silk-underwear music"<sup>74</sup>—but few matched her unabashed sentimentality, earning her detractors and admirers alike. Despite Cassidy's stylistic idiosyncrasies and enormous stature, at present, no collection of her arts criticism exists. This chapter aims to use representative excerpts to examine her prose's primary characteristics, as well as the controversies that resulted from what she wrote and how she wrote it.

Cassidy's approach to music was sensual: music was not just heard but felt, seen, smelled, and tasted. Objects of her highest praise were described vividly and plush with adjectives. (She wrote of the Reiner-CSO that it was "a dark, whetted brilliance in pinpoint equilibrium."<sup>75</sup>) In a 1966 interview with Studs Terkel, Cassidy divulged that she never explicitly wished to be a critic but had always wanted to be a writer.<sup>76</sup> Her predilection for the literary shows in her prose: she indulged far-ranging associations and romantic tangents, all in the service of the perfect metaphor, such as in the lede of her review of a Rudolf Serkin recital:

In the south of France, by an inlet curve of the sea, you come suddenly and breathtakingly on a black cathedral built of lava thrust formidably high and sheer. It dwarfs the landscape and stuns the eye. It is grim, implacable, beautiful and somewhat jubilant, for it seems to be alive. You know it was born of violence and welded in

74. Virgil Thomson, "Silk-Underwear Music," *New York Herald Tribune*, Oct. 31, 1940.

75. Claudia Cassidy, "Fritz Reiner, Music Great, Dies in N.Y.," *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 16, 1963, 1.

76. Claudia Cassidy, interview with Studs Terkel, Nov. 30, 1966, Studs Terkel Radio Archive.

fire, to which at any epic moment it may return. Odd, how clearly I saw it last night when Rudolf Serkin played Beethoven's "Waldstein" in Orchestra Hall.<sup>77</sup>

This review, like others, cross-referenced Cassidy's annual travels throughout Europe, underwritten by the *Tribune*. Her popular Europe on the Aisle column first appeared in 1949 and continued through 1968, after Cassidy had stepped down as chief music critic of the *Tribune*. Cassidy had hitherto never traveled to Europe, nor, presumably, had many of her readers. The reasons were practical (e.g., travel expenses for long overseas voyages) as well as political (the disruption of World War II). Cassidy's dispatches are colored by the war's looming shadow, often describing scenic landscapes and battle-torn towns in the same sentence. In one affecting column, Cassidy describes a visit to the thirteenth-century Abbaye Royaumont, about twenty miles from Paris, now a private home. The head of the house explained that his brother-in-law, the pianist François Lang, "was killed by the Germans." Cassidy shrewdly notes that this sentiment is "not quite the same as 'killed in the war'":

The feeling grew stronger as I looked at the things that [Lang] had loved, so gently kept alive in that quiet room. The two pianos, the framed manuscripts of Bach, Wagner, and Chopin, the walls lined with scores, the mementoes of artists past and present, the table with autographed pictures of Monteux and Furtwaengler, the snapshot of a gay young man at a cafe table with Monteux and Artur Schnabel. The sight of that merry meeting pulled the growing tension taut. "Do you mind," I said, "if I ask what happened?" What happened was this. François Lang was in the resistance, and he was caught. Flung into slave labor, he broke down almost

77. Claudia Cassidy, "Serkin's 'Waldstein' Crowns Recital which Also Honors Adolf Busch," On the Aisle, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Dec. 3, 1952, B2.

at once. Before his stunned family and friends knew what was happening, he was discarded as useless and thrust into a gas oven at Auschwitz.<sup>78</sup>

On the other hand, and at its most unabashedly jubilant, Europe on the Aisle included some of Cassidy's most remarkable writing. A trip to the Paris Opéra in 1950 yielded the following:

*L'heure bleue* seems to me an understatement. The lovely name the French wrap around the hour of twilight can cling all night in an almost imperceptible series of crepuscular variations. You won't notice the mutations if you stay in the din and smoke of night club, or even sedately in your hotel rooms. But there is more than one version of Paris by night, and I think this will remain my favorite if I can spin my own sets of variations.

It began, by amusing inadvertence, in the Wagnerian twilight of what Paris calls *Le Crepuscule des Dieux*, the uncut version not a bit shorter with a French title. So by 7:15 we are settled at the Opéra, by sheer luck in the front row center of the loge at the rear of the main floor, where I would always sit if I were king. With a swivel neck you can see everything—the circling tiers, the riotous décor, the voluptuous ceiling, the flowering dazzle of the chandelier as it comes to life and retreats into discreet dusk. You can even see what looks like, and is, the intrepid Elsa Maxwell chatting with the Aga Khan. When the lights dim you can rejoice in the uninhibited jouncings, swirlings and pouncings of George Sebastian's conducting, which seems to accompany Siegfried by riding a pogo stick down the Rhine.

The orchestra, recklessly augmented, is magnificent. The winds and brass so alien to Beethoven are wonderfully sensuous for Wagner,

78. Claudia Cassidy, "Because a Young Man Met a Cruel Death, the Abbey of Saint Louis Has a New Life," *On the Aisle, Chicago Daily Tribune*, Sept. 5, 1949, E7.

a very love philter, in their high, sweet, liquidly incandescent tone the color and texture of honey just warm enough to pour. You have heard a nobler *Götterdämmerung*, probably one of more monumental brilliance, but surely never one more ecstatically distilled from the mysterious potions of the amorous.<sup>79</sup>

As a journalist, Cassidy wrote practically all of her oeuvre facing same-day deadlines, making the intricacy of her prose all the more remarkable. Music and ballet critic Thomas Willis, who worked under Cassidy at the *Tribune* for seven years, recalled that she could attend a matinee concert in Orchestra Hall, write the review on the streetcar back to the office, have dinner, cover the opening of a new play that evening, and submit both reviews on time. Then, she and her husband Bill “would go dancing at some night club where Claudia would be covering the opening of a new show.”<sup>80</sup> Associates estimated that she worked sixteen hours a day;<sup>81</sup> Cassidy later joked that she became a professional the day an explosion rattled the *Journal of Commerce* offices a few minutes before deadline and she kept writing her evening review with plaster in her hair.<sup>82</sup> Colleagues at the *Tribune* were similarly impressed by the cleanness of her copy: not only was she a dauntingly efficient writer, but Cassidy rarely made mistakes.<sup>83</sup> According to Winer, a junior associate at the

79. Claudia Cassidy, “Bewitching Paris by Night, from Opera to Onion Soup: Flagstad Is Superb and the Crepuscular Streets Intriguing,” *Europe on the Aisle*, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 11, 1950, F1.

80. Sullivan, 3.

81. *Ibid.*

82. Sullivan, 31–32. The date of this incident appears to be the evening of June 8, 1936.

83. Linda Winer, telephone interview with the author, Feb. 24, 2018, and Lois Baum telephone interview with the author, Mar. 26, 2018. This can also be witnessed firsthand in typewritten drafts in the Cassidy Papers.

*Tribune*, Cassidy would “type her review as if it was in her head.”<sup>84</sup>

With few exceptions, formal musical terminology was absent from her reviews, making them accessible to casual concertgoers and untrained music lovers. For example, contemporary music that pushed at the boundaries of traditional tonality was described not as “post-tonal” or “atonal” but as “acid” or “rawboned.” Her peers Felix Borowski (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 1942–56) and Roger Dettmer (*Chicago American*, 1953–74) had both studied composition, and their reviews showed it. However, their musical chops did not always translate to engaging reviews. Even John Defauw—the son of Désiré Defauw, the CSO music director whom Cassidy scorned in her columns—admitted that he “preferred reading Claudia because at least she could write.”<sup>85</sup> In a letter sent to Cassidy after her semi-retirement from the *Tribune*, Ray Still, the former principal oboist of the CSO, affirmed that it was her prose which had eventually won his respect: “Yours is a great art! If only some of the nincompoops who are today’s critics could catch one glimpse of your genius! I have, at times, in the past railed at you for technical errors but now I realize how meaningless these are when an artist can catch the essence of another’s art!”<sup>86</sup>

As Still implies, Cassidy found words for what made a performance ineffable. Lois Baum, associate program director at WFMT, spoke years later about the appeal of Cassidy’s writing for her fans: “[It] called up their own memories, which was a very pleasurable thing.... She could write about [artists] and help me recall my own memories [of them].... Her reviews were memories, because they *were* memories of what she’d seen that week.”<sup>87</sup> A touching letter from a reader bedridden by illness for many years is a testament to the evocative power of Cassidy’s

84. Linda Winer, telephone interview with the author, Feb. 24, 2018.

85. John Defauw, interview by Marilyn Arado, Feb. 1, 1984, 8, Rosenthal Archives.

86. Ray Still to Cassidy, October 23, 1972, box 2, folder 177, Cassidy Papers.

87. Lois Baum, telephone interview with the author, Mar. 26, 2018.

columns.<sup>88</sup> She wrote about the letter in *On the Aisle* in 1949: “For those of you who sometimes write from hospitals or other quiet rooms, I shall do my best to share a magic carpet. For I can never forget one letter, just about the nicest I ever received on my job. It said, ‘I never leave this bed, and I go everywhere you go, hear all you hear, see all you see. Where are we going next summer?’”<sup>89</sup>

Cassidy acknowledged that her prose evoked memory and sentiment over claims to hard reportage—a quality that put her at odds with not only her peers at other dailies, but also the broader sweep of Chicago’s twentieth-century literary tradition. While Cassidy was forging her career, modernist writers like Nelson Algren, Ernest Hemingway, Carl Sandburg, and Richard Wright popularized a stark, angular realism that seemed to evoke the rough-and-tumble industrialized city, which Chicago had become. At a time when Chicago modernists were jettisoning ornamentation from their writing, Cassidy luxuriated in it, writing in a style that had far more in common with the American Romantics or Victorian novelists than her contemporaries. Her deliberate flouting of sober journalistic writing and the sparse muscular style of her literary contemporaries—most of whom were men—offers up another potentially gendered reading of her work. As Liesl Olson observes in her book *Chicago Renaissance*: “The claim to Chicago realism is also the claim to a masculine style.... The myth created by these men was that Chicago writers went for the direct hit.”<sup>90</sup> To both detractors and supporters, Cassidy’s prose might have been perceived as anachronistic and distinctly feminine, in a crude equivalence of sentimentality with femininity.

88. Claudia Cassidy, interview with Studs Terkel, Nov. 30, 1966, Studs Terkel Radio Archive.

89. Claudia Cassidy, “Miss Cassidy Begins Tour of Theater and Music Capitals of Europe: Rome, Verona, Milan, Salzburg, Paris, Edinburgh on Itinerary,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 10, 1949, F1.

90. Liesl Olson, *Chicago Renaissance: Literature and Art in the Midwest Metropolis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), 23.



In his interview, Terkel pressed Cassidy on similar subjects, asking her what she made of the myth of the “objective” or “detached critic”—perhaps referencing her heart-on-sleeve tendencies, or perhaps obliquely nodding to her friendships with some of the individuals she reviewed, like Reiner. Cassidy responded: “Entirely. I don’t see what else it could be! You take yourself—and [your readers] know that—and they can agree or disagree as they like.... I’m afraid that if a person was detached in that sense, that would be rather dull.... It’s *you*. Why would you want to blot it out in what you write?”<sup>91</sup> Moreover, the charge that Cassidy’s prose alienated musically knowledgeable readers is contradicted by her correspondence with professional musicians, which Cassidy often referenced firsthand. Professionals read her columns avidly. Ray Still, William Kapell, Maria Callas, Herbert von Karajan, Serge Koussevitsky, Eugene Ormandy, Lotte Lehmann, and Samuel Ramey, among others, responded to Cassidy’s columns and kept in touch with her over the years, even when it was no longer professionally advantageous to do so. In a radio interview, soprano Edith Mason took notice of Cassidy’s work, allegedly calling the critic “a perfectionist.”<sup>92</sup> Cassidy recalled a similar plaudit from a performer: in midflight, the guitarist Andrés Segovia allegedly wrote a postcard to Cassidy “from an altitude of 30,000 feet, approximately the height of your literary ability.” Cassidy claimed it was precisely this mutual respect that compelled her to be forthcoming and, at times, unsparing in her reviews: “If you hadn’t gone through the trouble to say precisely what you thought [Segovia] was doing, he’d be disappointed.”<sup>93</sup>

91. Claudia Cassidy, interview with Studs Terkel, Nov. 30, 1966, Studs Terkel Radio Archive.

92. S. Serlin, “Voice of the People: Miss Cassidy Pictured,” reader letter dated Feb. 3, 1965, *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 6, 1965, 12.

93. Claudia Cassidy, interview with Studs Terkel, Nov. 30, 1966, Studs Terkel Radio Archive. The postcard is not in Cassidy’s papers, so I could not corroborate her account.

However, many of Cassidy's critics were skeptical that she *knew* what her subjects were doing musically. For them, her avoidance of musical terminology was not a stylistic choice but showed a lack of musical training that disqualified her as a music critic. (It didn't help that her New York peers were accomplished musicians or musicologists outside their columns: Virgil Thomson was a composer, and Harold Schonberg completed many tomes on musical subjects.) Asbell wrote that Cassidy's college transcript does not include any music courses and that her lack of formal training contributed to a number of embarrassing mistakes at the *Tribune*. He cites instances in which Cassidy was tripped up by program changes that ought to have been obvious to listeners with a thorough knowledge of the classical repertoire. During an Isaac Stern recital, she had missed an announcement of a program change, reviewing what was printed in the program book (Franz Reisenstein's *Prolog* and *Danse Fantastique*) instead of what was actually played (Ravel's *Tzigane*).<sup>94</sup> In a particularly galling instance, a double-booked Cassidy reviewed the second half of a performance by a Roosevelt University string quartet and, according to Asbell, confused Prokofiev's String Quartet No. 1 for Haydn when the concert order was swapped.<sup>95</sup> All this, topped off by Cassidy's refusal to participate in a televised panel with Rafael Kubelík and Chicago critics, was enough for Asbell to deduce that she was concealing her musical ignorance from an unwitting public.<sup>96</sup> Linda Winer, *Newsday's* longtime theater critic who overlapped with Cassidy at the

94. Claudia Cassidy, "Bartók Sonata Peak of Isaac Stern's Recital in Orchestra Hall," *On the Aisle, Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 9, 1950, C1.

95. Claudia Cassidy, "Evening's Catch: Segovia in a Guitar Quintet and a Girl with a Voice," *On the Aisle, Chicago Daily Tribune*, Apr. 19, 1951, B1.

96. There may be another reason for her absence from the panel: Cassidy was extremely camera shy. Few photographs of her exist, even among her papers, and she wrote to CSO manager John Edwards that she never listened to her WFMT broadcasts.



University of Illinois, but he does not offer any further details. One illuminating artifact in Cassidy's papers seems to imply that she, at least, could read and take notation: a small spiral-bound songbook of lieder by Gounod, Strauss, and others is transcribed in her handwriting (see fig. 2).<sup>98</sup> Outside of formal musical training, Cassidy had listened to classical records on her mother's phonograph and cultivated a knowledge of the classical repertoire from an early age.<sup>99</sup> A letter from a friend also documents that she owned a piano.<sup>100</sup> Though these clues suggest that Cassidy was not a serious musician, the accusation that she was altogether musically illiterate is likely exaggerated. Moreover, Asbell's emphasis on Cassidy's mistakes misrepresents the factual accuracy for which she was famous. For most of her life, Cassidy fielded calls from curious readers, whose questions ranged from the historical (corroborating the details of a past performance) to the linguistic (how to pronounce and spell composers' and performers' names). As Reiner's biographer recalls: "Professionals and public alike kept her phone ringing with queries of 'Who?' 'When?' or 'What?' for which she checked her voluminous files and answered with invariable courtesy in an uncommonly sweet voice."<sup>101</sup>

To her readers, Cassidy's expertise and insight went beyond fact-checking. Though her personal relationships with famous musicians undoubtedly presented a conflict of interest, her insights into their lives and temperaments gave Cassidy a unique insider status, which her peers at other papers lacked. This was especially critical during the Reiner years at the CSO, when she enjoyed privileged access to the orchestra. Cassidy often peppered her reviews with keen assessments of institutional stability or engaging anecdotes about

98. Songbook, n.d., box 40, folder 497, Cassidy Papers.

99. Hart, 153.

100. Louis C. Lamb to Cassidy, Nov. 9, 1965, box 1, folder 92, Cassidy Papers.

101. Hart, 153.

particular performers—all reflecting knowledge not accessible to the general public and compellingly diminishing the distance between audience and performer. Though her reviews may not have reflected musical authority, they exuded social and institutional authority.

Ultimately, this same insider status, paired with her opponents' suspicion that she was a fraud, colored one of the tenser moments in Cassidy's career. After Reiner's death in 1963, Cassidy's expectations for Reiner's successor were characteristically high, as they had been after Stock's death two decades before. Infamously, Cassidy's initial distaste for Georg Solti kept him from immediately succeeding Reiner in Chicago, deferring a monumental chapter in the CSO's history.<sup>102</sup> (She later warmed to the music director once he took over the CSO in 1969.)

To everyone's surprise, however, Jean Martinon, the silver-haired Frenchman who became the CSO's music director in 1963, won her over immediately. According to Richard Oldberg, a hornist in the orchestra, his uncle, Orchestral Association president Eric Oldberg, called Cassidy to ask her who she wanted to see as director of the CSO. She'd answered Jean Martinon.<sup>103</sup> She superlatively praised his first residency at the CSO the year before, writing in her column that "it has been a long time since a conductor has rivaled Jean Martinon's second and third weeks of concerts with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in Orchestra hall"—the last time being, of course, Fritz Reiner's CSO debut.<sup>104</sup> Her effusive plaudits spilled over well into the 1963–64 season, comparing Martinon's "centrifugal intensity" to Herbert von Karajan's<sup>105</sup> and writing of Martinon's

102. For a concise summary of the bad blood between Solti and Cassidy, see Marsh and Pellegrini, 142.

103. Richard Oldberg, interview by Frank Monnelly, July 27, 1989, 26, Rosenthal Archive.

104. Claudia Cassidy, "Jean Martinon's Farewell Concert Lifts Esteem for Him to a New Level," *On the Aisle, Chicago Daily Tribune*, Mar. 16, 1962, B13.

105. Claudia Cassidy, "Martinon's Brilliant Bartok against Memory's Indelible Backdrop," *On the Aisle, Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 25, 1963, B13.

interpretation of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 that she looked forward "to the same symphony in the same hands five and 10 years from now."<sup>106</sup>

There were exceptions to her optimism. A week into Martinon's directorship, she bemoaned an "unfortunate program" comprised of the *Romeo and Juliet* suites by Prokofiev, Tchaikovsky, and Berlioz: "It was a dull evening, not in the least like Mr. Martinon, and even less like the Chicago Symphony Orchestra." However, her final verdict was forgiving: "There is no doubt of [Martinon's] quality, or of the orchestra's in his hands. This program may have been a straw in the wind of inquiry."<sup>107</sup> She was similarly uninspired by a year-end program of Rossini, Sessions, and Brahms, which she characterized as "tentative, even dubious." Again expanding her purview to offstage happenings, Cassidy alluded darkly to trouble brewing backstage at Orchestra Hall: "Emotional upheaval that brings people together can result in a great surge of eloquence. Picayune squabbles aired with name calling can jar an institution to its foundations, and when that institution is an orchestra, the results can be disastrous."<sup>108</sup>

Indeed, not all was well at 220 South Michigan Avenue. In January 1960, Seymour Raven, assistant music critic alongside Cassidy at the *Tribune*, was hired by Eric Oldberg to serve as manager of the CSO; many believed the hire was a direct attempt to appease Cassidy.<sup>109</sup> Raven remained at the CSO after Reiner's death, becoming Martinon's main point of contact as the new maestro took over. However, tensions mounted between the two men. Martinon politely expressed frustration with Raven's unresponsiveness, while Raven longed for a vacation,

106. Claudia Cassidy, "Martinon Concerto of Stunning First Movement in Brilliant Performance with Szyrnyg," *On the Aisle*, *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 15, 1963, B13.

107. Claudia Cassidy, "Mercutio Scene Stealer in Some Odd Choices from 'Romeo and Juliet'," *On the Aisle*, *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 18, 1963, B15.

108. Claudia Cassidy, "Turmoil Routs Triumph as Martinon Ends First Part of His Season with the Orchestra," *On the Aisle*, *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 13, 1963, B15.

109. Hart, 222.

exhausted by months of negotiations with the musicians' union and an ailing wife.<sup>110</sup> Though the exact chronology remains unclear, what is certain is that Martinon and Raven reached a breaking point partway through Martinon's first season. Unable to work with one another, both allegedly submitted resignations to the Board of Trustees and the Orchestral Association in March 1964. Oldberg weighed both letters heavily; after consulting with CSO musicians, ultimately, he, the board, and association only accepted Raven's resignation.<sup>111</sup>

For the remainder of the season, Cassidy's criticism of Martinon swerved from predominantly positive to overwhelmingly negative. Just two weeks after publishing a glowing Martinon review, in which she christened him "one of the finest Stravinsky men around,"<sup>112</sup> Cassidy wrote her most damning review of Martinon yet, describing Martinon's interpretation of Mozart's *Symphonie Concertante* as "a series of disappointments stirring serious doubts about Mr. Martinon." In a radical departure from her previous reviews, which had been ambivalent at worst, Cassidy went on to say that "some nights we have the distinguished conductor who came here as a warmly welcomed guest. Some nights we have a changeling."<sup>113</sup>

Martinon's longtime secretary, Myrtha Perez, suspected that Cassidy's change in critical appraisal was not coincidental:

110. Martinon-Raven correspondence, Sept. 1962–May 1963, Rosenthal Archives.

111. This series of events has been reconstructed from Robert Pollak, "Story of Symphony Skirmish," *Hyde Park Herald*, May 27, 1964, 4; and interview transcripts in the Rosenthal Archives: Robert Marsh, *Sun-Times* music critic (1956–93), Feb. 16, 1985, Myrtha Perez, administrative assistant and personal secretary to Jean Martinon, interview by Jon Bentz, July 7, 1989, and Richard Oldberg, CSO hornist and nephew of Eric Oldberg, interview by Frank Monnelly, July 27, 1989.

112. Claudia Cassidy, "The Great Serkin on the Big Night that Martinon Took Over," *On the Aisle*, *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 13, 1964, B13.

113. Claudia Cassidy, "Two Good Soloists in Concert that Stirs Some Serious Doubts about the Conductor," *On the Aisle*, *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 27, 1964.

One thing I began to observe was that every morning between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m. there was always a call for the Manager from Mrs. Cassidy. And the secretary would call out in a rather loud voice—she would say “Mr. Raven—Mrs. Cassidy is on the phone for you!”... and he would be on the phone for about an hour or more.... And mind you, this happened every morning. Now at that time I did not know [w]hat that meant. But after the second or third month I noticed that Martinon was always having problems with Mrs. Cassidy in the paper and this coincided with the problems he was beginning to have with the manager.... Then we started to put two and two together because it was so obvious. Of course, neither Martinon nor I could ever talk to anyone about it.... I think it is time to open up and say something[:] that this was a real connection ... and it was a very destructive connection.<sup>114</sup>

The simmering conflict between Martinon and Raven, and Cassidy’s possible entanglement in it, was not widespread knowledge until May 27, 1964, when Robert Pollak, the music critic of the *Hyde Park Herald*, laid out the case that Cassidy, seeking to avenge her friend, had launched a smear campaign against Martinon:

It at least appears that her aesthetic judgments changed sharply when her managerial preference is threatened. This phenomenon leaves something to be desired as it relates to the lofty realms of criticism, but then us girls is human.... That any civic institution should have been tempted to knuckle down to a lady journalist with an urge to play musical politics makes a sad page in our local history.<sup>115</sup>

114. Myrtha Perez, interview with Jon Bentz, July 7, 1989, Rosenthal Archives. Emphasis in original transcript.

115. Pollak, “Story of Symphony Skirmish,” *Hyde Park Herald*.





**Figure 3:**  
 Jeff Lowenthal,  
 “Cassidy: A woman’s  
 prerogative,” *Newsweek*,  
 Apr. 26, 1965.

The following season, a concertgoer, Richard F. Kinninger typed up a pamphlet (“Does Chicago Have a Jekyll–Hyde Critic?”) of Cassidy’s press clippings over the 1963–64 season, highlighting the change in tone that coincided with Raven’s resignation.<sup>116</sup> On at least three occasions, Kinninger passed out copies outside Orchestra Hall before concerts.<sup>117</sup> He mailed Cassidy the pamphlet and forwarded a carbon copy of the letter with the pamphlet to Silas Edman, Raven’s replacement at the CSO:

After reading your column “On the Aisle” for over twenty years, respecting but disagreeing with many of your comments, it was only after serious consideration I felt compelled to put together the

116. According to an obituary, Kinninger was “a great lover of opera” and retired from Morton Salt in Chicago. “Kinninger, Richard F,” Fostoria.org, accessed Oct. 20, 2019, [www.fostoria.org/index.php/component/content/article?id=18756#14](http://www.fostoria.org/index.php/component/content/article?id=18756#14).

117. “Queen of Chicago,” *Newsweek*, Apr. 26, 1965, 84–85.

attached brochure. I will continue to read your column but I no longer respect the comments in regard to Mr. Martinon, the Chicago Symphony or the Management at Orchestra Hall. It also leaves serious doubts in my mind as to the fairness of your comments on other items.<sup>118</sup>

As a consequence of Kinninger's sleuthing, the affair exploded. Carter Davidson, the host of WBBM-TV's *Views the Press*, mentioned the debacle on a live broadcast:

In terms of the theatre it is a sordid drama which might be entitled, "Everybody's Out of Step But Claudia." The plot is the picayunish effort by the *Tribune's* lifetime critic Claudia Cassidy to unseat Monsieur Jean Martinon as director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Monsieur Martinon is well received by symphony-goers and is widely renowned as a conductor. The three other music critics on Chicago daily papers, all of them, unlike Miss Cassidy, well back grounded in symphonic music, generally applaud the conductor in print. Miss Cassidy did so too when Monsieur Martinon first took up the baton five years ago. She even persuaded the symphony trustees to install one of her *Tribune* assistants, Seymour Raven, as orchestra manager. When Raven lost a power struggle with Monsieur Martinon and lost his job to boot, Miss Cassidy lost her taste for Martinon's music. Her critiques of Chicago Symphony Orchestra concerts are now vicious hatchet jobs on Monsieur Martinon. It has been going on for weeks, but last week it reached a new low, when the critic scolded the audience in print for applauding the conductor.<sup>119</sup>

118. Kinninger to Cassidy, Apr. 8, 1965, Rosenthal Archives.

119. Carter Davidson, *Views the Press*, WBBM-TV, transcript, Apr. 4, 1965, box 40, folder 493, Cassidy Papers.

*Newsweek* brought the feud to a national audience later that month, describing Cassidy's writing, which *Time* magazine had called "purple prose" a decade before, as "napalm prose." The scathing column was accompanied by an unflattering photo of Cassidy (see fig. 3).<sup>120</sup>

Later that month, Eric Oldberg—by then no longer president of the Orchestral Association—responded to the "scurrilous" *Newsweek* column. He defended his hiring of Raven, writing he had "known and respected [his] ability, integrity, and character for many years," and claimed that when he presented Raven as a candidate for general manager of the CSO, he was "unanimously approved" by the Board of Trustees. As for Cassidy, Oldberg writes: "The only feeling I had with respect to Miss Cassidy was one of mild trepidation over her possible private reaction to the loss of a trusted colleague and associate. It did not occur to me then, and it does not now, that that would in any way color her critical opinions." He concludes his column welcoming any internal investigation of the orchestra.<sup>121</sup>

Cassidy's most direct commentary on this issue came years later, in response to a 1983 *New Yorker* article that mentioned her feud with Martinon.<sup>122</sup> In a surviving letter draft to *New Yorker* editor William Shawn, she stuck to her story that "no one was more pleased" than she when Martinon was initially given the post, but that things "went from bad to worse." She points out that, after becoming the *Tribune's* critic at large in 1965, she did not review Martinon for the duration of his five-year contract, which ended in 1968. "I write only because what were not facts were presented as facts. I do not want a thing done about it."<sup>123</sup>

120. "Queen of Chicago," *Newsweek*.

121. Eric Oldberg, "Manager and Critic," *Chicago Tribune*, Apr. 23, 1965, 20.

122. She appears to be responding to the first of a two-part series on André Previn by Helen Drees Ruttencutter, "A Way of Making Things Happen," *New Yorker*, Jan. 10, 1983, 36–79.

123. Cassidy to William Shawn, c. 1984, box 2, folder 281, Cassidy Papers. Riddled with typos, which is unusual for Cassidy, the letter is almost certainly a draft.

Though Cassidy's verdicts seem to be those of an overzealous and biased critic, her insistence that Martinon was not the right leader for the CSO turned out to be prophetic. In his final years as music director, Martinon buckled under mutinying musicians—most famously principal oboist Ray Still, who publicly feuded with the maestro—and a deeply divided ensemble. Musicians began to resent his insistence on absolute control; hornist Richard Oldberg even echoed Cassidy's specific criticisms that Martinon "conducted very stiffly ... as if [the CSO] were a second-rate orchestra" and was "out of his depth."<sup>124</sup> Still also adopts Cassidy-esque language in his 1972 letter when he brands Martinon's tenure the "era of mediocrity."<sup>125</sup> Martinon's directorship would be remembered for years thereafter as a particularly tumultuous one for the orchestra, though it resulted in adventurous programming and a number of high-quality recordings.

The *Sun-Times* critic Robert Marsh would also take issue with Martinon as his tenure reached its end. Nonetheless, years later, he agreed that Cassidy had picked the wrong hill to die on and risked her professionalism in the process:

Miss Cassidy here overplayed her hand. She was working at the *Tribune* with a so-called lifetime contract given to her by Col. McCormick. There's always some doubt as to whose lifetime was involved here. As it turns out it was the Colonel's. The practical effect was Miss Cassidy retired as music critic of the *Tribune*. The

124. Richard Oldberg, interview by Frank Monnelly, July 27, 1989, 4, Rosenthal Archive: "There was no fluidity in his beat.... And as a result things were not very exciting because you had to rein in your individual attempts at playing in a soloistic or warm or emotional ways.... I really think he was out of his depth.... He conducted the orchestra as if it were a 'second rate orchestra' and a lot of times it sounded like it as a result."

125. Ray Still to Cassidy, Oct. 23, 1972, box 2, folder 177, Cassidy Papers.

new *Tribune* management didn't like the idea of the newspaper being this deeply involved in the operation of a cultural institution.<sup>126</sup>

However, Cassidy did not retire from the *Tribune*. Though she passed the title of chief music and ballet critic to Thomas Willis in 1965, the same year that the “Jekyll–Hyde Critic” furor reached its boiling point, Cassidy continued to write for the *Tribune* weekly as critic at large through 1968, and occasionally for about a decade thereafter. However, she seldom covered the CSO during that period. Where McCormick might have delighted in the degree of influence Cassidy—and by extension the *Tribune*—exerted on Chicago's cultural sphere, the new guard seemed to chose professionalism over power.<sup>127</sup>

To her detractors, this episode confirmed that when it came to Martinon, as with Désiré Defauw and Rafael Kubelík, Cassidy had been more swayed by personal bias than a trained ear. WFMT associate program director Lois Baum noted that Cassidy tended to cling to first impressions of performers, even if they had improved over their career. There are exceptions to this rule, though it was conspicuous in some cases, such as her persistent dislike of mezzo-soprano Janet Baker.<sup>128</sup> Ultimately, this tendency is just as, if not *more* revealing of another enthralling but fatal flaw of her prose: her general unwillingness to strike a convincing middle ground. Cassidy called the two Martinon-CSO concerts in Carnegie Hall “less than

126. Robert Marsh, interview, Feb. 16, 1985, Rosenthal Archives.

127. Cassidy to Lois Baum, n.d., box 2, folder 218, Cassidy Papers. The Martinon affair apparently became ingrained in the *Tribune's* institutional memory. Years later, Cassidy was disheartened when a letter inviting her to write for the *Tribune* magazine directed her to avoid “polemics, invective, or self-promotion,” which she describes to Baum in this letter.

128. Lois Baum to WFMT program host Don Tait, email, Oct. 2013. Shared with the author with permission.

laudatory.”<sup>129</sup> In contrast, Harold Schonberg and Raymond Ericson, writing for the *New York Times*, are decidedly ambivalent, but not searing: Schonberg bemoaned a point in the concert at which the orchestra “got a little out of control”;<sup>130</sup> and Ericson lamented an “aggressiveness that was not very winning” and general lack of interpretative cohesion.<sup>131</sup> Aside from these measured moments of negative critique, both reviews are otherwise positive. While Cassidy’s theater writing could be more temperate, Martinon’s case demonstrates the degree to which she resorted to extremes and absolutes in her music journalism. Even her more tempered early reviews of Martinon held the conductor to a superlative standard, disappointed as she was by anything less than “definitive ... [like] the great nights of Bruno Walter”<sup>132</sup> or which, to her, stopped short of the Chicago Symphony’s “remembered brilliance.”<sup>133</sup> Thanks to her evocative prose, which, for her readers, recreated the sensory experience of listening to music, Cassidy emerged from the Martinon debacle with her readership and stature relatively unscathed, if not her reputation.

Cassidy’s slow retreat from the *Tribune*’s pages ushered in a new chapter of her career. In 1968, WFMT program director Norm Pellegrini invited Cassidy to be one of the hosts of *Critic’s Choice*, a half-hour program of arts criticism on the station. She joined Harry Bouras (plastic arts), Herman Kogan (literature), and Bill Russo (jazz), covering Chicago’s

129. Claudia Cassidy, “Catching Up on the New Orchestra and Opera Seasons, with Some Reminiscent Notes on What It Was Like to Come Back 10 Years Ago,” On the Aisle, *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 11, 1964, G9.

130. Harold Schonberg, “Music: Led by Martinon,” *New York Times*, Apr. 17, 1964.

131. Raymond Ericson, “Martinon Offers Daring Program,” *New York Times*, Sept. 30, 1964.

132. Claudia Cassidy, “Requiem with Orchestra, Chorus One of Martinon’s Better Concerts,” On the Aisle, *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 19, 1965, B13.

133. Claudia Cassidy, “Music Sacred and Profane Looks Up a Bit in Orchestra Hall,” On the Aisle, *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 27, 1964, A1.

classical arts scene. Knowing her potential reach, Pellegrini was eager to seal Cassidy's contract; he told her that bringing her on as a host was "one of the best [things] in a long time" he'd done for the station.<sup>134</sup> To sweeten the deal, Cassidy was given the best time slot of the four *Critic's Choice* hosts: 12:30 p.m. on Sundays.<sup>135</sup>

Pellegrini's instincts were correct: Cassidy's program was one of the station's most successful, at least judging by the amount of fan mail she received. Again, what attracted listeners was not only what Cassidy said but how she said it: Lois Baum, who worked with Cassidy to produce her program, recalled that she would receive so many listener requests for carbon copies of Cassidy's on-air scripts that it was impossible to honor them all.<sup>136</sup> The scripts were characteristically meticulous; well trained by more than forty years of meeting newspaper deadlines, Cassidy was always on time or early with her material, which amounted to about seventeen to twenty pages of typed script a week. She would fine-tune her reviews until the moment Baum started recording, to ensure that "what she said was what she felt and meant."<sup>137</sup> Despite her reputation as an explosive wordsmith at the *Tribune*, as an on-air critic, Cassidy self-censored her reviews; Baum recalled that her off-mike commentary could be even more colorful than her broadcasts.<sup>138</sup>

Cassidy continued reviewing on WFMT for nearly fifteen years, but in early 1983, something changed. Pellegrini was often present to hear Cassidy's snarky asides about CSO and Lyric management before her tapings, giving him the impression that her on-air assessments were similarly withering. Pellegrini feared that Cassidy's reviews might threaten the

134. Norman Pellegrini to Cassidy, July 11, 1968, box 2, folder 137, Cassidy Papers.

135. Lois Baum, telephone interview with author, Mar. 25, 2018.

136. Ibid.

137. Ibid.

138. Ibid. "Behind the scenes, she used to sometimes speak her mind more clearly than she did in her reviews, especially if she didn't like something."

station's relationship with the CSO and Lyric, which were the station's biggest sponsors and offered exclusive rights to live broadcasts. He asked Baum to listen to all of Cassidy's programs to find objectionable coverage of the CSO and Lyric Opera, but Baum did not find any of the "vindictive" sentiments that Pellegrini claimed Cassidy's reviews contained.

One Sunday, Baum was listening to *Critic's Choice* when she noticed that material was missing from what she'd previously recorded with Cassidy. She confronted Pellegrini, who confessed to editing Cassidy's programs between recording and broadcast. He'd cut anything which he believed "didn't belong there"—in other words, any mention of CSO or Lyric Opera performances. Baum objected, as the station had not received Cassidy's consent to edit her programs. Pellegrini "dropped" the subject for a month or two, until one night, while leaving the station, he allegedly said to Baum, "Lois, the time has come to demise Claudia Cassidy."<sup>139</sup>

Pellegrini raised the question of Cassidy's future employment at WFMT in a subsequent staff meeting, with most vehemently opposing her dismissal. According to Baum, among Cassidy's supporters was Ray Nordstrand, the station's chief executive and steward of the station's financial health. Like Baum, Nordstrand found no evidence of strained relations between the station and management at both the CSO and Lyric Opera. Despite opposition on all sides, Pellegrini refused to back down.<sup>140</sup> He confronted Cassidy before she taped what would become her last *Critic's Choice* for WFMT, demanding that she refrain from reviewing all CSO and Lyric performances on her program. Cassidy refused, objecting that it was impossible to ignore the two largest cultural institutions in Chicago. When Pellegrini refused to budge, she recorded her final episode and quit.<sup>141</sup>

139. Ibid.

140. Ibid.

141. Lois Baum to Don Tait, WFMT program host, email, Oct. 2013, shared with the author with permission.



When her departure was announced shortly before her final *Critic's Choice* aired on March 27, 1983, listener outcry was enormous. While the average host received about ten to fifty calls and letters per week, the station received over three hundred letters from listeners and dozens of calls, the vast majority of which opposed her dismissal. Baum could only recall one other incident which inspired a greater listener reaction: WFMT's temporary loss of broadcast rights to the Salzburg and Bayreuth Festivals.<sup>142</sup> The fan mail expressed admiration for the way she conveyed her opinions, despite not always agreeing with the opinions themselves.<sup>143</sup>

Shortly after quitting her position at WFMT, Cassidy wrote CSO general manager John S. Edwards relaying her side of the story—how she'd left because she “do[es] not care for censorship,” how she had not noticed Pellegrini cutting her programs because she “never listen[ed] to herself,” and letting Edwards know that some material relating to the CSO may have been excised from her program without her consent.<sup>144</sup> Edwards's response is remarkable:

Ever since I heard the first rumors of your leaving WFMT, which I find hard to believe, I have been wanting to do something to help clear up that unhappy situation. I am fundamentally opposed to censorship as you are. I listen almost every Sunday at 12:30 with the greatest enjoyment.

I would be very grateful if you would send me copies of your original scripts, which you have so kindly offered to do. They sound terrific and I am sure they read every bit as well. Your voice will certainly continue to be heard in our land, as Kup [*Sun-Times* columnist Irv Kupcinen] so deftly suggested today.

142. Ibid. She estimates the pro-Cassidy to contra-Cassidy letters at about five to one.

143. Ibid.

144. Cassidy to John S. Edwards, Mar. 13, 1983, Rosenthal Archives.

I can only tell you that our exchange of notes has been one of the great pleasures of my management here.<sup>145</sup>

It is possible that Edwards was simply being magnanimous or perhaps sweetening the letter as a hedge against the uncertain dimensions of her continuing local influence. At face value, however, this correspondence confirms Baum's reading of the Pellegrini-Cassidy feud—namely, that there was no reasonable threat of retributive action from the CSO regarding Cassidy's reviews and that Pellegrini's insinuations of financial peril and loss of sponsorship were excuses to sideline Cassidy. Regardless of where the middle ground can be found, Edwards's sentiments speak anew to the power of Cassidy's prose: as it had with Désiré Defauw's son, her writing sometimes won her even the most unlikely of admirers. The watcher of institutions, it seemed, had become an institution herself.

There remains an unexplored factor that may explain why Cassidy was so widely read and embraced, despite her divisive opinions. The high standards that made Cassidy a subject of controversy at the *Tribune* and WFMT were not fueled by simple perfectionism but civic pride—a pride she was unafraid to flaunt in her columns and which gained the sympathy of her readers. This brings us to the third factor in Cassidy's influence: her self-identification, above all, as a Chicagoan.

## Second City, Not Second Rate

What makes Chicago unique, at least to me, is its combination of big city and small town with wide open spaces—especially before high rises jagged the horizon—walking with the lake stretching illimitably on one side, the city roaring on the other. Where else

145. Edwards to Cassidy, Mar. 1983, Rosenthal Archives.

would a rescuing traffic policeman send a critic a Christmas card of himself as Saint Christopher?

—Claudia Cassidy<sup>146</sup>

Cassidy was a lifelong Illinoisan. Born in Shawneetown, on the banks of the Ohio River, she moved to Chicago after graduating from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1921. Though she spoke sentimentally of both downstate locales, Chicago was the city that became her lifelong muse. She lived here until her death in 1996, primarily on the Near North Side and then in the Drake Hotel after her husband's death in 1986.<sup>147</sup> In *On the Aisle*, Cassidy often used "Chicago" as a collective pronoun to describe the city's artistic opinions and desires. Obviously, the gesture was rhetorical—a royal "we" of sorts—being that even her most devoted readers frequently disagreed with her.<sup>148</sup>

Generally unacknowledged is Cassidy's practice of airing readers' opinions and experiences verbatim. Gerald Sullivan notes in his dissertation on Cassidy's theater criticism that Cassidy "often" printed dissenting letters in her column, and Cassidy certainly did publish many reader letters in her twenty-three years at the *Tribune*.<sup>149</sup> Contrary to Asbell's *Chicago* magazine profile, which pilloried Cassidy as a cultural dictator, Cassidy's responses to reader mail convey delight at the plurality of public

146. "Panorama," *Chicago Daily News* (typescript), Dec. 1972, box 22, folder 379, Cassidy Papers

147. Richard Christiansen, "Former Tribune Critic Claudia Cassidy," *Chicago Tribune*, July 22, 1996.

148. Cassidy quipped that she could only "speak for herself, not for Chicago," and she "could more wisely become a producer, and get rich," if she could read the minds of Chicagoans. Claudia Cassidy, "When You Solicit Private Subsidy for the Arts It Takes a Little More Evidence than Just that You Need the Cash," *On the Aisle*, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Feb. 4, 1962, D9.

149. Sullivan, 6.

opinion: “People often disagree about reviews—heaven help us all the day they don’t.”<sup>150</sup> In a 1960 column, Cassidy juxtaposed two letters that exemplified this diversity: “As for the boos at *Fedora*, which were in truth no less justified than, say, cheers at [Lyric’s] *Die Walkuere*, I have two amusing contributions in the never dull mailbox. One angry ‘patron’ of the Lyric says those boos, if any, could have been mine, and only mine. The other letter starts, ‘It was I, dear critic, who booed Wednesday evening as the curtain fell on *Fedora*...’”<sup>151</sup>

On the Aisle even facilitated dialogue between readers. In a pair of columns in 1961, Cassidy quoted a letter from a disgruntled Ravinia patron who griped that “rude” Ravinia ushers take up precious sitting room in front of the standing area.<sup>152</sup> Thanks to Cassidy’s column, a Ravinia usher was able to explain patiently that said seats are actually reserved for ushers and are, in fact, often stolen by entitled patrons.<sup>153</sup>

As she had for her “magic carpet” letter, Cassidy often based entire columns on her favorite letters. A particularly affecting 1961 column sprouted from a trilogy of letters she’d received from a preteen “on the far south side” named Robert:

He had been to the opera and the opera had claimed him for its own.... He got there, heard *Don Carlo*, and was not entirely happy with my review. He felt that it should have been more glowingly

150. Claudia Cassidy, “Smile When You Write That, or Don’t Be Too Sure Laissez Faire Is a Virtue in Any World, Especially that of the Arts,” On the Aisle, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jan. 13, 1963, G9.

151. Claudia Cassidy, “Boos, Bows, Cheers, and Walkouts All Liven the Stage and the Mailbox,” On the Aisle, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Nov. 30, 1960, B3.

152. Claudia Cassidy, “On the Aisle: Ballet Dream Boat from Balanchine to Volkova to Fred Astaire, and the Rude Awakening to Some Omnipresent Ballet Facts,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Feb. 12, 1961, D7.

153. Claudia Cassidy, “‘Verklaerte Nacht’ in Original Form High Point of Chamber Concert,” On the Aisle, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Feb. 16, 1961, C5.

written in more refulgent prose, and he gave me pointers by way of illustration.... All these things kept Robert popping into my mind now and then, along with his hope that his mother would let him go back to the opera. I hope she did. But what made the letter so hard to answer was this: completely enamored of opera and the opera house, Robert wrote, "Altho I am a Negro, I hope to sing there."<sup>154</sup>

Having not yet responded to Robert's letter personally because she is "not the best of correspondents," Cassidy instead devoted her column to pioneering African American opera stars. (Cassidy especially singles out mezzo-soprano Grace Bumbry, whom she had heard early in her career at a master class at Northwestern, for praise.) Cassidy's aim was to show Robert that "the invisible barrier against Negroes in opera ha[d] diminished," though she did not indulge in the fiction that the playing field was level. After naming numerous singers and their most memorable performances, Cassidy, as though catching herself, wrote: "All this is to the point, but it is not quite the point. To indicate success is not to show the ladder." Cassidy ended her column with a memory of Dr. J. Wesley Jones, music director of the Metropolitan Community Church Choir in Chicago, who had once thanked her for her service to African American performers in Chicago. When a puzzled Cassidy asked him what he meant, Jones apparently responded: "You have expected us to be as good as anyone else." "So that's the way it is, Robert, and good luck," Cassidy wrote.<sup>155</sup>

Though she wrote and worked during the apex of the civil-rights movement, it would be disingenuous to present Cassidy as an ally to the movement, or even as particularly politically engaged. This column marked one of the few in which she addressed racial inequities in the arts.

154. Claudia Cassidy, "A Long Delayed Letter to Robert, which Was Waiting for a Chance to Be Not So Much Hopeful as Helpful," On the Aisle, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 4, 1961, S9.

155. Ibid.

As evidenced from the above excerpts, Cassidy seems to have limited her commentary to the performing arts and her own subjective and qualitative point of view, with little thoughtful criticism of institutional barriers facing black musicians. Additionally, she was known to produce blatantly caricatured descriptions of artists of color, as reviews of Marian Anderson<sup>156</sup> and even excerpts from her column to Robert demonstrate. Nonetheless, as Chris Jones has noted vis-à-vis Cassidy's early endorsement of Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, Cassidy's public support of black artists in the late fifties and early sixties could be considered remarkable, given that they ran in the conservative *Tribune*.<sup>157</sup> For example, her predecessor at the *Tribune*, Cecil Smith, all but refused to review a 1937 open-air performance of William Grant Still's *Afro-American Symphony* ("an unimportant piece of music") by describing the view of a twilit Grant Park instead of the piece playing in front of him.<sup>158</sup>

Rarely, but occasionally, Cassidy's column would function literally as a forum for reader opinion by presenting a full reader letter in lieu of *On the Aisle*, though its reproduction was not always synonymous with endorsement.<sup>159</sup> The only opinions she would *not* tolerate, it seemed, were

156. Claudia Cassidy, "Miss Anderson Back, Her Voice a Lovely Ghost," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jan. 22, 1950. The review was a rather sympathetic one of an artist past her prime, but described Anderson's voice as "a gray and elusive shadow of the dark torrent that once poured in such black majesty from that somehow primitive throat."

157. Chris Jones, "'Acidy Cassidy,' that Woman from Chicago," *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 11, 2013. The article was excerpted from Jones's *Bigger, Brighter, Louder*.

158. Cecil Smith, "Park Twilight Ideal Set for Negro Piece," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Aug. 14, 1937, 7. Credit goes to Phillip Huscher, CSO scholar-in-residence and program annotator, for this find.

159. See, Claudio Cassidy, "Chicagoan with Chicago Theater on His Mind Comes Up with a Blast of Conviction, Roaring, Pointing and Calling Names," *On the Aisle*, *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 18, 1960, D7. The article quoted, in full, a letter by Alan Edelson, a show publicist and former journalist. Edelson shared Cassidy's uncompromising convictions that theater in Chicago was lacking in quality.

those that implored her to soften her criticism. She once ridiculed a letter from a reader that “said without a trace of irony that while our current crop of shows may not be much it is all we have, so why knock it?”<sup>160</sup>

Cassidy also used *On the Aisle* to answer readers’ questions, a responsibility she took so seriously that she often apologized in print for her tardiness. If she had been inundated by a particular question or concern, she often would address it in a later column. One amusing example demonstrates Cassidy’s well-known research and thoroughness:

A flurry of letters has come in complaining about the lighted torches juggled by the Rudenko brothers in [the musical] “Carnival.” Everything is fireproofed. The cast is trained to watch for trouble. The stage manager stands in the wings with chemical fire extinguisher in hand. Torches are extinguished the instant the men leave the stage by dousing them in a metal container designed and carried for that purpose. All cleared with the fire marshal. So relax.<sup>161</sup>

Readers and listeners consulted Cassidy’s authority in all matters artistic because she had a reputation as a historian and archivist of Chicago’s performing arts. Cassidy assumed this role gladly, thumbing through her “critic’s scrapbook” to answer questions about bygone performances and corroborate facts. At one point, the Auditorium Theatre Council’s historian contacted Cassidy for help with records *he* was missing: “In my job as historian here, I have access to all our own archives[,]... but I know that there is a lot of stuff I haven’t tracked down, and some of it may not have ever existed—at least on paper. And that’s where you come in.”<sup>162</sup> Cassidy’s departure from the *Tribune* in 1965 let her embrace this role more fully.

160. Cassidy, “On the Aisle: Smile When You Write That,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

161. Claudia Cassidy, “Met’s First ‘Ariadne’ Has Karl Boehm Conducting Opera Dedicated to Him by Richard Strauss,” *On the Aisle*, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Dec. 11, 1962, B11.

162. Bart Swindall to Cassidy, n.d., box 2, folder 185, Cassidy Papers.

In 1967, she delivered a sold-out lecture at the Chicago Drama League;<sup>163</sup> the following decade, she spoke about the history of Chicago theater and opera for the Chicago Public Library<sup>164</sup> and the Winnetka Lyric Guild, respectively.<sup>165</sup> Even in old age, when she could no longer reliably honor engagements, she remained in high demand as a speaker. She was invited to deliver a dance lecture at the Newberry in January 1989 as part of a series that included John Neumeier and Robert Joffrey.<sup>166</sup> A 1993 letter by the president of the Arts Club of Chicago speaks to her intergenerational appeal, citing a “sizeable number of members under forty” who wanted to meet the ninety-four-year-old critic.<sup>167</sup>

After “retirement,” Cassidy contributed to the program books of the CSO and Lyric Opera, the two musical institutions she covered most as a critic, and wrote an illustrated history of Lyric Opera in 1979.<sup>168</sup> Notably, in February 1971, she trawled the CSO’s archives and collated what she believed to be the orchestra’s twelve most spectacular concerts, its “Dazzling Dozen,”<sup>169</sup> spanning from the first music director, Theodore Thomas, to the current director, Georg Solti. It is a testament to the longevity of Cassidy’s career that all of the concerts, save for three (two under Thomas, one under Stock), were performances Cassidy had

163. Irene Powers, “Capacity Crowd to Hear Critic,” *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 9, 1967, C16.

164. Claudia Cassidy, typescript, July 22, 1976, box 22, folder 392, Cassidy Papers.

165. Claudia Cassidy, typescript, May 7, 1976, box 23a, folder 405ii, Cassidy Papers.

166. Charles T. Cullen (Newberry president and librarian) to Cassidy, Jan. 27, 1989, box 1, folder 26, Cassidy Papers.

167. Stanley M. Freehling to Cassidy, Nov. 29, 1993, box 2, folder 46, Cassidy Papers.

168. Claudia Cassidy, *Lyric Opera of Chicago*.

169. Eleanor Page, “An Affectionate, Nostalgic Look at Our Orchestra at the Age of 80,” *Chicago Tribune*, Apr. 8, 1971, B1.



attended. Interestingly, there are two Solti inclusions—she had warmed to the conductor by this point—and only one Reiner selection, perhaps owing to Cassidy's conviction that Reiner's performances were polished but the programs unimaginative.<sup>170</sup> Later the same year, Cassidy penned her most far-reaching work: a colloquial history of Chicago's performing arts, which she wrote for the Chicago Historical Society. In it, she melded oral history and personal recollection, referencing her CSO archival project and delivering testimony of long-forgotten performances to a new generation of Chicagoans.<sup>171</sup> Cassidy included one of her oft-repeated adages, first said by writer Hugo von Hoffsmannthal and passed along to her by the conductor Bruno Walter: "The roots must be more splendid than the foliage." She goes on to write eloquently of Chicago's artistic heritage, tipping her hat to America's greater journalistic and critical heritage while doing so:

Call it a reassuring truth—rather than a reproach—that Chicago's roots are more splendid than its foliage. Call it a sobering but not daunting challenge that the cost of cultivation has reached astronomical figures.

Is it worth the cost? Only, I think, if we demand the best, which once upon a time we had. I always remember what [journalist] Henry Mencken said of [arts critic James] Huneker, who made reading a critic of the arts a pleasure. Mencken said, "Because of him, art is no longer, even by implication, a device for improving the mind. It is wholly a magnificent adventure."

170. Notes and correspondence regarding the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's program books, Feb. 3, 1971, box 22, folder 389, Cassidy Papers.

171. Claudia Cassidy, Chicago Historical Society (typescript), Dec. 1971, box 22, folder 381, Cassidy Papers. It's unclear whether Cassidy dictated the piece in a public lecture or submitted it for print to the society. The exact fate of a 1987 submission to the society about the Auditorium Theatre, also existing in typescript at the Newberry, is similarly unknown.

When that idea strikes root, who knows what adventurous foliage?<sup>172</sup>

Cassidy's knowledge of Chicago's artistic roots was unparalleled, and she was, some would say to a fault, invested in its future foliage. She had moved to Chicago during the halcyon days of Mary Garden's opera companies and admired their "dazzling" standard for years thereafter.<sup>173</sup> Cassidy wasn't above using her influence to play impresario during the scrappy, pre-Lyric chapter in the history of Chicago opera. When Ottavio Scotto's lauded United States Opera Company found itself broke and stranded in Chicago in February 1947, she helped arrange a concert engagement for the singers that supported their travel back to Europe.<sup>174</sup> Later, she was one of Lyric Opera's most vocal cheerleaders. As Robert Marsh and Norman Pellegrini recalled: "No one in town wanted resident opera back more than [Cassidy] did."<sup>175</sup> She felt particularly indebted to Lyric cofounder Carol Fox for her role in bringing permanent opera back to Chicago, supporting Fox as general director even when it was obvious she was no longer suited to run the company.<sup>176</sup> In the late 1950s, Cassidy even tried to facilitate a co-venture between Lyric and the CSO, but was ultimately obstructed by prohibitive costs on the side of the still-fledgling Lyric, Maria Callas's departure from the company, and Fritz Reiner's reluctance to collaborate.<sup>177</sup>

172. Claudia Cassidy, Chicago Historical Society (typescript), Dec. 1971, box 22, folder 381, Cassidy Papers.

173. Claudia Cassidy, "When Are Deficits a Good Investment? Possibly When They Make a City a Gay and More Rewarding Place to Live," *On the Aisle*, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Dec. 9, 1962, F7.

174. Marsh and Pellegrini, 121.

175. *Ibid.*, 130.

176. Lois Baum to WFMT program host Don Tait, email, October 2013. Shared with the author with permission.

177. Hart, 165.

To Cassidy, Chicago's arts institutions were meant to represent the city—a philosophy which ultimately led to her most public break with Fritz Reiner. Since 1955, Reiner had wanted the CSO to tour Europe. He imagined a hypothetical six-week tour in late summer to early fall, with an itinerary encompassing major European capitals;<sup>178</sup> most of these would be “behind the Iron Curtain.”<sup>179</sup> A stint in the Soviet Union qualified the tour as a diplomatic mission of the President's Special International Program for Cultural Presentations, which was facilitated by the American National Theater and Academy (ANTA) and underwritten by the US State Department. Though not the only genre of music included in ANTA programming abroad, classical music occupied a privileged place because of its perceived “universality” compared to show tunes and folk music.<sup>180</sup> This emphasis was reflected by the aesthetic slant of its Music Advisory Panel, which included critic-composer Virgil Thomson, critic Alfred Frankenstein, and composers Howard Hanson and William Schuman, who were also, respectively, the directors of the Eastman and Juilliard Schools of Music.<sup>181</sup> Numerous other highly qualified American orchestras were considered for the tour, planned for 1959, including Eugene Ormandy's Philadelphia Orchestra, Charles Munch's Boston Orchestra, and Leonard Bernstein's New York Philharmonic; if selected, the tour would have been a reputational and political coup for the CSO.

On May 29, 1958, CSOA president Eric Oldberg announced the tour formally.<sup>182</sup> Reiner's wife, Carlotta, had already told Cassidy, in confidence,

178. Ross Parmenter, “European Tour: Chicago Symphony's Loss Is N.Y. Philharmonic's Gain,” *New York Times*, Mar. 15, 1959, X9.

179. Hart, 205–7.

180. Danielle Fosler-Lussier, “Classical Music and the Mediation of Prestige,” in *Music in America's Cold War Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015).

181. *Ibid.*

182. Hart, 207.

that the tour was in its planning stages.<sup>183</sup> However, shortly after the announcement, the venture faltered. Robert F. Schnitzer, the ANTA official for tour logistics, informed Reiner that the tour would likely be eight weeks, not six, and that it might be impossible to tour all the promised cities in Western Europe. Unbeknownst to Reiner, the actual duration being considered by Schnitzer and CSO manager George Kuyper was closer to eleven or twelve weeks. Reiner objected, stating in a November telegraph draft that he refused to conduct more than eight weeks of concerts, citing his and the orchestra's stamina, their remaining commitment in Chicago, and the tour's Cold War "propaganda" content, among other grievances.<sup>184</sup>

In February 1959, Reiner announced the tour's cancellation to the orchestra. CSO musicians, who would each lose a projected \$2,000 in wages as a result of the cancellation, were livid.<sup>185</sup> Allegedly, they hissed at his announcement and staged backstage protests, one of which included hanging an effigy of the conductor.<sup>186</sup> Officially, the tour was "deferred," but it was obvious that the CSO had, in fact, missed its chance. Leonard Bernstein announced two days later to a cheering New York Philharmonic that they had laid claim to the tour itinerary initially intended for the CSO.<sup>187</sup> The philharmonic set off on what was ultimately a nine-week tour that August.<sup>188</sup> As Cassidy would sum up in her column years

183. Ibid., 206.

184. Ibid., 208.

185. Ibid., 212.

186. Ibid., 211. Reiner denied that musicians ever hissed after the announcement (see Ross Parmenter, "New \$6,000,000 Theatre in Vancouver to House Festival Events This Year," *New York Times*, Mar. 29, 1959, X11), and CSO management subsequently contested the existence of the effigy.

187. ANTA may have favored the Philharmonic all along because Bernstein was American born and trained. See, Fosler-Lussier.

188. Parmenter, "Chicago Symphony's Loss," *New York Times*.

later, the cancellation “opened a Pandora’s box of orchestral and other resentment” against Reiner.<sup>189</sup> Reiner’s biographer claims the cancellation accelerated the already precipitous deterioration of labor relations between CSO musicians and management.<sup>190</sup>

Cassidy was nearly as upset by the loss as the orchestra musicians were. *Sun-Times* critic Robert Marsh remarked years later: “Claudia had a civic booster spirit that was irrepressible and to her cancelling that tour was an act of betrayal.”<sup>191</sup> The tour cancellation emboldened Cassidy to unstop her festering grievances with Reiner. In subsequent issues of the *Tribune*, Cassidy leveled that he had never become “deeply a part of the Chicago scene,” treating the CSO as a vehicle for fine performances but neglecting a music director’s civic duties outside of subscription concerts. She pointed to Reiner’s indifferent to CSO traditions like the children’s concerts, Saturday night “popular” concerts, and the Civic Orchestra. Additionally, Cassidy claimed, he took only a marginal interest in other Chicago institutions; Cassidy remained frustrated by Reiner’s earlier refusal to join forces with Lyric Opera, despite “being an opera man at heart.” Moreover, she argued, he did not even live in Chicago, spending most of the year in Westport, Connecticut.<sup>192</sup> Of course, the trade-off was that Chicago heard performances of a caliber unheard since the Stock days (by Cassidy’s reckoning). However, the disintegration of the 1959 tour opened Cassidy’s eyes to the shortcomings of Reiner’s artistic single-mindedness: if he had also possessed civic pride, Cassidy implied, the

189. Claudia Cassidy, “Luck Seems to Be on Both Sides as Jean Martinon Chooses and Is Chosen to Be the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s 7th Conductor,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 13, 1962, G9.

190. Hart, 212.

191. Robert Marsh, interview, Feb. 16, 1985, Rosenthal Archives.

192. Claudia Cassidy, “Superior Orchestra, Renowned Conductor, but after 7 Reiner Seasons All Is Not Rosy in Orchestra Hall,” On the Aisle, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 15, 1960, E11. Of course, the traveling-maestro model is de rigueur today, but it was not when Cassidy wrote this column.

tour would have never fallen through, because Reiner would have understood how much was at stake.<sup>193</sup>

Another grievance of Cassidy's was that Reiner was turning the orchestra into "a private orchestra for RCA Victor recordings," implying that the record company had undue control over the CSO's artistic direction. According to Cassidy, the RCA arrangement eroded the quality and creativity of CSO concerts because it compelled Reiner and the orchestra to treat performances like rehearsals of recording sessions.<sup>194</sup> "When the recording tail wags the concert dog, the cart is far worse than before the horse—it just isn't going anywhere, except possibly downhill," Cassidy wrote in a review published around the time tour negotiations broke down.<sup>195</sup> Reprising the subject in a later column, she asserted that "an orchestra's primary obligation is to its audience"—a statement also tinged with civic pride.<sup>196</sup> Despite her disappointment that Reiner's affection for the city did not match her own, for his obituary Cassidy wrote that he "left Chicago the great gift of making it a better place in which to live" and that the maestro's greatest legacy was, in her eyes, a hyper-local one.<sup>197</sup>

For Cassidy, the tour cancellation also revived another sore subject: Chicago's perceived artistic subordination to New York City. "The New York Philharmonic with Leonard Bernstein [is] due to take off next August on a wonderful tour while our orchestra sits home and mumbles, or maybe screams," Cassidy wrote that March, as though gritting her teeth.<sup>198</sup> Chicago already had a reputation as a "try-out town" for the

193. *Ibid.*

194. Claudia Cassidy, "Two Faces of Publicity on Reiner Resident and Greco Transient," On the Aisle, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Mar. 8, 1959, G7.

195. Claudia Cassidy, "Winded Warhorse for Stereo at Afternoon Concert," On the Aisle, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Feb. 25, 1959, B1.

196. Cassidy, "Superior Orchestra, Renowned Conductor," *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

197. Cassidy, "Farewell to Reiner," *Chicago Tribune*.

198. Cassidy, "Two Faces of Publicity on Reiner," *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

performing arts before touring companies and artists went to New York. Cassidy believed that Chicago was too often treated as a mere rehearsal for New York, and, when Chicago tour stops came after New York, she sensed that performances were anticlimactic. These complaints were more prominent in her opera and theater criticism than her concert music criticism, especially in the pre-Lyric era of omnipresent touring companies. Cassidy's only two contributions to the *New York Times* were direct appeals to New York theater producers: "The funeral bak'd meats of the New York theatre feast do coldly furnish forth our first-night tables, and until New York is satiated, Chicago starves.... If Chicago is to be more than a good town for a popular show it's up to the theatre, not Chicago,"<sup>199</sup> and Chicago's "show-going public, or what remains of it, is suspiciously tilted back on its heels, from sad experience expecting the worst. Shows meticulously produced for Broadway are farmed out for touring to less resourceful showmen, who cut cast and production but not prices, and who shriek with outrage at less than ecstatic reception."<sup>200</sup>

Full as she was of her "irrepressible civic booster spirit," Cassidy bristled when the New York press condescended to Chicago's home institutions. It was even more humiliating when their criticisms were founded, as she believed they had been years later when Martinon took the CSO to Carnegie Hall.<sup>201</sup> In March 1959, she wrote witheringly of the New York coverage of the CSO's cancelled European 1959: "When it came to making an announcement, it was told in Chicago that with

199. Claudia Cassidy, "Lament from Chicago: A Critic Reports on the Lean Drama Fare of a 'Second-Season' Show Town," *New York Times*, Aug. 15, 1948, X1.

200. Claudia Cassidy, "Chicago's Plaint: New York Productions Arrive Late and Frequently with Too Little," *New York Times*, Aug. 17, 1958, X1.

201. "Less than laudatory reviews of Mr. Martinon's pre-season tour concerts [were] what you might expect New York critics to write about Chicago's orchestra." Cassidy, "Catching Up on the New Orchestra and Opera Seasons," *Chicago Tribune*. See Schonberg, "Music: Led by Martinon," *New York Times*, and Ericson, "Martinon Offers Daring Program," *New York Times*.

our orchestra not going, New York's would step in. It was told in New York that the Philharmonic was getting the most delectable tour yet handed out by the state department. At least one New York newspaper said in a tag piece that the Chicago Symphony had canceled 'a tour.' It might as well have been going to Podunk."<sup>202</sup>

Cassidy could have defected to New York City. She had gained national fame for her reviews at the *Tribune*, as articles dedicated to her in national magazines like *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *Variety* attest. After Cassidy wrote a heartfelt obituary for the operatic soprano Rosa Raisa in 1963, a friend and executive at Columbia Artists Management, Inc., commended her in a letter and then lamented: "I am more than disenchanted with the kind of press coverage certain events have gotten here [in New York City]. A kind of dry rot is already in evidence, and I can only paraphrase Wordsworth (I am sure it was Wordsworth) when I say, 'O! Cassidy, New York hath need of thee!' . . . You are very much admired here, and not only by myself; many of us wish avidly that you were in New York."<sup>203</sup>

Marsh alleged that Cassidy was tethered to Chicago thanks to a "lifetime contract" at the *Tribune*;<sup>204</sup> whether this is true or not, she could have become a regular contributor to other national publications once she wound down her time at the *Tribune*. It's unknown which New York publications formally made offers to Cassidy, but she received at least one tempting offer from Irving Kolodin after leaving the *Tribune*. Kolodin was a juggernaut music critic and historian in New York City, with bylines in the *New York Sun* and *Saturday Review*, as well as the New York Philharmonic's and Metropolitan Opera's program books. He was also Cassidy's friend. When he heard in 1966 that she was no longer writing for the *Tribune* full time, he urged her to contribute to the *Saturday Review*: "If you feel the urge, our latch string is always out. . . . Please make us your

202. Cassidy, "Two Faces of Publicity on Reiner," *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

203. Richard O'Harra to Cassidy, Oct. 23, 1963, box 2, folder 132, Cassidy Papers.

204. Robert Marsh, interview, Feb. 16, 1985, Rosenthal Archives.



first ‘outside’ contact. I leave the subject to you, and the length.... A page is about 1,000 words, and a good unit, but more is also welcome. Also, we pay a lot better than we used to. I’ll be watching the mails...”<sup>205</sup> Though Cassidy’s response to Kolodin is lost, she did submit one piece to the *Review* in 1972, but it does not appear to have been published.<sup>206</sup>

These outside flirtations notwithstanding, the overwhelming majority of Cassidy’s writing appeared in Chicago-based publications. In her post-*Tribune* years, Cassidy wrote most frequently for *Chicago* magazine—a different, albeit identically named publication from the one in which Asbell’s “Claudia Cassidy: The Queen of Culture and Her Reign of Terror” had appeared in 1956. She also wrote book reviews and miscellaneous articles for the *Chicago Daily News* and the *Sun-Times* through the 1970s.<sup>207</sup> It speaks to Cassidy’s dedication to the city of Chicago that she so frequently wrote not only about its arts but explicitly *for* its citizens, even after she stopped writing for the *Tribune* full time. Chicago was Cassidy’s chosen home, and Chicagoans her chosen audience. Her fans felt and appreciated her devotion to the city; one letter published in the *Tribune* after her death lists her among the “Top 20” Chicagoans of the twentieth century, alongside denizens like Mayor Richard J. Daley, Colonel Robert McCormick, Mike Royko, and Nelson Algren.<sup>208</sup>

At the end of every artistic season, Cassidy’s highlights column was more fulsome than the numbered and somewhat detached “Best Of” lists common today. These were twice as long as her usual columns and doubled as a State of the Arts in Chicago, with Cassidy commenting on areas of growth and atrophy in the city’s cultural sphere. Though dedicating

205. Irving Kolodin, to Cassidy, Jan. 15, 1966, box 1, folder 85, Cassidy Papers.

206. *Saturday Review* (transcript), 1972, box 23, folder 405, Cassidy Papers.

207. See “Other Works, 1950s–1980s,” box 22, various folders, Claudia Cassidy Papers.

208. Harlan Helgeson, letter to the editor, “Top 20 Chicago Figures of Century,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 19, 1999.

only a few words to each performance, Cassidy's "scrapbook" roundups gave the impression that, no matter how skimpy the season, there were always almost too many highlights to name—a deluge of praise from a notoriously exacting critic. In these it is stated most unequivocally: Cassidy's colorful criticism came from a place of passion for the arts and her unerring faith in Chicago's artistic greatness. In an especially heartfelt December 1959 retrospective, Cassidy memorialized artists who had passed away in the previous decade, linking their artistry with a resonant pronouncement on the arts in Chicago: "The legacy they left us is beyond price, and many of them had this in common, which was said long ago by Toscanini: 'I burn or I freeze—I cannot be lukewarm.'"<sup>209</sup> When it came to defending the integrity of Chicago's performing arts, neither could Cassidy.

## Postscript

**Claudia Cassidy:** [Art] is dangerous, and if you're not willing to think so, I don't know why you bother! Because that's where the greatness is.... There is that willingness to risk everything, which I think is terribly important. In fact, I think it's living. I've always been out on a limb, because I'm never quite sure I'm there; I'm not aware of it until someone begins to saw.... I don't think [artists] think they're risking, because I don't think they can do anything else. Safety can be very attractive, but it's not very exciting.

**Studs Terkel:** You realize, you could have been a very popular critic! You realize that? [Cassidy laughs] You could have written marvelous, beautiful things about everybody, and in fact, you could have been society editor, too, I'm guessing!

209. Claudia Cassidy, "Brave New Decade—Some of Its Inheritance and Some of Its Obligations," *On the Aisle*, Dec. 27, 1959, D9.

**Cassidy:** Well, I wouldn't have wanted anybody who believed in me to be disappointed. That's true. People have always been most extraordinary. When I was starting—goodness, you wouldn't believe. The trouble they all went through.... You know, they could be so charming, in such a gay way.... I always felt that you owe it to anyone you're writing about to do the best that you can, whatever that may be.<sup>210</sup>

When Claudia Cassidy died on July 21, 1996, she was memorialized in newspapers across the country. Some obituaries—like those by Richard Christiansen<sup>211</sup> and Linda Winer,<sup>212</sup> beloved colleagues at the *Tribune* and personal friends—were sentimental, while others preferred to repeat Asbell's opinion of Cassidy as a terror.<sup>213</sup> None, however, denied her power and influence. Jonathan Abarbanel said Cassidy “saw Pavlova dance, heard Rachmaninov concertize, saw Barrymore and Dusa act, heard Mary Garden and Chaliapin sing. It is not just a critic who has died, but a monumental piece of the living history of the performing arts in Chicago and the western world.”<sup>214</sup> These assessments of Cassidy's criticism have overshadowed her historical import. At the time I wrote this study in 2018, the value of Cassidy's historical legacy seemed to be very much up for debate. In some respects, this is the critics' lot. Jean Sibelius—whose music Cassidy called “a sound of mystery and grandeur, of simplicity and

210. Claudia Cassidy, interview with Studs Terkel, Nov. 30, 1966, Studs Terkel Radio Archive.

211. Richard Christiansen, “Cherished Notes from a Critic who Was an Artist,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 28, 1996, 71.

212. Linda Winer, “Goodbye to a Writer of Passion, Integrity,” *New York Newsday*.

213. William Grimes, “Claudia Cassidy, 96, Did Not Mince Words in Chicago,” *New York Times*, July 27, 1996, 11.

214. Abarbanel, “Legendary Critic, Claudia Cassidy, Dies,” *PerformInk*.



**Figure 4:** Claudia Cassidy Theater, Chicago Cultural Center, photograph by Hannah Edgar, Apr. 24, 2018.

indestructibility ... [with] a kind of obdurate eloquence”<sup>215</sup>—famously quipped to a fellow composer that one ought to “never pay any attention to what critics say,” for “a statue has never been built in honor of a critic.”

A monument in Chicago offers a counterpoint to Sibelius’s words. In the Chicago Cultural Center—a landmark building, nucleus of arts and culture, free and open to the public—stands the Claudia Cassidy Theater (see fig. 4). Dedicated in 1997, the 298-seat theater hosts events as varied as the performances Cassidy covered in life.<sup>216</sup> In an unintentional double entendre, the plaque outside the theater describes the woman who witnessed so much of the twentieth century’s arts as “the Premiere [*sic*] Critic of Theater, Music and Dance.... A titan of Chicago journalism,

215. Claudia Cassidy, “Reiner Honors Sibelius as Symphony Begins Its 67th Season,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 18, 1957, A1.

216. “Cultural Center Honors Critic Claudia Cassidy,” *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 28, 1997.

she raised the standards for performing arts criticism.” Such may well be the thesis for this study. Prolific, provocative, and always passionate, Cassidy surely raised the standards for the performing arts in Chicago, but she ought to be included in any informed discourse of American criticism on the whole. By taking her influence as its subject of inquiry, this small volume hopes to assert Cassidy’s place in the pantheon of notable arts critics everywhere. ○

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*Classic Record Collector*, 2006

*Hyde Park Herald*, 1964

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# Space for Whom? Negotiating Displacement and Development





# The Obama Presidential Center and South Side Community Benefits Agreement Coalition

VALERIA ALEJANDRA STUTZ, AB'18

## Introduction

### Theoretical Problem and Research Question

The Obama Presidential Center is expected to open in Jackson Park in the South Side's Woodlawn neighborhood in 2021.<sup>1</sup> Controversial since inception, the center has provoked both excitement and fear within surrounding neighborhoods such as Hyde Park, South Shore, Washington Park, and Woodlawn. Some community groups wholeheartedly praise and support the Obama Foundation's plan, some deplore the use of publicly owned parkland as the site for the center, and still others celebrate the possibilities, but fear displacement stemming from gentrification. In September 2016, four South Side community organizations formed the Obama Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) Coalition and launched a campaign for a CBA.<sup>2</sup> The coalition asked the Obama Foundation, the City of Chicago, and the University of Chicago (collective *the Library* in the coalition's

1. Jay Koziarz, "Judge Dismisses Lawsuit Blocking Obama Center Construction in Jackson Park," *Curbed Chicago*, Jun. 11, 2019.

2. The coalition has six members and twenty-two ally members in 2018, see appendix 2.

discourse) to agree on a set of development principles.<sup>3</sup> In 2018, the coalition drafted a CBA that would legally bind the three institutions to specific measures concerning affordable housing, jobs, economic development, sustainability, education, and transportation infrastructure within the five-mile radius of the center.<sup>4</sup>

The foundation says that CBAs are appropriate strategies to control private developers wanting to profit from community change, not for a nonprofit organization whose goal is to invest in the community.<sup>5</sup> It states that the center will not cause gentrification in the near future.<sup>6</sup> The coalition has met with Michael Strautmanis, the foundation's vice president

3. "2016 Development Principles," CBA for the Obama Library, Sept. 29, 2016, [www.obamacba.org/principles.html](http://www.obamacba.org/principles.html); Meredith Ogilvie, "Local Organizations Launch Community Benefits Agreement Campaign," *Hyde Park Herald*, Sept. 30, 2016.

4. "2018 Ordinance Outline," CBA for the Obama Library, [www.obamacba.org/2018-ordinance-outline.html](http://www.obamacba.org/2018-ordinance-outline.html). The first CBA in the United States was established in 2001, negotiated between Los Angeles residents, businesses, and organizations and the Los Angeles City Council's Sports and Entertainment District development. "Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District CBA," Partnership for Working Families, accessed Apr. 24, 2018, [www.forworkingfamilies.org/resources/staples-cba](http://www.forworkingfamilies.org/resources/staples-cba).

5. Barack Obama said that "the community benefit agreement concept is actually one that can be a really useful tool ... if you have a bunch of developers coming in that want to build a high-rise or for-profit enterprise in your neighborhood. ... But here's the thing: we are a nonprofit and aren't making money. We are just bringing money to the community." Lolly Bowean, "Obama Personally Answers Questions at Chicago Presidential Library Forum," *Chicago Tribune*, Sept. 15, 2017.

6. Obama said that gentrification is "not what's happening. We have such a long way to go before you will start seeing the prospect of gentrification.... Right now, we've got to worry about broken curbs and trash and boarded-up buildings." Lolly Bowean and Blair Kamin, "Obama Makes Pitch for His Center in Jackson Park: 'Too Much Development' Has Not Been a Problem for the South Side," *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 27, 2018.

of civic engagement, but has not entered into any negotiations.<sup>7</sup> The city and the university have been silent on a CBA. After organizers showed up unannounced at the mayor's office, the office granted the coalition a meeting with a deputy mayor, who said the city would need to study CBAs signed in other cities before it could make a decision. The coalition last heard from the mayor's office in February 2018.<sup>8</sup> The coalition nonetheless persists, arguing that unless a CBA is negotiated, low-income black residents will be displaced.<sup>9</sup>

The foundation has a unique and unusual status, because it is neither a for-profit developer nor a public project.<sup>10</sup> It is a nonprofit organization dependent on fundraising, and it conceives of the center as a benefit to the South Side, as a space for collaborative civic engagement, and as a museum "celebrating President and Mrs. Obama's legacy."<sup>11</sup> The peculiarity of this situation is enhanced by the construction of the center on twenty acres in publicly owned Jackson Park, a National Historic Place designed by Olmsted and Vaux in 1871, which the foundation will lease from the city for a nominal fee.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the foundation occupies a liminal

7. Yunhan Wen, "More Say from the South Side," *South Side Weekly*, May 23, 2017.

8. Bowean and Kamin, "Obama Makes Pitch," *Chicago Tribune*.

9. Editor's note: for progress on the coalition's efforts since the thesis was written in spring 2018, see the epilogue and appendix 1.

10. The Barack Presidential Center "will be a privately operated, non-federal organization." The National Archives and Records Administration, which administers the separate Barack Obama Presidential Library, will lend some records and artifacts to the center. "About the Library," Barack Obama Presidential Library, accessed June 13, 2019, [www.obamalibrary.gov/about-us](http://www.obamalibrary.gov/about-us).

11. The Obama Presidential Center, Obama Foundation, accessed Jan. 22, 2018, [www.obama.org/the-center/](http://www.obama.org/the-center/).

12. Blair Kamin, "Obama Center Plans Won't Destroy Olmsted's Park," *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 20, 2018; "City Council Unanimously Approves 99-Year Lease for Obama Center," *Chicago Maroon*, Oct. 31, 2018.

space between the connotations or common conceptions of “private,” and “public” organizations.

Out of this situation emerges a question: when an organization leading a major development project arrives in the neighborhood, how do neighborhood residents and the organization make geographic assertions? In other words, how do they justify and legitimize their use of a particular urban space? What happens when the residents are low income? How is this process complicated by the project’s participation in and departure from the tradition of presidential libraries? How are the geographic assertions further complicated by Barack Obama’s status as a beloved political figure in Chicago and especially on the South Side? How does this process unfold in surrounding neighborhoods, specifically in Woodlawn? This study will focus on the Obama CBA Coalition, which is one among many interested groups. The coalition does not speak for the entire neighborhood, but represents the interests of low-income black residents and allied groups.

In our contemporary urban landscape, in which gentrification pushes people of color out of their neighborhoods and cities, these are relevant questions to ask of developer-resident interactions. What tools do the coalition and the foundation use to claim their “right to the city”?<sup>13</sup> How does an institutional status versus a residential status, especially that of low-income residents, affect the way groups leverage identity, history, and world view to assert themselves as legitimate users of a space? How does the dominant discourse legitimize (or delegitimize) a person’s claim to a particular urban space and affect the way that neighborhood residents assert their claims? In other words, how do low-income black residents claim the right to an urban space when they do not have the credentials mandated by wider society? Besides the relevance of these questions to wider discussions about power and space, they are important because future presidential centers may likewise step out of the canon of a presidential

13. See, Henri Lefebvre, *Le Droit à la Ville* (Paris: Anthropos, 1968); Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York: Guilford Press, 2003).

library and envision themselves as community centers or platforms for enhancing a city's global reputation.

The Woodlawn neighborhood in and of itself is an interesting setting for such a study. It contains a rich history of black culture, and etched in the memories of residents are historical and contemporary experiences of institutional racism and disinvestment. Woodlawn is in flux, with a rising reputation as a "hot market" for real-estate developers. The changes that will come with the center are high stakes for residents and other interested parties.

## Literature Review and Methodology

From September 2016 to September 2017, I conducted exploratory interviews with Woodlawn residents, attended public community meetings, and carried out a two-month ethnographic survey in one of Woodlawn's community gardens, which included participating in the communal work days and speaking one-on-one with garden participants. Through these interviews, conversations, and interactions, I sought to understand neighborhood identity, the dynamics of gentrification and displacement, and residents' experiences of these changes. The arrival of the Obama Presidential Center was a lively topic of conversation for Woodlawn residents, and these conversations were the seeds of my study. The center emerged as a way to articulate topics of neighborhood identity and change. While my study relies on textual analysis rather than on ethnographic and interview data, the field work was the crucial beginning.

The most important methodological guide for my study is Gabriella Gahlia Modan, a cultural anthropologist and linguist. Modan studied a multiethnic DC neighborhood called Mount Pleasant that was undergoing gentrification in the 1990s. She uses linguistic discourse analysis to study how different community groups use language to "create and contest visions of their neighborhood,"<sup>14</sup> through claims about its identity and

14. Gabriella Gahlia Modan, *Turf Wars: Discourse, Diversity, and the Politics of Place* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 6.

its spaces. Modan examines spoken and written texts. She draws from casual conversations, community meetings, grant proposals, emails, press, and other literature generated by individuals or organizations.<sup>15</sup> Her working definition of discourse is the “ways of talking, writing, and signing; patterns of recurring themes, linguistic forms, and modes of conversational interaction.”<sup>16</sup> In her framework, discourse is relevant because how we talk about a place affects how a place changes and develops materially.<sup>17</sup>

Modan differentiates between two kinds of discourse: “big D” and “little d.” Big D involves linguistic constructions of large social categories (such as age, race, and geographical boundaries) and how these categories promote particular power relations. This approach looks at the general content of written and spoken statements without focusing on “specific instances of discourse [such as spoken sentences] ... as objects of commentary or analysis”<sup>18</sup> Sentences themselves, called “utterances,” are the basis of little d analysis. A person’s utterances describe a particular world view by using “social knowledge, attitudes, and values.”<sup>19</sup> Modan uses little d analysis to determine how a person’s utterances effect meaning and uses big D to analyze the ways society talks about urban life.<sup>20</sup>

According to Modan, a person or an organization emphasizes certain perspectives and deemphasizes others by using “deictic centers.”<sup>21</sup> A deictic center is “the base point where a speaker locates themselves spatially, temporally, and socially” in their utterances.<sup>22</sup> In linguistics, a deictic

15. *Ibid.*, 24.

16. *Ibid.*, 6.

17. *Ibid.*, 7.

18. *Ibid.*, 293.

19. *Ibid.*, 276.

20. *Ibid.*, 277.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*, 148.

center is determined through context; it only exists relative to a group on the margins.<sup>23</sup> In grammar, the actor at the deictic center is the subject of the sentence and uses active verbs that communicate agency; conversely, the group at the margins is the object of the sentence and is described with passive verbs that communicate a lack of agency and suggests a real-world passivity.<sup>24</sup> Looking at the grammatical structure of utterances, Modan asks who is a core member and who is a marginal member of Mount Pleasant? Who are the “real” residents?

Using Modan’s framework as a guide, I analyzed the written and spoken discourse of the Obama Foundation and the Obama CBA Coalition. These include websites, flyers, social media, spoken statements to the press, and my interviews with coalition members and Woodlawn residents.<sup>25</sup> The term *discourse* means the pattern of themes and linguistic forms in speech and writing that expresses particular views and ideas. My focus is primarily on thematic content, and I examine linguistic form only in the context of locating the deictic center of the speakers’ discourses.

Following Modan, I began by looking at the nexus of discourse and neighborhood identity. What does the use of language about the center say about the foundation’s and coalition’s identities and relationships to Woodlawn? How do both groups perceive change in Woodlawn? I predicted that both would leverage ideas about the “true” identity of the neighborhood in order to advance their goals, perhaps referencing South Side history and culture, as well as the figure of Barack Obama. However, an in-depth reading of the texts of the coalition and foundation reveals that a particular conception of Woodlawn identity was not the consistent thread of the discourse of both groups. Rather, the consistent thread is the justification and legitimization of their use of space in Woodlawn—

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., 157.

25. I have given pseudonyms to some interviewees in order to protect their privacy.

both groups argue for their right to use and shape the space of Woodlawn, and why their argument is credible or authoritative.

In this study, the term *justification* refers to the ideas used by the organizations to respond to the question, “why do you have a right to use and change this space?” The term *legitimization* is the process by which the organizations answer the question, “how do you show you are credible or authoritative enough to make these claims?” Each organization’s position at the deictic center or margin of power affects the ideas that they use to justify and legitimize their geographic claims.

I combined linguistic analysis with an analysis of the cultural geography of Woodlawn. I use the term *geographic assertions* as adapted by black studies and the cultural geography scholar Katherine McKittrick.<sup>26</sup> The coalition frames its geographic assertions in terms of history, desire, and vision: members want to remain in their historically black neighborhood, not only to avoid displacement, but also to envision a kind of development that will benefit them. The foundation frames its geographic assertions in terms of mission and legitimacy: its mission is to bring resources into the South Side by leaders whose original homes were on the South Side. The claims of the foundation and coalition operate on two distinct scales: neighborhood and district.

26. Katherine McKittrick, “Freedom is a Secret: The Future Usability of the Underground,” in *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place*, ed. Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Adrian Woods (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2007), 97–111. McKittrick examines how the history of the Underground Railroad produces geographic assertions about who has knowledge, such as “the claim of black geographic ignorance, the intimate knowledge that black slaves had about their surroundings; and how the Underground Railroad, in the present, gets mapped as a knowable location.”



## Historical Inheritances and Contemporary Dynamics

### History of Woodlawn

Dutch farmers settled in the area now known as Woodlawn in the 1850s, and Chicago annexed it in 1889. The population was small (less than one thousand) until the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition brought twenty thousand new residents to the area.<sup>27</sup>

Since the 1930s and the beginnings of the Great Migration of blacks from the South to the North, the University of Chicago tried to control the racial composition of its neighborhood, Hyde Park, and the surrounding neighborhoods of Oakland, Kenwood, and Woodlawn.<sup>28</sup> A housing shortage during the thirties and forties and subsequent overcrowding led blacks to migrate from the "Black Belt," west of Cottage Grove Avenue.<sup>29</sup> The university and community groups, such as the Hyde Park–Kenwood Community Conference (HPKCC) and the university-sponsored South East Chicago Commission (SECC), shared the perception that Hyde Park was in danger. HPKCC sought to integrate middle-class black families into the neighborhood. SECC sought to keep the area white with restrictive covenants, redlining, and other "urban renewal" efforts.<sup>30</sup> The Blighted Areas Redevelopment Act of 1947 enabled the university to implement the "conserve" development model, initially in Hyde Park and later in Woodlawn.<sup>31</sup> Julian H. Levi, a University of Chicago alumnus

27. Amanda Seligman, "Woodlawn," Encyclopedia of Chicago, 2004, [www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1378.html](http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1378.html).

28. John W. Boyer, *The University of Chicago: A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005).

29. Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940–1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983, 1998), 136.

30. *Ibid.*, 5.

31. *Ibid.*, 137.

and SECC's executive director, developed the university's plan and persuaded the Illinois State Legislature to revise the related "Neighborhood Redevelopment Corporation Act of 1947 to give the university the right of eminent domain (if a redevelopment corporation secured the approval of 60 percent of property owners in a specific area, the corporation could take independent legal action to remove blighted properties)."<sup>32</sup> Historian Arnold Hirsch argues that the university tried to "create an economically upgraded and predominantly white neighborhood,"<sup>33</sup> an effort that extended into the Woodlawn neighborhood and resulted in the demolition of "blighted" properties and subsequent forced housing relocations.<sup>34</sup>

Until the 1950s, Woodlawn had remained mostly white and middle class.<sup>35</sup> By 1960, the area was predominantly black, with more than eighty thousand residents.<sup>36</sup> The public policies associated with urban planning and development "played a key role in fostering, sustaining, and, not infrequently, intensifying the separation of the races even in the absence of Jim Crow legislation."<sup>37</sup>

32. Boyer, 346.

33. Hirsch, 127.

34. Boyer, 35.

35. Loïc Wacquant, *Urban Outcasts: Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2008), 53.

36. *Ibid.*, 57–58.

37. *Ibid.*, viii.

## Contemporary Woodlawn: Development and the Obama Presidential Center

A 2015 study by the architecture firm Gentler found that Woodlawn has an “estimated fifty-nine acres of vacant city-owned land, with an additional eighty-five acres of vacant land owned privately.”<sup>38</sup> In 2017, the real estate brokerage, Redfin, classified Woodlawn as the country’s “third hottest neighborhood” in off-market home values.<sup>39</sup> In the first half of 2017, Woodlawn’s off-market home values increased by 23 percent, compared to 4.6 percent for Chicago overall.<sup>40</sup>

Besides the center, the three other high-profile development plans in Woodlawn are the University of Chicago’s new dorm and convention center and a privately build hotel.<sup>41</sup> The dorm, called Woodlawn Residential

38. Sam Cholke, “Will Obama’s Library Help the South Side? New Group Says That’s Their Goal,” DNAinfo, Mar. 13, 2017, [www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20170313/jackson-highlands/barack-obama-presidential-library-woodlawn-washington-park-south-shore/](http://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20170313/jackson-highlands/barack-obama-presidential-library-woodlawn-washington-park-south-shore/).

39. Jon Whitely, “Hot or Not? Redfin Reviews Its Hottest Neighborhood Predictions and Identifies 10 Areas That Are Just Heating Up,” Redfin, Aug. 18, 2017, [www.redfin.com/blog/hot-or-not-hottest-neighborhood-predictions.htm](http://www.redfin.com/blog/hot-or-not-hottest-neighborhood-predictions.htm). Off-market homes are not listed in the public databases that real-estate agents use to list properties and are only available in exclusive deals between agents and, usually cash, buyers. See, “About the Redfin Estimate,” Redfin, accessed Mar. 20, 2018, [www.redfin.com/redfin-estimate](http://www.redfin.com/redfin-estimate); Laura Agadoni, “Sell Your House without Putting It on the Market,” Trulia, Jan. 3, 2018, [www.trulia.com/blog/how-to-sell-your-house-pocket-listing/](http://www.trulia.com/blog/how-to-sell-your-house-pocket-listing/).

40. Sam Cholke, “Woodlawn Home Values Soar as Obama Library Draws New Interest to Area,” DNAinfo, Sept. 12, 2017, [www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20170912/woodlawn/home-values-increase-redfin-barack-obama-presidential-library-center-prices-real-estate-markets-hot-jackson-park/](http://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20170912/woodlawn/home-values-increase-redfin-barack-obama-presidential-library-center-prices-real-estate-markets-hot-jackson-park/).

41. Grace Hauck, “The Maroon Weekly, E3,” podcast, *Chicago Maroon*, accessed Mar. 5, 2018, [soundcloud.com/chicagomaroonpodcast/the-maroon-weekly-e3](https://soundcloud.com/chicagomaroonpodcast/the-maroon-weekly-e3).

Commons, will be located between Woodlawn and University Avenues on the north side of 61st Street and will house 1,200 students; construction began in 2018, and it will open in 2020.<sup>42</sup> Habitation 3, a New York firm, will build a 180-room hotel, called the Study at the University of Chicago, on the corner of 60th Street and Dorchester Avenue.<sup>43</sup> West of the hotel, at 60th Street and Woodlawn Avenue, the university's new conference center, named the Rubenstein Forum, will host academic conferences, workshops, lectures, meetings, and ceremonies.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, in 2016, the university purchased land in Woodlawn at 63rd Street and University Avenue for the new home for a university charter school.<sup>45</sup> Other recent construction in Woodlawn includes MetroSquash, an educational and recreational center, five apartment buildings and the Woodlawn Resource Center built by the nonprofit Preservation of Affordable Housing Chicago, and a Jewel-Osco grocery and pharmacy at 61st Street and Cottage Grove Avenue.<sup>46</sup>

42. University of Chicago, "University of Chicago to Continue Expansion of College Housing," UChicago News, Jan. 23, 2018, [news.uchicago.edu/article/2018/01/23/university-chicago-continue-expansion-college-housing](https://news.uchicago.edu/article/2018/01/23/university-chicago-continue-expansion-college-housing).

43. Sam Cholke, "U. of C. Unveils Plans for 15-Story Hotel One Block from Obama Library," DNAinfo, May 11, 2017, [www.dnainfo.com/chicago/2017/05/11/woodlawn/university-of-chicago-hotel-obama-library-the-study-rooms/](http://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/2017/05/11/woodlawn/university-of-chicago-hotel-obama-library-the-study-rooms/).

44. Calmetta Coleman, "UChicago Provides Construction and Safety Updates at Woodlawn Meeting," University of Chicago Civic Engagement, May 11, 2017, [civicengagement.uchicago.edu/features/uchicago-provides-construction-and-safety-updates-at-woodlawn-meeting/](https://civicengagement.uchicago.edu/features/uchicago-provides-construction-and-safety-updates-at-woodlawn-meeting/).

45. Sam Cholke, "U. of C. Buys 26 Properties," DNAinfo, Dec. 10, 2014; "New Woodlawn Facility Officially Opens," UChicago Charter, accessed Apr. 14, 2018, [www.uchicagocharter.org/page.cfm?p=538&newsid=30](http://www.uchicagocharter.org/page.cfm?p=538&newsid=30).

46. Mary Wisniewski, "Can a New 'L' Construction Project Turn a Dark Woodlawn Intersection into a Bright Spot?" *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 8, 2018.

The observations of one Woodlawn resident, called Lorenzo for the purpose of the study, captures the lived experience of residents that is not in quantitative data points:

I've watching the neighborhood change in front of my eyes.... It's changed so much since I've been here. You know, redevelopment with the tearing down of the projects, the tearing down of the housing projects on Cottage. It's been quite an experience, you know, seeing the demographics change. I think the property value's going up and I think rent's gonna go up.... It's going to be just a matter of time before a lot of us have to move. I mean, that's the only thing that's scary about that.... See with me, I'm going to school and soon I'll be worth a few more dollars, so I could probably maintain and manage. But the people that's rent is only \$800 for a two-bedroom, if that goes up to 1,000 or 1,200 then they're not gonna be able to do that. If it goes up an extra fifty dollars ... let alone, hundreds. It's gonna be a total shift, probably the next ten, fifteen years, I can guarantee you.... This is going to be Hyde Park Two. When the businesses start coming in and the rent starts going up and you know, people start moving out and the crime goes way down, it's going to look very attractive to anyone.<sup>47</sup>

It is in the context of these changes that community groups have developed stances concerning the effect, unintended or intended, of center on the area.

The Obama Foundation announced in 2015 that the center would be built in Chicago and selected Jackson Park for its location in 2016 (see appendix 1 for timeline).<sup>48</sup> Alderman Willie Cochran, whose 20th Ward

47. Lorenzo (Woodlawn resident), interview with the author, Nov. 6, 2016.

48. Julie Bosman and Mitch Smith, "Chicago Wins Bid to Host Obama Library," *New York Times*, May 12, 2015; Kathy Bergen, Blair Kamin, and Katherine Skiba, "Obama Chooses Historic Jackson Park as Library Site," *Chicago Tribune*, July 27, 2016.

**Table 1: Stakeholders and Their CBA Stances**

Center with CBA	Center without CBA	Relocate from Park
Obama CBA Coalition	Obama Foundation Emerald South Economic Development Collaborative*	Cultural Landscape Foundation Friends of the Park
20th Ward <small>WEST OF THE CENTER</small> Ald. Willie Cochrane Ald. Jeanette Taylor Mayor Lori Lightfoot	5th Ward <small>LOCATION OF THE CENTER</small> Ald. Leslie Hairston*** Mayor Rahm Emanuel	
(anecdotally) low-income or working-class South Siders, including West Woodlawn****	(anecdotally) middle- and upper-income South Siders, including East Woodlawn****	185 University of Chicago faculty

encompasses the majority of Woodlawn west of the park, indicated that, “the residents have mixed feelings [about the center]. Happy because of the promise of hope, jobs, safety, and a vibrant community with more food choices. Temper that with fear of displacement and strangers they know nothing about.”<sup>49</sup> Besides the Obama CBA Coalition, other groups that have responded to the center include Chicago’s Friends of the Park, the DC’s Cultural Landscape Foundation, a group of University of Chicago faculty, and the newly formed Emerald South Economic Development Collaborative (see table 1).

49. Stan West, “South Siders on Obama Library: Listen to Us!” *Chicago Defender*, May 1, 2017.

Mixed Reaction	
Citywide news media**	<p>* Previously, the Woodlawn, Washington Park and South Shore Community and Economic Development Organization.</p> <p>** <i>Chicago Defender</i>, <i>Chicago Reporter</i>, <i>Chicago South Side Weekly</i>, <i>Chicago Sun-Times</i>, <i>Chicago Tribune</i>, and DNAinfo.</p> <p>*** Hairston now supports a CBA after narrowly winning reelection in 2019; her opponent was pro-CBA.<sup>50</sup></p> <p>**** Surveys would be needed to determine the positions of residents in the surrounding neighborhoods.</p> <p>50. Aaron Gettinger, “Hairston Now Backs CBA for Obama Center,” <i>Hyde Park Herald</i>, Mar. 25, 2019.</p>

The network of organizations in Woodlawn and nearby neighborhoods is too complex and intertwined to parse into two “sides,” but in broad strokes, Emerald South represents the “establishment” and the Obama CBA Coalition, the “grassroots.” Like the coalition, Emerald South wants residents to benefit from the center and not be displaced and encourages neighborhood economic activity, but unlike the coalition, Emerald South does not support a CBA.<sup>51</sup> In 2017, the Chicago Community Trust gave

51. Previously called the Woodlawn, Washington Park and South Shore Community and Economic Development Organization ([www.pss.org](http://www.pss.org)), as of 2018, it is called the Emerald South Economic Development Collaborative ([emerald-south.org](http://emerald-south.org)).

the new nonprofit half its start-up costs (\$25,000).<sup>52</sup> Its board includes leaders of the Obama Foundation (Michael Strautmanis, vice president for civic engagement), the City of Chicago (Andrea Zopp, a deputy mayor, and David Reifman, head of planning and development), the University of Chicago (Susan Sher, advisor the president and Michelle Obama's former chief of staff), Network of Woodlawn,<sup>53</sup> the Washington Park Consortium,<sup>54</sup> and the Chicago Community Trust.<sup>55</sup> The board also includes important community religious leaders: Reverends Torrey Barrett, Leon Finney, and Byron Brazier. Barrett is the executive director of the nonprofit Keep Loving Each Other in Washington Park, Finney is the cofounder of the Woodlawn Organization formed in the sixties, and Brazier is the pastor of Apostolic Church of God.<sup>56</sup> Finney and Brazier own

52. In 2018, the Chicago Community Trust gave Emerald South an additional \$250,000, and the organization is seeking an additional \$2 million from other foundations. See, Lisa Bertagnoli, "Next in the Obama Center Story: Neighborhood Development," *Crain's Chicago Business*, Mar. 7, 2018.

53. The nonprofit community-development organization focuses on education, health, safety, and economic development. "About," Network of Woodlawn, accessed Apr. 24, 2018, [www.facebook.com/pg/NetworkofWoodlawn/about/?ref=page\\_internal](http://www.facebook.com/pg/NetworkofWoodlawn/about/?ref=page_internal).

54. Convened by 20th Ward Alderman Willie Cochran, the Washington Park Consortium developed a "Quality-of-Life Plan," with the goal of community and economic development. Its Planning Task Force steering committee included Mattie Hunter, Illinois State Senator; Donna Hampton-Smith, staff member, 5th District Office of Illinois State Representative Ken Dunkin; Sonya Malunda, staff member, Office of Civic Engagement, University of Chicago; and pastors from local churches, such as Rev. Torrey Barrett. "Washington Park Quality of Life Plan," May 2009, LISC Chicago's New Communities Program, [www.newcommunities.org/cmados/WashPark\\_QoLPlan\\_2009.pdf](http://www.newcommunities.org/cmados/WashPark_QoLPlan_2009.pdf).

55. Lynn Sweet, "SWEET: Big Job for Obama Center Nonprofit," *Chicago Sun-Times*, Aug. 30, 2017.

56. Lynn Sweet, "Arne Duncan Is Co-chair of New Nonprofit Related to Obama Center," *Chicago Tribune*, Aug. 29, 2017.



significant amounts of land in Woodlawn and have good relationships with the University of Chicago,<sup>57</sup> residents consider them influential figures, and one columnist for the *Chicago Defender* called them “aristocrats.”<sup>58</sup>

Emerald South’s mission is to capture the economic benefits of the Obama Presidential Center for the surrounding neighborhoods.<sup>59</sup> A CBA is not part of their strategy, and individual members have said publicly that they disagree with a CBA. Emerald South’s website (as well as the Obama Foundation’s website) does not state who founded the organization, but the *Tribune* reports that it was created by the foundation, the city, the university, and the Chicago Community Trust, with help from the Network of Woodlawn and the Washington Park Consortium.<sup>60</sup> Barrett and Brazier were leaders in the planning process and Arne Duncan, Obama’s education secretary, is Emerald South’s cochair.<sup>61</sup> In 2018, the board was developing a business plan and operating model.<sup>62</sup> The symbiotic relationship between the foundation and Emerald South is reminiscent of the relationship in the 1950s between the University of Chicago and the South East Chicago Commission during the “urban renewal” period.<sup>63</sup>

The stance of Chicago journalists towards the center is mixed. *Tribune* architecture critic Blair Kamin argues that the center will not destroy the

57. Andre, Anthony, and Kevin (Woodlawn residents), interview with the author, Nov. 23, 2016.

58. West, “South Siders on Obama Library,” *Chicago Defender*.

59. Sweet, “Arne Duncan Is Co-chair,” *Chicago Sun-Times*.

60. Sweet, “SWEET: Big Job for Obama Center,” *Chicago Sun-Times*.

61. Bertagnoli, “Next in the Obama Center Story,” *Crain’s Chicago Business*; Sweet, “Arne Duncan Is Co-chair,” *Chicago Sun-Times*.

62. Woodlawn, Washington Park and South Shore Community and Economic Development Organization, accessed Mar. 12, 2018, [wwpss.org](http://wwpss.org).

63. Anne Li and Mari Cohen, “The Past and Future of the SECC,” *Chicago South Side Weekly*, Apr. 26, 2017.

intentions of the nineteenth-century architect, Frederick Law Olmstead, who “embraced the need to adapt his parks to changing times and circumstances.”<sup>64</sup> *Tribune* columnist Dahleen Glanton characterizes the CBA proposal as counterproductive to improving conditions on the South Side and appeals to black South Siders to fully support the center. She writes that prolonged South Side disinvestment has left residents unnecessarily cautious and fearful of change: “sometimes we can become so accustomed to not having anything that we forget that we deserve everything. We fear that change could rob of us the few crumbs we have been able to scrape together for ourselves.”<sup>65</sup> *Chicago Reporter* contributor Jitu Brown argues that because of the history of racism in Chicago, a written legal agreement is essential to guarantee that the foundation’s development partners will invest without displacing residents: “while Obama urged residents to ‘trust’ him, we have good reason to want his assurances in writing.”<sup>66</sup>

## Canon of Presidential Libraries

The Obama Presidential Center departs from past presidential libraries in its self-presentation, funding structure, and vision. Presidential libraries have functioned historically as archives and museums—preserving presidential papers and presenting a particular narrative of his presidency, personal life, and aspirations.<sup>67</sup> A presidential foundation raises money

64. Kamin, “Obama Center Plans Won’t Destroy,” *Chicago Tribune*.

65. Dahleen Glanton, “It’s Time for a Heart-to-Heart with African-Americans Who Are Resisting the Obama Center,” *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 1, 2018.

66. Jitu Brown, “Why the Obama Library Needs a Community Benefits Agreement,” *Chicago Reporter*, Oct. 30, 2017. Brown is a member of KOCO, one of the coalition’s founding organizations.

67. “Presidential Libraries promote understanding of the presidency and the American experience. We preserve and provide access to historical materials, support research, and create interactive programs and exhibits that educate and inspire.” “Presidential Library History,” National Archives, last reviewed on Aug. 16, 2016, [www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries/about/history.html](http://www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries/about/history.html).



The Obama Presidential Center

to build the library and prepares the opening exhibit. The National Archive of Records Administration (NARA) appoints a museum director, administers the library, and legally owns many of library's artifacts and papers.<sup>68</sup>

The center's mission envisions the center as a space for experimentation and collaboration and as an economic resource for Chicago, especially on the South Side:

More than a building housing documents from the past, we want this to be a place for visitors to play a real role in building our collective future ... where we will shape, together, what it means to be a good citizen in the 21st century.... For the Obamas, selecting the South Side of Chicago as the location for the Obama Presidential Center represents both a return home and an investment in the city's future.<sup>69</sup>

The center will house only digitized copies of non-classified papers from the Obama administration; the official papers will be stored in existing NARA facilities in Kansas City, Missouri, and College Park, Maryland.<sup>70</sup> The foundation, not NARA, will administer the center, and it cannot accept federal funds.<sup>71</sup> The foundation has used this departure from the canon of presidential libraries to justify and legitimize the presence of the center on the South Side and its use of Jackson Park. But this same organizational change prompted 185 faculty members at the University

68. Jodi Kanter, *Presidential Libraries as Performance: Curating American Character from Herbert Hoover to George W. Bush* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2016), 2.

69. Obama Foundation, accessed Jan. 22, 2018, [www.obama.org](http://www.obama.org).

70. "Information About New Model for Obama Presidential Library," National Archive, last reviewed on Mar. 1, 2019, [www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries/information-about-new-model-for-obama-presidential-library](http://www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries/information-about-new-model-for-obama-presidential-library).

71. Dahleen Glanton, "Breaking Free of Federal Money, Obama Library Could Better Serve Chicago," *Chicago Tribune*, May 15, 2017.

of Chicago to sign an open letter urging the foundation to find an alternative site to Jackson Park, noting that the center “has abandoned its original plans to be a Presidential Library. It will be a private entity with no official connection to the National Archives.”<sup>72</sup>

## Public Discourse of the Obama CBA Coalition

The coalition’s four founding members are Southside Together Organizing for Power (STOP), the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (KOCO), the Bronzeville Regional Collective, and the Prayer and Action Collective (see appendix 2 for a complete list members).<sup>73</sup> STOP and KOCO have a history of successful community organizing and use the Saul Alinsky model of community organizing, which was developed in Woodlawn in the sixties and which focuses on building grassroots community power.<sup>74</sup>

The coalition formed in 2016, conducted town-hall meetings that summer to develop a set of principles, and launched the CBA campaign in September. A second set of town-hall meetings in the summer of 2017 fleshed out the details of the CBA in the areas of housing, economic

72. “Letter from Faculty Concerning the Obama Center,” last updated Feb. 7, 2018, accessed through the Internet Archive, [facultyobamaletter.wufoo.com/forms/z3524m71bfuyo8/](http://facultyobamaletter.wufoo.com/forms/z3524m71bfuyo8/).

73. STOP is based in Woodlawn, KOCO in Kenwood, BRC in Bronzeville, and Prayer and Action Collective (now UChicago for a CBA) in Hyde Park. Some of these organizations had earlier mounted pressure on the university to open a Level-1 Adult Care Trauma Center, which opened in April 2018.

74. Saul D. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals* (New York: Random House, 1971); community organizing can be defined as the process of building group power around a particular problem. The group defines the problem, and using the group’s political leverage to assure that group representatives and ideas are part of the solution.

development, and sustainability, which the coalition proposed to the City of Chicago.<sup>75</sup>

## Self-Presentation

The coalition's website opens with a quote from Barack Obama: "communities ha[ve] to be created, fought for, tended like gardens," followed by a statement, "push back on being pushed back." Immediately, the coalition communicates affinity with Barack Obama's values, by invoking his history of community organizing on the South Side and positing displacement as its central issue.

After a short summary of principal aims (jobs, housing, investment, and schools), the website quotes Deborah Taylor, an activist with KOCO and STOP, two of the four organizations that founded the coalition: "typically, when something major comes into a community, taxes go up, low-income residents are displaced, there is an influx of new residents who want to be in the area—it's sexy—prices go up. We want to be sure when it floats, we float with it." Taylor is a Woodlawn resident who organized STOP with others living in subsidized housing.<sup>76</sup> The coalition presents her as a public face of its interests and mission to advocate for low-income, local residents by combating displacement.

## Principal Geographical Claims

The coalition seeks a "comprehensive South Side master plan, which sustains cultural heritage and prioritizes rewards and incentives to present

75. "2016 Development Principles" and "2018 Ordinance Outline," CBA for the Obama Library.

76. Andre, Anthony, and Kevin (Woodlawn residents), interview with the author, Nov. 23, 2016; for a description of STOP, see, "Southside Together Organizing for Power," Chicago Community Trust, accessed Jan. 22, 2018, [www.cct.org/what-we-offer/grants/southside-together-organizing-for-power/](http://www.cct.org/what-we-offer/grants/southside-together-organizing-for-power/).

residents.”<sup>77</sup> This statement expresses the cultural right of low-income residents to remain in the center’s proximate neighborhoods and to benefit from its economic changes.

Coalition member and Woodlawn resident Kayla Butler asserts her desire to remain in Woodlawn without paying higher rent:

You already know that your community is underfunded. Now you have somebody coming in with a big development that you’re not sure if you’re going to be able to stay around to even enjoy.... I want to know that [my daughter’s] gonna have a sustainable home school that’s going to be able to be open and fully functioning, and that she’s going to be able to have all the education she needs to be able to grow on and go to the next level.... I want to make sure that I’m still able to even afford to live in this neighborhood.... It’s no way that anybody really that lives in that area right now will be able to afford a 1,500 dollar a month studio apartment, one-bedroom apartment when they got five kids.<sup>78</sup>

If rents rise, Butler and her neighbors will only be able to remain in the neighborhood with rent-control measures. Haroon Garel, another coalition member and Woodlawn resident say, “yeah I’m excited, I really think [the center is] a good thing for the neighborhood. But we still want to be here as well, and that’s why we’re asking for a Community Benefits Agreement.”<sup>79</sup> Butler and Garel worry that outsiders with higher incomes will benefit from the neighborhood’s improvements; for them, the coalition and the CBA’s call for rent control and subsidized units in new apartment buildings breaks the pattern of exclusion from gentrification.

77. “2016 Development Principles,” CBA for the Obama Library.

78. Hauck, “The Maroon Weekly,” podcast, *Chicago Maroon*.

79. Ibid.

The coalition goes beyond advocating for continued occupancy of neighborhood space to propose a new vision for development:

While we recognize the old ways of redeveloping black communities have not created community wealth, we see exciting potential to develop differently now. We aim to catalyze measurable and substantial increases in our community wealth and well-being through sustainable, inter-generational land ownership and transfer; increased revenue streams through neighbor-owned businesses and buildings; and revived resources for vibrant lifelong learning.<sup>80</sup>

The coalition invites the center “in concert with the University of Chicago and the City of Chicago” to participate in a new model in which the geographic claims of low-income black residents are recognized and have decision-making roles.

## **Deictic Centers and Their Relevance, Part I**

Residents living in neighborhoods around the center who are at risk of displacement occupy one deictic center in the coalition’s discourse. The phrases “communities surrounding the library,” “surrounding neighborhoods,” and “communities within a five-mile radius of the library” appear repeatedly on the coalition’s website.<sup>81</sup> The coalition’s development principles focus on the most vulnerable populations in “the surrounding neighborhoods” and state that the majority of center jobs should “go to residents from the communities surrounding the library.” It invites the foundation, city, and university, collective the Library, to support the

80. “2016 Development Principles,” CBA for the Obama Library.

81. A five-mile radius includes Woodlawn, Hyde Park, South Shore, Avalon Park, Kenwood, Grand Boulevard, and parts of Auburn Gresham, Calumet Heights, and Back of the Yards.



formation of “a Federation of Community Land Trusts in the surrounding neighborhoods,” to set aside “new housing for low-income housing in the area surrounding the Library,” to “partner with local schools,” to increase “green open space for... local users,” and to “support local small business development.”<sup>82</sup>

The economically vulnerable also occupy this deictic center. The coalition asks the trio of institutions to reserve employment for “people in low-income housing, ex offenders, youth, seniors and long-time unemployed.” Regarding housing, 30 percent of new and renovated rentals should be “set aside for households earning between 0–50 percent of the AMI [Average Medium Income],” and there should be a community land trust. For property owners, the coalition wants a “property tax freeze or exemption for existing dwellings within a two-mile radius of the Obama Presidential Center for residents who can verify ten years of residency within a five-mile radius.”<sup>83</sup>

Individual coalition members likewise emphasize the economically vulnerable. Jeanette Taylor addressed then President Obama during one of the foundation’s public meetings: “the first time investment comes to black communities, the first to get kicked out is low-income and working-class people. Why wouldn’t you sign a CBA to protect us?” Kyla Butler, another coalition member, STOP organizer, and Woodlawn resident pointed out the economic straits of some residents, including her own: “right now I’m paying \$535 for my one-bedroom and I got that one by luck. But if you look at the rest of the one-bedroom apartments

82. “2016 Development Principles,” CBA for the Obama Library; a community land trust owns land collectively in urban neighborhoods, maintains rents at below the market rate, and helps build intergenerational wealth for low-income families. Usually each unit is rented by the same family for ninety-nine years. See, John Emmeus Davis, ed., *The Community Land Trust Reader* (Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2010).

83. “2018 Ordinance Outline,” CBA for the Obama Library.

within this area, they're \$800.... Some people is not even making \$500 a week at their job. It's just going to be a continuous cycle.<sup>84</sup>

The coalition itself occupies a second deictic center in coalition discourse, which uses active verbs ("push" and "demand") to communicate force and agency. The coalition has "critical stakeholders" with the "perspectives, skills, and goals to coordinate, collaborate, and engage with the Library."<sup>85</sup> These verbs imply that the coalition has the credibility and status to be an interlocutor to the Library. The Library may have material and political resources, but the coalition's discourse reveals a powerful and competing resource that the Library does not possess: its members are "seasoned community development practitioners and the leadership of low-income and working African American tenants, home and business owners, youth, seniors, and long-time residents."<sup>86</sup>

What is more, the coalition is justified in being a deictic center, because it includes "long-term" Woodlawn residents, such as coalition member Haroon Gareh:

I grew up at the 6200 block of Kimbark. My grandmother, she was the block club president, Geraldine Moore, since 1985.... I'm one of the organizers with the Community Benefits Agreement.... We don't want the property taxes to go up sky high in the neighborhood, when the Obama Presidential Center comes, 'cus some people may be prized out of the neighborhood, if they grew up here, like me. I've been over here for thirty years.<sup>87</sup>

84. Hauck, "The Maroon Weekly," podcast, *Chicago Maroon*.

85. "2016 Development Principles," CBA for the Obama Library.

86. Ibid.

87. Brian Cassella, "Neighborhood Hopes for Obama Presidential Center Impact," *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 14, 2018.

Garel's grandmother and one of her best friends, Ma Fuller, are two of the neighborhood's elder figures who led projects for social improvements earlier in their lives.<sup>88</sup> Garel interweaves his generational roots in Woodlawn and his identity as a CBA organizer to legitimize a geographic claim that places the Library at the margins of the discourse. Garel asserts that occupying a space ("resident"), having a connection to its history ("long-term resident"), and participating in it ("community member") grants him the right to stay in this space and to shape its future. The logic of his claim transcends free-market economics, which grants only private property owners rights to a particular space and which makes property rights "natural," a form of "common sense" and "hegemony."<sup>89</sup> The constructed paradigm of the free market favors those in power who can disregard and displace those who cannot pay rising rents or property taxes.<sup>90</sup>

The coalition's counter-hegemonic geographical claim derives from long-term residency, such as Garel's, and from historical and contemporary barriers to black ownership. The coalition's status as a primarily black organization, the cultural context of the South Side, and the goal of protecting primarily black low-income residents reflects a particular world view. People of color in the United States tend to conceive of identity as linked to the formation of and participation in a community. Community is not a loosely related circle of acquaintances; it is a group of people who

88. Andre, Anthony, and Kevin (Woodlawn residents), interview with the author, Nov. 23, 2016.

89. Mitchell, *The Right to the City*, 132. Mitchell argues that "in the context of an evolving capitalist American state, citizenship is defined through a process whereby owners of private property freely join together to create a public, which forms the critical functional element of the public realm"; see also, Tim Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 3–4.

90. See, *ibid.*, 14. "The analytical power of the concept comes from the way it connects ideas of what exists, what is good, and what is possible to various forms of power relations. Ideology ... is 'meaning in the service of power.'"

have personal relationships with each other, make personal decisions conscious of the effect on the group, and depend on one another emotionally, financially, and spiritually. For African American culture, participation in a community affects how individuals define themselves, conceive of their personal purpose, make decisions, and interact with the world.<sup>91</sup> Dependence on others is a strength (not a sign of weakness or immaturity) and is sometimes necessary for survival.<sup>92</sup>

The community-focused construction of identity means that the threat of geographic displacement is not merely a threat of eviction from a physical space but an existential expulsion from the community developed in that space. For many residents of Woodlawn and nearby neighborhoods, like Kayla Butler and Haroon Garel, the space of their neighborhood provides a home in the form of a collective identity and deep relationships formed over time. Displacement means a destruction of the community fabric, which destabilizes and fractures the individual's identity. What is more, displacement separates residents from the social network that helps them survive economic and personal hardships.

The second aspect of the coalition's justification for remaining in Woodlawn is the historic exclusion of black neighborhoods from the resources necessary to own land. The legacy of slavery and Jim Crow—historical redlining, contemporary predatory loan practices, scarcity of

91. J. S. Phinney, J. Dennis, and S. Osorio, "Reasons to Attend College among Ethnically Diverse College Students," *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 12, no. 2 (2006): 347–66. A principal educational motivation for students of color, as compared to white students, is the desire to help their families.

92. "In comparison to White Americans, African Americans tend to have a more collectivist worldview." Collectivism can be defined as "a cultural orientation that drives an individual to put the needs of others in their group over the needs of themselves," opposite on the spectrum to individualism, which "is the tendency to put the needs of self over others' needs." Carmen McCallum, "Giving Back to the Community: How African Americans Envision Utilizing Their PhD," *Journal of Negro Education* 86, no. 2 (Spring 2017): 140.

employment and educational opportunities conducive to wealth accumulation, the mass-incarceration of black men, and discriminatory policing—have blocked black families from buying property and creating intergenerational wealth.<sup>93</sup> Only a minority of residents in black neighborhoods have the capital or property necessary to remain in their homes and neighborhoods once real estate development accelerates. Lacking capital, the coalition must use occupancy of a space, and the participation in community fabric this implies, as part of the justification for remaining and having some control over that space.

## Deictic Centers and Their Relevance, Part II

When the coalition talks about the political and economic authority to use and shape neighborhood spaces, and by extension to effect social and political changes, the deictic center is the Library, the combination of the foundation, the city, and the university. The coalition's discourse justifies its claim for a CBA by identifying the history of actions by the city and university on the South Side, Barack Obama's personal and political connections to the South Side, and the moral obligations that stem from this history and their political and economic power. As coalition member Haroon Garel says in a *Tribune* article,

Yes, I do agree that some voices are being heard more than others. You know, we live in a community where it's about one hundred units of government-subsidized housing. These are the majority of the people who are asking for the Community Benefits Agreement. We've been pushed to the side.<sup>94</sup>

93. Janelle Jones, John Schmitt, and Valerie Wilson, "Fifty Years after the Kerner Commission," Economic Policy Institute, Feb. 26, 2018, [www.epi.org/publication/50-years-after-the-kerner-commission/](http://www.epi.org/publication/50-years-after-the-kerner-commission/).

94. Cassella, "Neighborhood Hopes," *Chicago Tribune*.

Here, the residents are passive objects of the Library's actions, which pushes them to the margins, "to the side." The coalition's website uses forceful verbs to say residents are "being pushed out" and links the Library to theft, greed, and force:

What will the Obama library take? Obama's library will consume twenty-one to twenty-two acres of one of our public parks.... With this construction we'll face the loss of free public space, and we'll lose that space to a development that won't contribute to the neighborhood's tax base. (As a 501(c)(3), the library won't pay many taxes.)<sup>95</sup>

The future tense, "will," means the loss of space is certain and unavoidable; the verb "consume" communicates voraciousness; and there is a sense of unfairness: the Library will not be taxed for use of space.

The center's connection to other presidential libraries further cements it as the deictic center in the coalition's discourse about power. The 2017 template for coalition's "Dear President Obama" letter-writing campaign reads, "we are prepare for the arrival of a \$500 million Presidential Library in Jackson Park. Write a letter to President Obama explaining why your community needs a CBA for his Presidential Library." The coalition twice notes the center's participation in the canon of presidential libraries and frames the library as belonging to Obama, "his Presidential Library," hinting at Obama's political sway and abundant external financial resources.

In the coalition's discourse, the actions of the university in Woodlawn also marginalizes the coalition and residents. Garel explained that "this is a community that has been gentrified because of the University of Chicago is growing and expanded.... We stay over here in Woodlawn

95. "Background," CBA for the Obama Library, accessed Jan. 22, 2018, [www.obamacba.org/background.html](http://www.obamacba.org/background.html).

where the university is constantly building.”<sup>96</sup> The coalition’s 2018 flyer expresses a similar sentiment: “the Obama Center is coming to Jackson Park and now the University of Chicago is planning to build a Luxury Hotel and Restaurant, a new Dorm, and a Conference Center all in Woodlawn.”<sup>97</sup> The flyer concludes that the university’s expansion will lead to gentrification: “real estate interests are planning luxury condos and housing we can’t afford.”<sup>98</sup>

## Justification and Legitimization of Claims

### History of Development on the South Side

The coalition’s website and the 2017 “Dear President Obama” template letter outline a pattern of broken promises to black neighborhoods by developers, arguing that this history necessitates a legally binding CBA:

Keep in mind is Chicago’s long history of displacing poor people of color. It repeatedly seems that when our city and our government make “improvements,” Black families are displaced and disenfranchised. Construction of the Dan Ryan expressway displaced Blacks along State Street in the 1950s and 60s. In 2013, Chicago Public Schools closed 50 of our neighborhood schools. People’s homes have been demolished. Between 2000 and 2010, 180,000 Black people moved out of Chicago after the City’s “Plan for Transformation” to improve the Chicago Housing Authority’s public housing. And now President Barack Obama, in collaboration with the City of Chicago, the University of Chicago, and the Obama Foundation are planning to “improve” communities with a \$500 million library.<sup>99</sup>

96. Cassella, “Neighborhood Hopes,” *Chicago Tribune*.

97. “Stop Displacement,” flyer, Obama CBA Coalition, 2018.

98. Ibid.

99. “Background,” CBA for the Obama Library.

The scare quotes around “improvements” communicate the absurdity or dishonesty of this term in the eyes of the coalition. The implied question is “for *whom* were the improvements?” Here, “improvements” are synonymous with displacing low-income black residents of the South Side. The interests of displaced residents do not count in a city where the definition of “improvements” is their eviction or forced migration.

The memory of the 1999 Plan for Transformation, in which the city demolished public housing, is fresh among Woodlawn residents. The city “called for the demolition of 18,000 units of neglected public housing and the construction or renovation for 25,000 units” but only constructed 8,000 new units.<sup>100</sup> Many former public housing residents left the city, and those who stayed had to use government-issued vouchers (“Section 8”) for private housing, which is concentrated on the South and West Sides.<sup>101</sup> Some former Cabrini-Green residents moved from the near North Side to South Shore, Englewood, and Woodlawn.<sup>102</sup> Kayla Butler, a coalition member and STOP organizer, remembers the demolitions:

I used to live in what was once Stateway Gardens with my grandmother. And then I used to live in what was once LeClaire Courts,<sup>103</sup> which is on the West Side of Chicago.... Stateway Gardens ... was on 47th, 49th and State on down. They moved a lot of those people

100. Jake Bittle, Srishti Kapur, and Jasmine Mithani, “Redeveloping the State Street Corridor,” *South Side Weekly*, Jan. 31, 2017.

101. Maya Dukmasova, “The CHA’s ‘Supervoucher’ Program,” *Chicago Reader*, Apr. 28, 2016.

102. Joel Hammernick (Woodlawn resident and executive director of Sunshine Gospel Ministries and Sunshine Enterprises), interview with the author, Nov. 6, 2016.

103. “Lucia Anaya, “Former LeClaire Courts Residents Are Still Fighting to Go Home,” *Chicago Reader*, Aug. 4, 2016, [www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/leclaire-courts-redevelopment-controversy-cha/Content?oid=23039100](http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/leclaire-courts-redevelopment-controversy-cha/Content?oid=23039100)



out of that area, out of those buildings, promised them they were gonna be able to come back. Only so many of them was able to come back. Only a small percentage of them was able to come back.... I'm also a product of what happens when you push everybody of a low-income residency into one area.<sup>104</sup>

The lived experience of Chicago residents in their twenties, thirties, and forties creates a bond with the memories of their elders of the city's broken promises and displacement. Butler, who is in her early twenties, went on to observe how new development around her former home is creating an upper-income neighborhood attractive to whites: "Now when you go to 49th and State you see it's a Starbucks and you see it's a bunch of things there that are not for people that, you know, would typically live in that community, or live in that area at a different time." Lorenzo, another Woodlawn resident, told a similar story of displacement from Cabrini-Green Homes:

I come from the Near North Side, so I've seen that neighborhood get destroyed and get gentrified.... It's got shopping centers and police stations and easy transportation. Its buses go every which way through there.... There's a Target over there. The people that have stayed, they enjoy the new environment and the opportunity to be able to be a part of it, [but] a lot of people weren't even allowed to [stay], and I think that's how it's going to be over here. A lot of people aren't going to be allowed to stay.... Nobody's really forcing them out, but they're pricing them out.<sup>105</sup>

104. Hauck, "The Maroon Weekly," podcast, *Chicago Maroon*; "Chicago Housing Authority LeClaire Courts Transportation Access Study," Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Dec. 2013, [www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs/ltl/cha-leclaire-courts](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs/ltl/cha-leclaire-courts).

105. Lorenzo (Woodlawn resident), interview with the author, Nov. 6, 2016.

The coalition also remembers the history of the university's interventions in Hyde Park and surrounding neighborhoods. A student leader in the coalition says that the university has "a long, long history of supporting urban renewal policies in the Hyde Park area that were specifically intended to keep black people out of the neighborhood. There were a lot of demolitions that went on to get rid of low-income housing and replace it with less-dense, higher-income housing so that you wouldn't have more African Americans moving into the neighborhood."<sup>106</sup> The university's actions against its black neighbors continue today with the construction of a new dorm, hotel, and convention center in Woodlawn, which "keep driving up rent prices in the neighborhood," and driving out current black residents.<sup>107</sup>

### **Morality**

The coalition's discourse frames the resistance of the Library's three constituent institutions' resistance to a CBA in moral terms. The Library "can help build the kind of communities that Obama fought for, OR it could displace longtime residents." The coalition appealed to the Library's conscience by organizing a prayer vigil before the foundation's second public meeting on February 27, 2018.<sup>108</sup> Charles Perry, a coalition member, led a prayer: "Father God, we thank you for your loving kindness, your grace and your mercy, Father God. We're asking you to change their hearts, that they would not come in and do destruction in the community by displacing folks in the community and running folks out."<sup>109</sup> As a form of discourse, a pray intensifies the extent of the Library's immorality by arguing that the three institutions have failed in their moral obligation to legally guarantee benefits to its neighbors.

106. Hauck, "The Maroon Weekly," podcast, *Chicago Maroon*.

107. Ibid.

108. Bowean and Kamin, "Obama Makes Pitch," *Chicago Tribune*.

109. Ibid.

### Barack Obama's Political Career

The coalition's campaign materials draw on the values, slogans, and images of Obama's 2008 and 2012 presidential campaigns, arguing that Obama's own principles should lead him to support a CBA, which

holds the promise of helping our community to help ourselves. The CBA promises to affirm the hope, change, and progress that your Presidency and legacy represents to us. You have said that "communities ha[ve] to be created, fought for, tended like gardens," in that spirit we are doing just that by organizing for a CBA. We hope you will support us.<sup>110</sup>

The coalition's discourse transforms the emblematic campaign slogan, "Yes We Can," into a Twitter hashtag, "#yeswecan," to reference negotiating for a CBA. It uses the 2008 HOPE poster, replacing "HOPE" with "CBA" to express the idea that the CBA continues the ideals of Obama's first presidential campaign (see fig. 1).



**Figure 1:** Obama's 2008 "HOPE" poster recast with "CBA."

110. "Dear President Obama," template letter, CBA Campaign, 2017.

The coalition draws a parallel between Obama's community organizing on the South Side and its own strategies. Its campaign epigraph, "communities ha[ve] to be created, fought for, tended like gardens," is from Obama's memoir, where he speaks of the motivations and ideals that led to him becoming a community organizer:

I wasn't alone in my particular struggles, and that communities had never been a given in our country, at least not for blacks. Communities had to be created, fought for, tended like gardens. They expanded with the dreams of men—and in the civil rights movement those dreams had been large. In the sit-ins, the marches, the jailhouse songs, I saw the African-American community becoming more than just the place where you'd been born or the house where you'd been raised. Through organizing, through shared sacrifice, membership had been earned.... This community I imagined was still in the making.... This was my idea of organizing. It was the promise of redemption.<sup>111</sup>

The coalition's quotation calls forth an entire set of values and worldview, in which community organizing develops black communities and fights for the rights of blacks. By connecting to Obama's personal history, the coalition legitimizes its geographical claims that a community is more than "just the place where you'd been born or the house where you'd been raised."

## Home

In a portion of the 2017 "Dear President Obama" template letter the deictic center is shared by the coalition and the center: "your library is coming home to the South Side, where I live. With a Community Benefits Agreement, your legacy too has a chance to come home, to its roots in communities organizing for the greater good." By establishing that

111. Barack Obama, *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1994, 2004), 134–45.

Obama is returning to his origins, which made him into who he is today, the coalition positions itself as a legitimate petitioner, one that “lives,” and Obama as the returning son, the one who “is coming home.” The South Side gave, and now it is its time to receive.

## Public Discourse of the Obama Foundation

In January 2018, I analyzed the discourse on the Obama Foundation’s website in order to understand the foundation’s self-presentation to the public. The foundation is responsible for raising funds for the Obama Presidential Center and developing programming. The foundation’s mission is

to inspire and empower people to change their world. From leaders who are already making an impact, to people who are interested in becoming more involved, but don’t know where to start, our goal is to make our programs accessible to anyone, anywhere. We’ll equip civic innovators, young leaders, and everyday citizens with the skills and tools they need to create change in their communities. It’s a big job, and we’re just getting started. Learn about our first set of projects and join us in this experiment in citizenship for the 21st century.<sup>112</sup>

### Self-Presentation

The foundation presents the site of the future center as the “heart” of the South Side:

We’re building a campus for active citizenship in the heart of Chicago’s South Side.... The Obama Presidential Center will be

112. “Our Mission,” Obama Foundation, accessed Jan. 22, 2018, [www.obama.org/mission/](http://www.obama.org/mission/).

... an economic engine for the city of Chicago, ... creating thousands of new jobs on the South Side—and will help to continue the revitalization of historic Jackson Park.<sup>113</sup>

The biological and generative language positions the center itself—not just its location—in the “heart” of the South Side. The choice of “active” to describe the kind of citizenship that the center seeks to foster and the organic description of the campus as a “living” space, communicate ideas of life and movement.

At the February 2018 public meeting, the foundation framed the center as a means for the South Side to be known to a wider audience. On an eight-by-eight-foot poster, attendees could answer the question, “what do you want to showcase to the world?”<sup>114</sup> The website says the center will draw “hundreds of thousands of visitors every year, ... allowing the Foundation to encourage and affect change locally, and showcase the South Side to the rest of the world.”<sup>115</sup> In the foundation’s descriptions of the center’s future programming and architectural design, “visitor” appears repeatedly, suggesting a tourist or someone from another part of Chicago.

The planned design for the center has five elements: a forum building, museum, branch of a Chicago Public Library, athletic facility, and plaza.<sup>116</sup> The 859-word description of the plan barely mentions architectural features, but instead focuses on what will happen in and around the building: the word “public” appears eleven times, “visitors” seven times, “community” five times, and “free and open to the public” three times.<sup>117</sup>

113. Ibid.

114. “The Obama Presidential Center Public Meeting,” Obama Foundation, Feb. 27, 2018, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdMLB2c8keM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdMLB2c8keM).

115. “Sign Up for Presidential Center Updates,” Obama Foundation, accessed Jan. 22, 2018, [www.obama.org/chicago-community-newsletter/](http://www.obama.org/chicago-community-newsletter/).

116. “The Obama Presidential Center,” Obama Foundation.

117. Ibid.

## Deictic Centers and Their Relevance

The foundation is the deictic center of its own discourse. The future center in the geographical and metaphorical “heart” of the South Side will be a “platform” for the reputation of the South Side to expand. The foundation’s discourse places the center is in the middle of action, like a magnet, “drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors every year.” Relative to resources, the center is at the core and the South Side and the general public are on the margins. In terms of inherent value or importance, however, the deictic center is the South Side, visitors, and the community. The center’s location “in the heart of the South Side” suggests that the neighborhood is a living being. The center’s status as a “platform” facilitates outsiders’ knowledge of the South Side’s already existing value.

The presence of two deictic centers—the center relative to resources and the importance of the South Side and its people—communicates an idea of equality or comparability between the center and the South Side. The foundation’s website and spokespersons use terms like *partnership* and *collaboration* repeatedly:

The Center is a work in progress, built in direct partnership with thousands of people who have offered their feedback in-person and online.... The Obama Presidential Center is, first and foremost, a collaboration with our neighbors.... As Chicago-area residents, you’re our neighbors and partners in building this campus for active citizenship.<sup>118</sup>

We want this to be a place for visitors to play a real role in building our collective future... [a] project where we will shape, together, what it means to be a good citizen in the 21st century.<sup>119</sup>

118. “Chicago, Join Us #ObamaFoundation,” Scene Magazine, Feb. 27, 2018, scene-chicago.com/scene/index.php/chicago-join-us-obamafoundation/.

119. “The Obama Presidential Center,” Obama Foundation.

The foundation describes the center as a democratic collaboration with the community, and, according to Board Chair Martin Nesbitt, the foundation's leaders are open to suggestion: "we came to this with open minds and a plan to have an iterative process, and that's reflected in where we're going."<sup>120</sup> The foundation's February 2018 RSVP states, "we will host a public meeting to continue gathering input from our neighbors across Chicago on the design and development of the Obama Presidential Center as well as future programming ... share your thoughts, questions, and ideas."<sup>121</sup> Obama told meeting attendees, "we'll have the opportunity to continually upgrade and update the programs that we're doing and the community will have continuing input in how that evolves."<sup>122</sup>

The foundation's discourse expresses that collaboration is not only an ideal or the jargon of public relations, but a reality: the website's "You spoke—and we listened" section lists twelve examples of public input and the foundation's response. For example, to "you wanted to see more landscaping," the foundation responded,

We added a berm to the East Side of the campus. Landscape berms now surround the garage and the sides of the garage were opened for ventilation. [The] vehicle entrance at the parking facility [is] now covered by landscape. [The] parking facility was lowered a half floor below grade. [The] size of the above-grade volume of the Forum building was reduced.<sup>123</sup>

120. Lisa Bertagnoli, "Obama Foundation Puts a Price Tag on Presidential Center," *Crain's Chicago Business*, Jan. 10, 2018.

121. "Rooted in Chicago and Designed with You, Obama Foundation, accessed Jan. 22, 2018, [https://www.obama.org/chicago\\_/](https://www.obama.org/chicago_/).

122. "The Obama Presidential Center Public Meeting," Obama Foundation.

123. "Rooted in Chicago and Designed with You, Obama Foundation.



Scattered throughout the site are invitations to participate and examples of past public input, such as, “learn more about our plans for the Center—and how you’ve helped shape them.”<sup>124</sup> The principal public contributors are the “community,” “neighbors across Chicago,” “visitors,” and “you.”

Together with the large February 2018 public meeting in McCormick Place (a prominent convention center in Chicago), the foundation and various city entities (the Chicago Park District, the Department of Transportation, the 5th Ward) held eight public meetings in 2017.<sup>125</sup> By throwing a wide net to the public, the foundation furthers the idea of equal power between itself and those interested in the center. These meetings also made it difficult for detractors to argue that the center’s planning is exclusive, self-interested, and not community-centered. Obama encapsulates this ethos of equality, saying “Michelle and I are absolutely grateful to all of you for being a part of all this remarkable process.”<sup>126</sup> However, given the foundation’s resources, ability to raise \$500 million, and political power, the idea of equality is strained.

## Principal Geographical Claims

To legitimize geographical claims to Jackson Park, the foundation needs the support of the residents of the South Side neighborhoods around the center. It must assert that its use of Jackson Park will be aligned with the well-being of the South Side and not with for-profit businesses or the university’s expansion plans.

124. Ibid.

125. Lynn Sweet, “Obama Foundation Officials Host Meeting Sept. 14 for Public Input,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, Sept. 7, 2017. On December 1, 2017, the city’s Departments of Transportation and of Planning held a private meeting with the Obama Foundation to discuss the impact of the center on Jackson Park, which was part of the formal federal government review process.

126. Leah Hope, “Obama Foundation Submits Presidential Center Plans amid Opposition,” *Eyewitness News*, ABC 7, Jan. 10, 2018.

## Justification and Legitimization

### Home

The foundation legitimizes the center's presence in Woodlawn by showing that the Obamas have the moral, historical, and cultural authority to change the neighborhood they once called home.

During a November 2017 summit for young leaders, Michelle Obama addressed the reasons the Obamas selected Chicago for the future center:

It is so good to be home. Home!... Bringing the foundation [to Chicago] was important to us because we love this city. It is a special place. This is the city that raised me. It is the city that connected me to the love of my life.... The question isn't why would we be here in Chicago on the South Side, but why not? Why not. Chicago has an amazing array of resources. We have great organizations, we have great faith-based leaders, we have strong culture, we have music, we have talent, we have history, we have organizing, we have beauty.<sup>127</sup>

All of the characteristics she names are attached to a specific South Side quality. The South Side is known for faith leaders and congregations heavily involved in community activities and activism. It is the birthplace of community organizing by Saul Alinsky and the Woodlawn Organization against the University of Chicago's "urban renewal" policies of the fifties and sixties.<sup>128</sup> Michelle Obama's identification of "strong culture, music, talents, history, and beauty" refers tacitly to black culture on the South Side. She stands next to Chance the Rapper, a nationally known hip-hop artist who grew up in the South Side neighborhood of West

127. "We Love This City: First Lady Michelle Obama Speaks to Chicagoans," Obama Foundation, Nov. 7, 2017, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RBt198C5VE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RBt198C5VE).

128. Edward McLelland, "Meet the Community Organizers Fighting Against Barack Obama," *Politico*, Feb. 28, 2018, [www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/02/28/barack-obama-library-chicago-217093](http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/02/28/barack-obama-library-chicago-217093).

Chatham.<sup>129</sup> The site of the center is blocks away from sections of 63rd Street that were the hub of the jazz and blues scene in the fifties and sixties, in clubs owned by black business owners and bands led by black artists.<sup>130</sup>

In another foundation video, Barack Obama establishes Chicago as pivotal in his life:

All the strands of my life came together and I really became a man when I moved to Chicago. That's where I was able to apply that early idealism to try to work in communities in public service. That's where I met my wife. That's where my children were born. And the people there, the community, the lessons that I learned, they're all based right in these few square miles where we'll be able to now give something back and bring the world back home after this incredible journey.<sup>131</sup>

He presents the center as an opportunity to “now give something back” to his home, cementing the idea of the center as inherently community focused and concerned with the public good.

The foundation's website reinforces the theme of South Side as “home,” with a timeline of landmarks in the couple's life, showcasing pictures and information about Michelle's childhood, the Obamas' first date, and their wedding on the South Side.<sup>132</sup>

The relationship between the Obamas and the South Side gives the foundation the credibility to build the center and also to negate a CBA.

129. David Drake, “Who Is Chance the Rapper?” *Complex*, Mar. 23, 2013, [www.complex.com/music/2013/03/who-is-chance-the-rapper/](http://www.complex.com/music/2013/03/who-is-chance-the-rapper/).

130. Wacquant, *Urban Outcasts*, 53.

131. “Obama Foundation Announces South Side as Home for Library,” Obama Foundation, May 12, 2015, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2Q3xFpf-KE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2Q3xFpf-KE).

132. “Our Story,” Obama Foundation, accessed Jan. 22, 2018, [www.obama.org/our-story/#raised-south-side](http://www.obama.org/our-story/#raised-south-side).

The foundation's website traces Barack Obama's professional history with a timeline of his community organizing in Chicago's Roseland neighborhood, his position as a professor of constitutional law at the University of Chicago, his leadership in Illinois Project Vote! (an initiative to increase turn out of voters of color in Illinois), and his term as a US senator.<sup>133</sup> Obama responded to a Woodlawn resident and community organizer's question—"why wouldn't you sign a CBA to protect us?"<sup>134</sup>—by saying,

I was a community organizer. I *know* the neighborhood. I know that the minute you start saying well, we're thinking about signing something that will determine who's getting jobs ... next thing I know I've got twenty organizations that are coming out of the woodwork, some of them I've never heard before.<sup>135</sup>

Jitu Brown, a CBA supporter and member of KOCO, one of the coalition's founding organizations, asked Obama the same question and reported that Obama told the audience to "trust" him.<sup>136</sup> The foundation says it "shares the goals of many in the community" that South Side neighborhoods "are enhanced and supported, that families are able to stay in their homes, and that our workforce is representative," but it argues against a CBA, saying it would only benefit a few. It concludes by saying it has joined with the Emerald South Economic Development Collaborative to "addresses systemic challenges."<sup>137</sup>

The foundation also evokes the collective hope of Obama's 2008 and

133. "Where It Began," Obama Foundation, accessed Jan. 22, 2018, [www.obama.org/chapter/chicago-where-it-began/](http://www.obama.org/chapter/chicago-where-it-began/).

134. McLelland, "Meet the Community Organizers," *Politico*.

135. Hauck, "The Maroon Weekly," podcast, *Chicago Maroon*.

136. Brown, "Why the Obama Library Needs a CBA," *Chicago Reporter*.

137. "About the Obama Presidential Center," Obama Foundation, accessed July 27, 2019, [www.obama.org/chicago/opc-faq](http://www.obama.org/chicago/opc-faq).

2012 presidential campaigns with the campaign slogan, “Yes We Can,” and suggests that the foundation is part of a democratic grassroots effort, similar to Obama’s campaign, by inviting the public’s feedback with a quote from a 2012 Obama speech: “Your voice matters. Your voice makes a difference.”<sup>138</sup>

### Departure from Tradition

The foundation uses the center’s relationship to the canon of presidential libraries and their “public” character to justify its presence in Woodlawn:

The Obama Presidential Center is more than a building or a museum. It’s a space for all of us to come together, collaborate, and leave ready to go change our worlds.... The Library Building is the third main building of the campus—a portal for visitors to engage with the world beyond the Obama Presidential Center. More than a building housing documents from the past, we want this to be a place for visitors to play a real role in building our collective future.... The Museum... will have a relatively small footprint within the Campus.<sup>139</sup>

The foundation distinguishes the center from past presidential libraries that enshrine the legacy of a particular president, “we are not like other presidential libraries.”<sup>140</sup> “More than a library or a museum, it will be a living, working center for citizenship,” according to Obama.<sup>141</sup> The center is described as a “campus,” which communicates a sense of activity and

138. The “Yes We Can” slogan was repurposed as a foundation logo at the February 2018 public meeting and the 2012 campaign quote appear on Obama Foundation’s website devoted to public input, accessed Jan. 22, 2018, [www.obama.org](http://www.obama.org). As of 2019, the quote has been removed.

139. “Rooted in Chicago and Designed with You,” Obama Foundation.

140. *Ibid.*

141. “What’s Next for Barack and Michelle Obama,” Obama Foundation, Jan. 20, 2017, [youtube/ODVxuN6m6E8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODVxuN6m6E8).

learning, a place where participants have agency, exchange knowledge, look to the future, and seek transformation: “it’s a space for all us to come together, collaborate, and leave ready to go change our worlds.”<sup>142</sup>

## Conclusion

Having examined the Obama Community Benefits Agreement Coalition’s and the Obama Foundation’s use of language in their public discourse, this study’s opening and central question returns: how do residents and a major developer make geographic assertions?

The foundation’s and coalition’s discourses overlap in several ways. Both use almost identical material to justify and legitimize claims to space: the Obamas’ history on the South Side, the status of the South Side as their home, Barack Obama’s history of community organizing, the mission of the foundation, and the center’s status as an innovative presidential library. Both make geographical assertions about the same area, but the scale is different: The foundation’s claim is the South Side (a district) and the coalition’s claim is Woodlawn (a neighborhood). The foundation plans to bring resources to the South Side and make the South Side a “destination.” The coalition also wants resources on the South Side for the residents who already live there, but they do not want the South Side to become a “destination” for real estate speculators who will displace the most vulnerable.

Both organizations are concerned with the historical lack of investment in the South Side and agree about the need for resources, but they differ in how to address the problem. For the foundation, the problem is the lack of economic activity on the South Side as a whole and the devaluation of the South Side by the rest of Chicago and the country. For the coalition, the problem is displacement of low-income residents, and the solution is prioritizing surrounding neighborhoods as the beneficiaries of resources brought by the center.

142. “Rooted in Chicago and Designed with You,” Obama Foundation.

The coalition is keenly aware of the power differential between itself—whose core constituents are low-income residents—and the Library. The coalition's discourse uses multiple deictic centers to reflect prevailing power dynamics. When the coalition make claims over space of Woodlawn, the deictic center is occupied by long-term Woodlawn residents. They are the active agents; other players remain at the margins of the discourse in mere "experiencer roles." When the coalition talks about political and economic power, the deictic center is the Library's three institutions (foundation, university, and city). They are the active agent; coalition members and long-term residents are marginal figures who passively experience the consequences of the institutions' actions. Although the coalition recognizes that this power differential can lead to displacement, its discourse does not solely dwell on community helplessness. By stressing the power that residents have due to their cultural history and long residency in the neighborhood, the coalition legitimizes and justifies the demand for a CBA.

Two factors make the possibility of a CBA both possible and extremely unlikely: the departure of the center from the canon of presidential libraries and the figure of Barack Obama. The mission and vision of the center make it the type of enterprise that would be open to negotiation or even willingly supportive of a CBA. The foundation states that the center is meant to be a space of change, a partnership between the foundation and visitors and South Side residents in which the public's input is a guide, a source of economic development and resources for the South Side, and a "gift" to the South Side. Its mission is expressly for the public good. The Obamas' history and relationship to the South Side makes a CBA seem like a viable option.

As a former organizer, Obama could understand the conditions and experiences that necessitate a CBA, and his personal commitment to the South Side could make him open to negotiating a CBA. Although the foundation has no authority over certain aspects of the CBA, such as rent control and better public transportation, Obama has the political status and influence necessary to convince the City of Chicago and University

of Chicago to guarantee CBA measures. Finally, South Siders strongly supported Obama during his campaigns; the Obamas remain beloved figures of hope and pride, regardless of the disappointments of his presidency. These characteristics, however, also make a CBA unlikely. According to journalist Edward McClelland,

Obama is not a rich outsider developing real estate. He is one of the most beloved, if not the most beloved, politicians in Chicago. Obama does not need to sign a CBA in order to gain the city's goodwill, obtain land, or quicken the construction process. He is Mayor Emanuel's former supervisor and has received twenty acres from the city to build his presidential library. In Emanuel's words, the center is a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the city." Thus it is extremely unlikely that the coalition will convince local politicians to "throw their weight against the wishes of both Obama and Emanuel."<sup>143</sup>

The foundation's mission of public good and self-envisioned role as a community resource makes it an unlikely CBA candidate: if its intentions are to bring resources into the South Side, rather than to make a private profit, why does it need to sign a CBA? In the foundation's argument, the essence of the center mirrors the goals of a CBA. Obama's history on the South Side allows him to say, "trust me," without a CBA.

Given the city's and the university's history of "urban renewal" on the South Side, the coalition's propositions might seem quixotic or futile. I asked Lorenzo, a Woodlawn resident, "do you feel like there is a way to resist these changes in rent and demographics?" He answered,

I doubt it. I've seen a lot. I mean, you can resist all you want but you know, once your rent goes up, it goes up. There ain't nothing you can do about it. You're either going to have to pay it or leave.

143. McLelland, "Meet the Community Organizers," *Politico*.



A lot of people have been moving on their own, out to the suburbs  
... [for a] more affordable way of living.<sup>144</sup>

What possible tools does a group representing the interest of low-income black residents, led by low-income tenants and some middle-class residents, have to pressure the foundation, the city, and the university to sign a CBA? The coalition wants the three institutions to do more than simply refrain from harming low-income residents through the unintended consequences of development. The coalition is asking them to actively improve their living conditions, which completely reimagines how development is conducted in urban communities.

The coalition see housing, education, and transportation as human rights. For those who care about the quality of life in cities, the coalition's demands, especially those that pertain to the ability to stay in the neighborhood, express the "right to the city."<sup>145</sup> Free-market capitalism, however, frames these demands as unrealistic and incompatible with the "common sense" rights of private property owners.<sup>146</sup> Consequently, gentrification is the "natural" process of the market and the flow of capital. Displacement is inevitable; it is part of the natural shifts in the urban fabric, even as more and more neighborhoods become unaffordable and larger groups of lower-income people must move.

The coalition advocates for low-income black people. In a society where the interests of whites and white power structures are the "natural state," the call for a CBA becomes even more unattainable. The experience, culture, and perspective of white people remain normative, so the claims of low-income, marginalized black people are easily dismissed.

Given the strength of the free market and the history of the United States' enslavement and disenfranchisement of black people, the demands

144. Lorenzo (Woodlawn resident), interview with the author, Nov. 6, 2016.

145. Mitchell, *The Right to the City*.

146. See, *ibid.*, 132.

of the coalition are fruit of a kind of radical hope. To recognize the radical hope within their demands, however, does not mean romanticizing the power that low-income people have or operating under the false illusion that people power always wins. Nor is the hope a superficial, self-deceptive, or placating kind of hope. The coalition imagines a more equitable future, but it knows the material limits of its power. Its members know that a CBA is unlikely, yet they persist.

## Epilogue

In July 2019, Alderwomen Leslie Hairston (5th Ward) and Jeanette Taylor (20th Ward) introduced a CBA ordinance to the Chicago City Council.<sup>147</sup> Compared to the comprehensive ordinance drafted by the coalition, the introduced ordinance focuses on housing policies to prevent displacement.<sup>148</sup> Lori Lightfoot, elected mayor in 2019, supports a CBA. In July 2019, Lightfoot convened a private meeting of center stakeholders, “to make sure that we give justice to people in those communities. We can’t have development mean displacement.”<sup>149</sup> This meeting was the first time that the coalition and the Library (foundation, university, and city) occupied the deictic center at the same time. ○

147. Aaron Gettinger, “CBA Housing Ordinance Introduced in City Council, but Long Road Awaits before Passing,” *Hyde Park Herald*, July 24, 2019.

148. Ibid.

149. Aaron Gettinger, “Mayor Resets Timeline for Discussion on Center,” *Hyde Park Herald*, July 29, 2019.

## Appendix 1: Timeline<sup>150</sup>

- **Mar. 20, 2014**

Barack Obama Foundation issues a request for qualifications for the Obama Presidential Library.

- **Sept. 15, 2014**

Foundation issues a request for proposals for the Obama Presidential Library from Columbia University, University of Chicago, University of Hawaii, and University of Illinois at Chicago.

- **Dec. 11, 2014**

Foundation uses the name, Barack Obama Presidential Center, for the first time.

- **Mar. 19, 2015**

Chicago City Council unanimously approves the use of Jackson Park or Washington Park for the center.

- **May 12, 2015**

Foundation selects the University of Chicago's proposal and the South Side of Chicago for the center.

- **June 30, 2016**

Foundation selects Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects.

- **July 29, 2016**

Foundation announces Jackson Park as the site for the center.

- **Summer 2016**

Obama CBA Coalition forms and conducts town-hall meetings with South Side residents to design a set of development principles.

150. For major foundation and center milestones, see "Updates" (press releases), Obama Foundation, [www.obama.org/updates/](http://www.obama.org/updates/).

- **Sept. 29, 2016**

Coalition launches the CBA campaign.<sup>151</sup>

- **May 3, 2017**

Foundation announces that the center will no longer be a presidential archive controlled by the National Archives and Records Administration. This changes the center from a federal to a private operation.

- **Summer 2017**

Coalition conducts a series of town-hall meetings to draft the CBA.<sup>152</sup>

- **June 11, 2019**

A US District Court judge dismisses *Protect Our Parks et al. v Chicago Park District and the City of Chicago*, which argued “that the city could not legally transfer twenty acres of the historic Frederick Law Olmsted–designed park to a private entity.” Protect Our Parks plans to appeal.<sup>153</sup>

- **July 18, 2019**

Coalition website changes from “CBA for the Obama Library” to “CBA for the Obama Center.”

151. “2016 Development Principles,” CBA for the Obama Library.

152. Coalition for a CBA (@ObamaCBA), “Our next #GetItInWriting forum is at 6 p.m.,” Twitter, Jul. 11, 2017, 10:00 a.m., [twitter.com/ObamaCBA/status/884819578894688257](https://twitter.com/ObamaCBA/status/884819578894688257).

153. Koziarz, “Judge Dismisses Lawsuit,” Curbed Chicago.

- **July 24, 2019**

Alds. Leslie Hairston (5th) and Jeanette Taylor (20th) introduce a CBA ordinance, which focuses on housing issues in a two-mile radius around the center site, to the Chicago City Council.<sup>154</sup>

- **July 28, 2019**

Chicago's new mayor, Lori Lightfoot, convenes a private meeting of "grassroots" (e.g., the coalition, the Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization, etc.) and "establishment" (e.g., the Chicago Community Trust, the Emerald South Economic Development Collaborative, etc.) organizations. The meeting included representatives from the foundation, various city departments, and the university.<sup>155</sup>

- **July 29, 2019**

Chicago's Department of Planning and Development determines that the center "will have an *Adverse Effect* to historic properties [emphasis in original]" in Jackson Park, which the foundation must mitigate in consultation with the National Park Service, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Illinois Department of Transportation. The meeting is scheduled for Aug. 5, 2019.<sup>156</sup>

- **2021**

Anticipated ribbon-cutting ceremony for the center.

154. Gettinger, "CBA Housing Ordinance Introduced," *Hyde Park Herald*.

155. Gettinger, "Mayor Resets Timeline," *Hyde Park Herald*.

156. Department of Planning and Development, *Assessment of Effects to Historic Properties: Proposed Undertaking in and adjacent to Jackson Park* (Chicago: City of Chicago, July 2019), 53, [www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dcd/supp\\_info/jackson/aoe\\_for\\_public\\_review.pdf](http://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dcd/supp_info/jackson/aoe_for_public_review.pdf).

## Appendix 2: Participating Organizations of the Coalition<sup>157</sup>

### Members

Black Youth Project 100

Bronzeville Regional Collective, founding member

Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization, founding member

Southside Together Organizing for Power, founding member

UChicago for a CBA (formerly Prayer and Action Collective, formerly Trauma Center Prayers), founding member

Westside Health Authority

### Ally Members

Alliance of the Southeast

Brighton Park Neighborhood Council

Chicago Jobs Council

Chicago Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights

Chicago Rehab Network

Chicago Teachers Union

Chicago Women in Trades

Community Renewal Society

Environment, Transportation, Health, and Open Space

Friends of the Parks

Indivisible Chicago—South Side

Metropolitan Tenants Organization

Poor People's Campaign

157. "Obama Community Benefits Agreement Coalition," CBA for the Obama Center, 2018, accessed July 27, 2019, [www.obamacba.org/coalition.html](http://www.obamacba.org/coalition.html).

Reparations at UChicago

Service Employees International Uni Healthcare Illinois/Indiana

Showing up for Racial Justice Chicago

South Side Chicago Democratic Socialists of America

Nathalie P. Voorhees Center for Neighborhood and Community

Improvement, University of Illinois at Chicago

Westside Health Authority

Wolf Pack Youth Football

Woodlawn Baptist Church

Woodlawn East Community and Neighbors

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*Chicago Reader*, 2016

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*Chicago Tribune*, 2016–2018

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