2019

# The Post-1960s Development Of Urban Institutions And The Production Of Racial Justice Activism

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# The Post-1960s Development Of Urban Institutions And The Production Of Racial Justice Activism

## Abstract

This dissertation traces the historical development of neighborhood-level civic, economic, and political institutions since the 1960s, and shows that these institutions limit possibilities for contemporary grassroots organizing around economic issues. Using secondary and archival data, the first section of the project examines sequences of institutional development in urban neighborhoods, showing that interactions between racial justice movements, local and federal programs, philanthropy, and changing economic conditions, produced a field of neighborhood-based organizations committed to pro-capitalist—and later distinctively neoliberal—forms of development, and which construct these projects in militant discourses on racial empowerment and identity. Using ethnographic, social network, and textual analysis, the second section of the dissertation shows how 1) these institutions encourage neighborhood residents to develop ideological commitments to and material investments in neoliberal modes of economic and social practice in distressed urban neighborhoods; 2) that the wide diffusion of these commitments and investments impedes efforts to organize residents around progressive economic projects. The project also shows that, in neighborhoods with large concentrations of recently arrived immigrants, neighborhood institutions are less likely to be incorporated into neoliberal regimes, and more likely to be shaped by alternative ideologies, imported through transnational activist networks. These findings elucidate the politics of economic policy, suggesting that neighborhood-based institutions reproduce commitments to neoliberalism, supporting the political resilience of neoliberal regimes. On the other hand, the findings also suggest oppositional cultures may flourish at the neighborhood level, insofar as neighborhood institutions are incompletely incorporated into neoliberal regimes. Finally, the findings support the theoretical arguments that the urban neighborhood is a crucial site of identity and interest formation, and that neighborhood-level community development organizations are key sites of neoliberal subject formation.

## Degree Type
Dissertation

## Degree Name
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

## Graduate Group
Political Science

## First Advisor
Adolph Reed Jr.

## Keywords
class politics, community organizing, non-profits, race politics, Social movements, urban politics

## Subject Categories
History | Political Science

THE POST-1960S DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN INSTITUTIONS AND THE PRODUCTION OF

RACIAL JUSTICE ACTIVISM

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A DISSERTATION

in

Political Science

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania

in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2020

Supervisor of Dissertation

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*For Jeff Noble and Ava Pedersen:*

*may your wisdom and brilliance fill many volumes.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

# ABSTRACT

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NEIGHBORHOOD-LEVEL RACIAL JUSTICE ACTIVISM

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This dissertation traces the historical development of neighborhood-level civic, economic, and

political institutions since the 1960s, and shows that these institutions limit possibilities for

contemporary grassroots organizing around economic issues.  Using secondary and archival

data, the first section of the project examines sequences of institutional development in urban

neighborhoods, showing that interactions between racial justice movements, local and federal

programs, philanthropy, and changing economic conditions, produced a field of neighborhood-

based organizations committed to pro-capitalist—and later distinctively neoliberal—forms of

development, and which construct these projects in militant discourses on racial empowerment

and identity.  Using ethnographic, social network, and textual analysis, the second section of the

dissertation shows how 1) these institutions encourage neighborhood residents to develop

ideological commitments to and material investments in neoliberal modes of economic and

social practice in distressed urban neighborhoods; 2) that the wide diffusion of these

commitments and investments impedes efforts to organize residents around progressive

economic projects.  The project also shows that, in neighborhoods with large concentrations of

recently arrived immigrants, neighborhood institutions are less likely to be incorporated into

neoliberal regimes, and more likely to be shaped by alternative ideologies, imported through

transnational activist networks.  These findings elucidate the politics of economic policy,

suggesting that neighborhood-based institutions reproduce commitments to neoliberalism,

supporting the political resilience of neoliberal regimes.   On the other hand, the findings also

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institutions are incompletely incorporated into neoliberal regimes.  Finally, the findings support

the theoretical arguments that the urban neighborhood is a crucial site of identity and interest

formation, and that neighborhood-level community development organizations are key sites of

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In recent years, progressive and socialist formations at the urban, state, and national scales have attempted to advance policy agendas in part by organizing grassroots support in lower-class neighborhoods. Despite the importance of this organizing to contestation over economic policy, we know little about the terrain for organizing—the characteristics of neighborhoods and their populations which create barriers to and opportunities for this organizing. This dissertation elucidates the terrain for grassroots organizing around neoliberalization and related economic issues in lower-class Black and Latinx neighborhoods of U.S. cities by examining the historical development of neighborhood institutions and cultures, and conducting ethnographic research on contemporary neighborhood organizing.

I present three sets of empirical findings:

- First, I find that neighborhood institutions developing since the late 1960s, largely products of neoliberalization at the federal level, have shaped the terrain for organizing in three ways: 1)they have incorporated large swaths of neighborhood populations into distributive relationships with neoliberal regimes; 2)most recently, they have increased grassroots participation in the neoliberal real estate redevelopment industry; 3)relatedly, they have produced discourses on racial interest and on social problems which support market-based community development and apolitical self-help, and deemphasize state or corporate responsibility for economic conditions, and diffused these understandings among neighborhood residents.

- Second, I show that these institutional developments are less likely to have occurred in "point-of-entry" neighborhoods, defined by large populations of foreign-born and first-

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generation U.S. born people.  The mechanisms which incorporate populations into neoliberal distributive relationships, and those populations' neoliberal-compatible conceptions of interest and of social problems, developed over decades.  The incorporation of recently arrived populations into similar distributive relationships depends on contingent interventions by political elites.  Recently arrived populations are more likely to view collective interests and social problems through discourses developed in their country of origin or in international activist networks.

- Third, the growth of left formations at the urban and national scales also shapes the terrain for organizing in some neighborhoods.  Most importantly, this growth entails the expansion of populations of activists committed to progressive and socialist visions.  These activists are distributed among neighborhoods as consumers of residential space, concentrating in gentrifying neighborhoods.  These activists may lead community organizing projects in their neighborhoods of residence.

These findings elucidate the politics of neoliberalism and related economic issues, including divestment, displacement, and economic inequality more generally.  The first set of findings describe powerful barriers to organizing against neoliberalization in many neighborhoods, indicating the political resilience of neoliberalism.  However, the second and third finding suggest that certain types of neighborhoods may be more conducive to organizing popular support for progressive or socialist projects.

The findings also inform theoretical conversations about grassroots organizing and social movement formation.  First, the findings reaffirm older work which sees neighborhoods as key sites of identity and preference formation.  The findings depart, however, from recent work on the role of neighborhoods in shaping political possibilities, within the subfields of racial and

ethnic politics and social movement studies.  Second, I show that the terrain for neighborhood organizing is shaped by political developments at the urban, national, and even global levels.  The institutional developments which created the terrain for contemporary organizing were driven by federal policy, national trends in the practices of philanthropic foundations, global economic restructuring, and other supra-local factors.  Relatedly, I argue that the neighborhood, and especially the institutions through which populations participate in market-based community development, are crucial sites of neoliberal subject formation.

Finally, I found what could be described as a circular relationship between political developments at larger scales of the polity and the terrain for neighborhood organizing: neoliberalization has created neighborhood conditions which impede organizing against neoliberalism.  Similarly, the growth of the left at the urban and national scales has created neighborhood environments more favorable to organizing.

The remainder of this chapter will introduce my research question and theoretical framework, and place the question in historical context.  I will first review contemporary conflicts over economic policy, describing the neoliberal policies dominant since the 1970s, and the emergent progressive and socialist formations challenging them.  I will show that those emerging formations see neighborhood organizing as a key strategy, motivating the dissertation's central question about the terrain for organizing.  The chapter will close with an overview of subsequent chapters.

# 1. Contemporary Conflict Over Economic Issues:  Neoliberalization and Resurgent Progressivism and Socialism

The context for this study is the renewed contention over poverty, economic inequality, and related economic issues in recent years.  Since the 1970s, political coalitions committed to neoliberalism have dominated both major political parties, and governments at the state and local levels, implementing neoliberal policies and institutional reforms at all levels.  Emerging progressive and socialist formations, operating in U.S. cities and in the national Democratic Party, are attempting to advance an agenda of economic redistribution and democratic control of certain economic processes.  In some cases, these formations have begun to seriously contend for institutional power.  I will present a cursory review of neoliberalization and the emergent progressive and socialist formations.

## Neoliberalization at the federal and urban levels

Neoliberalism can refer to the body of ideas elaborated by Post-War conservative economists; to agendas for public policy, institutional reform, and public and corporate practice elaborated and implemented since the mid-1970s, based on those ideas; and to the array of social practices and habits of thought encouraged by those policies and programs.  I will focus on the second level, describing neoliberal policy agendas implemented at the federal and urban scales.

### *Neoliberalization at the federal level*

At the federal level, neoliberal policies were implemented in several policy areas, beginning in the 1970s.  I will briefly discuss the federal response to global economic restructuring and economic recession, and the subsequent application of neoliberal ideas to

other policy areas including urban policy, welfare and social provision, education, and labor relations.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, neoliberal ideas informed the federal government's response to the economic restructuring and decline of formerly industrialized regions, which had started in the late 1960s. Policymakers in both parties in Congress and in presidential administrations' since Gerald Ford's oriented policy in multiple areas to accelerating this restructuring.[1] Policymakers repeatedly rejected proposals to bolster declining industrial sectors and industrial regions, whether through bailouts of cities, national reinvestment programs, or industrial policies (such as subsidies, trade protections, or collective planning).[2] Fiscal and corporate policy were also revised to accelerate capital mobility, including tax breaks or reduced tax rates for corporate relocations, acquisitions, and mergers, reduced penalties on foreign profits, and reduced taxes on income from investments.[3] The federal stance toward declining regions of the country was captured by President Reagan's enjoinder to residents to ''vote with their feet'' and seek work elsewhere.

Daniel Rodgers (2011) and Daniel Stedman Jones (2012) each describe the adoption of neoliberal ideas in other aspects of economic policy since the mid-1970s. On the basis of neoliberal ideas, federal policy and practice in the areas of "antitrust judgments, liability law, and most dramatically, regulatory policy," were reoriented around the categories of "cost and

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[1] Policymakers believed that market-driven decline of industries or regions was inevitable, and would lead ultimately to renewed growth, as resources were reallocated to their most productive uses (Weaver, 2015; O'Connor, 1999: 108, 111-12). This was based on a more fundamental belief that, in the words of the President's National Urban Policy Report in 1982, created by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, "the private market is more efficient than federal program administrators in allocating dollars" (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1982: 14; quoted in Weaver, 2015: 29). Political pressures included the intense unpopularity of increased government spending or intervention in the economy by the mid-1970s (recognized by politicians) (Neuman, 2014; Biles, 2011) and lobbying by big business (Prasad, 2010).

[2] President Ford rejected bailouts to Detroit, and underwrote a bailout of New York City under stringent conditions of repayment (Biles, 2011: 212). President Carter also rejected HUD's proposal for $20 billion in new urban spending (Neuman, 2014: 284-5). In the early 1980s, Congress repeatedly rejected proposed policies to retain industry in the U.S. through a mix of subsidies, trade protections, and collective planning (Graham, 1992: 158-60).

[3] Tax breaks for new construction and relocation were significantly increased in the Revenue Act of 1978 and Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 (Biles, 2011; Weaver, 2015: 35). Abu-Lughod (1999: 280) notes the reduction of taxes on repatriated profits. For federal policies abetting mergers and acquisitions, see Orhangazi, 2008

efficiency" and the premise of "highly idealized markets."[4]  The same analytical frameworks

were applied to labor markets and labor relations, producing federal policies, bureaucratic

rulings, and corporate practices designed to enhance managerial control of labor relations and

creating flexible and disciplined labor markets.[5]  By the 1990s, neoliberal ideas had been applied

to areas "such as law, regulation, the family, welfare, and sex, that had previously been

considered outside the realm of markets."[6]  Book length studies describe neoliberal federal

policy reforms in urban policy,[7] education,[8] welfare,[9] and public housing,[10] among others.

*Neoliberalization at the urban level*

At the urban level, neoliberalization can be seen as a set of strategies for economic

growth, fiscal solvency, and governance, oriented to the post-1970s conditions of intensified

capital mobility, economic restructuring, investment of surplus capital in urban bonds and real

estate, and decreased federal aid for cities.   Scholars agree that urban governments enacted

different versions and combinations of neoliberal reforms, in different mixes with other

programs, but that these general growth strategies were widely adopted since the 1970s.

By the early 1970s, urban policymakers faced a new policymaking context, defined by

economic restructuring and declining federal support.  As industry deconcentrated and

globalized, formerly industrialized cities in the North and Midwest lost large shares of their

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[4] Rodgers, 2011:  56.  Jones similarly describes the application of neo-liberal premises and neoclassical methods to questions of "railroad regulation, income tax, monetary reform, agricultural subsidies, public housing, labor law, and social security legislation" (Jones, 2012:  118).

[5] For federal efforts to reassert managerial control and break labor unions, see McCartin (2000); for federal practices designed to create flexible labor markets, see Weinbaum, 2004.

[6] Jones, 2012:  112.

[7] Weaver, 2015; Sites, 2003.

[8] Lippman, 2011.

[9] Soss et al, 2011.

[10] Arena, 2012.

employment base.[11]  The loss of industry diminished cities' tax bases—a development

compounded by continuing departure of upper- and middle-class residents (chasing departing

jobs and fleeing racial integration), and by increased service burdens of federal offloading of

welfare responsibilities and the in-migration of relatively poor residents.  Beginning with the

Ford administration, the federal government cut federal aid to cities significantly, worsening

fiscal crises and pushing many cities to the brink of bankruptcy.[12]

Economic restructuring and federal policy also portended new opportunities for urban

growth.  Spurred in part by the aforementioned federal fiscal and corporate policies, the

advanced service sectors of the economy grew during these years, creating an opportunity for

deindustrializing cities to repurpose as "corporate centers."[13]  With few profitable outlets for

surplus capital and incented by federal tax breaks on investment in commercial real estate,

investors in the U.S. and globally increasingly purchased urban real estate, and to a lesser

extent, municipal debt.[14]

In this context, policymakers in most large cities oriented policy toward attracting firms

in the advanced service sectors of the economy and investment, as well as tourism.  The agenda

included fiscal austerity (i.e., low taxes and limited social spending), deregulation, and limits on

popular participation in governance to maintain a "business- and investor-friendly climate;"

public support for rent-intensifying redevelopment, to create spaces attractive to mobile firms

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[11] Representing well trends among older, industrialized cities, Chicago lost approximately 267,000 industrial jobs between 1967 and 1982, about 48% (Abu-Lughod, 1999:  323).  New York City lost approximately 750,000 manufacturing jobs between 1950 and 1990 (Stein, 2019:  45).

[12] The Ford administration cut funding for Community Development Block Grants and revenue sharing, the two programs providing the majority of federal aid to localities.  Between 1980 and 1987, the federal government reduced spending on community development programs alone from an estimated $2.6 billion to $1.1 billion (Weir, 1999:  145).  In total, from 1980 to 1990, "federal grants to cities were cut by 42 percent, the equivalent of $46 billion in constant 2012 dollars" (Weaver, 2015:  30).

[13] Sassen, 2005:  29.  Sassen and Harvey (1989) note that of advanced corporate service firms tend to locate in dense clusters, facilitate highly efficient and interactive production systems," sharing information, and enjoying reduced transaction costs among each other (quotation from Harvey, 1989:  8).

[14] The absence of profitable outlets had to do with the declining returns on investment in manufacturing since the late 1960s and the volatility of global financial markets.  The Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 also created tax advantages for investment in specifically in commercial real-estate projects (Leitner, 1990; Sites, 2003:  43).

and residents; the extensive use of public resources as subsidies for firms and real estate development projects; "opening new spaces to accumulation," by privatizing and commoditizing public goods and public services; and new forms of governance which insulate financial and fiscal decision-making from political pressures and institutionalize collaboration between the city and investors and developers, respectively.[15]

Neoliberal regimes have fostered a public-private real estate redevelopment industry. The creation of spaces and amenities oriented toward high-end consumers is intended to attract corporate service firms and retain their employees as city residents (and thus taxpayers). Real estate development is a source of revenue which does not impinge on the business climate through taxes.[16] To drive real estate redevelopment, the city provides public funds and logistical support to the real estate development industry, incorporating them into urban planning.[17]

Scholars usually define urban neoliberalism to include additional institutional reform agendas, implementing market structures and firm styles of governance in public institutions. These reforms are inspired by the same pro-market, anti-bureaucratic ideas that drove neoliberalization at the federal level and informed urban responses, and are often motivated by the same, ever-present concern with inter-local competition for mobile capital. Cities have adopted neoliberal reforms of public education, transportation, parks and recreation, and other systems.

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[15] On removal of fiscal decisions from politics, see Brenner and Theodore (2002) and Hackworth (2012); on institutionalized collaboration between city government and investors, see Weber (2015) and Farmer and Poulos (2019); on institutionalized collaboration between the city and real estate development industry, see Sites, 2003: 45.

[16] Real estate transfer fees and rising property values (and thus property taxes) "allow the municipality to sustain low tax rates, attain favorable bond ratings, and increase borrowing for expensive infrastructure schemes" (Weber, 2015: 146). Thus, "property-led development becomes one of the few tools available for enhancing revenues" (Weaver, 2015: 17).

[17] Stein, 2019; Leitner, 1990: 147.

## Challenging Neoliberalism:  Emerging Progressive and Socialist Formations

In recent years, several formations have attempted to advance progressive and socialist economic agendas, explicitly rejecting neoliberal policies and their justifications.  These are not, as in the past, episodic reactions to particular policies or arrangements, or particular developments, but sustained efforts to build political power through coalition, labor organizing, and community organizing.  These formations are rooted in various ideologies, and encompass many forms of organization, including grassroots mass membership organizations, local coalitions of labor unions and community-based organizations, and tendencies within the Democratic Party.  While a comprehensive description of this field of formations is beyond the scope of this dissertation, I will briefly describe key formations.

Perhaps the most remarked-upon development is the growth since 2015 of the progressive and socialist wing of the Democratic Party.  Institutionally, this is reflected by the rapid growth of the party's Progressive Caucus in the House of Representatives, now the chamber's second largest with 96 members (founded in 1994 with 6).  An infrastructure to support progressive and socialist elected officials and candidates, in the form of new political action committees (focused on fundraising, campaign consulting, and voter mobilization) and national grassroots lobbying organizations, has also developed, as a counterweight to the centrist-dominated Democratic National Committee.[18]  The progressive resurgence in the party is also reflected in the embrace by party leaders and contenders for the party's 2020 presidential nomination of socialist and/or progressive policies, including large expansions of public services (including Medicare for All, free college tuition) government involvement in the

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[18] Perhaps most notably, Justice Democrats is attempting to function as an alternative to the Democratic National Committee, coordinating primary challenges to conservative and moderate Democrats, and raising funds.  Another notable group is Our Revolution, a national network built by staff and supporters of Bernie Sanders' campaign, and functioning as a pro-Sanders SuperPAC and grassroots lobbying group.  Other new political action groups conducting fundraising and shallow network-building on behalf of left-leaning Democrats are Indivisible, Brand New Congress, and Swing Left.

economy (including large scale public investment in conversion to renewable energy sources), democratization of the economic system (including guaranteed worker membership on corporate boards), bans on corporate campaign contributions, public employment programs, and progressive revenue policies (taxes on wealth, inheritance, financial transactions).

Several left-leaning grassroots organizations have formed since 2016. Journalists speculate that the rapid growth of these organizations is fueled by interest in socialism driven by Bernie Sanders' and Alexandra Occasion-Cortez's campaigns; painful economic experiences during and since the 2008 recession; concern with what they view as the extremism of Trump campaign and administration; and disillusionment with liberalism and the Democratic Party for its inability to compellingly address the latter issues.[19] Amidst ideological diversity, these groups support some version of the redistributive programs backed by Sanders, AOC, and other left-leaning Democrats, and work on some combination of electoral and issue campaigns and grassroots base-building (with a few preferring grassroots service provision).

The largest of these mass membership organizations is Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), whose national membership spiked from about 6,000 in 2015 to over 60,000 in 2019, distributed among approximately 300 local chapters. Though DSA has no official ideology, most of the official caucuses, and most members, embrace a broad and ambitious redistributive program, including policies like Medicare For All, free college tuition, and a Green New Deal. Most chapters support socialist candidates for office at all levels (in many cases endorsing and campaigning for candidates), and socialist issue campaigns.[20] DSA's caucuses do have differing

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[19] Blanc, 2019; Heywood, 2019; Economist staff, 2019.
[20] 32 DSA-endorsed candidates won election in 2017 and 43 in 2018 (Democratic Socialists of America, 2017). A few chapters have run their own candidates (Henwood, 2019).

visions of democratic control of the economy, and over the relationship of capitalist economic

structures with forms of oppression based on ascribed identities, among other issues.[21]

Smaller membership organizations have formed in many cities. For example, Reclaim

Philadelphia was formed in 2016 by staff and volunteers of Sanders' 2016 campaign, and have

participated in a range of local and state electoral campaigns and in local issue coalitions.[22]

Under the rubric of "transforming the Democratic party," they have recruited and backed

ideologically aligned people for positions within Philadelphia's Democratic party. Similarly, the

People's Lobby in Chicago, a mass membership group rooted in religious, student, and racial

justice organizations, has expanded rapidly since 2014, collecting people activated by

movements in Chicago and by the Sanders campaign. It also works on electoral and issue

campaigns.[23]

Scholars note that, in the last decade, an increasing number of unions have pursued

broad progressive policy agendas through sustained coalition with allies in other sectors and

grassroots organizing—a practice alternately called "community unionism," "social movement

unionism," or "fusionism." Some recent worker organizing drives have relied on mobilization of

community support and advanced public policy goals beyond those directly related to workplace

issues.[24] Unions have also participated in issue campaigns and coalitions at the state and local

level (often providing most of the money and grassroots mobilizing capacity).[25] In a few cities,

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[21] Henwood, 2019; Blanc, 2019; Heyward, 2019.

[22] For example, Reclaim Philadelphia has participated in the "Our Cities Our Schools" coalition to reestablish local governance of Philadelphia public schools, and to end Philadelphia's tax abatement for real estate development. Reclaim also lobbied City Council to divest from Wells Fargo, and was part of the citywide Coalition for a Just District Attorney (Reclaim Philadelphia website: https://www.reclaimphiladelphia.org/, accessed 9/8/19.

[23] This and previous sentence, Reclaim Chicago website: https://www.reclaimchicago.org/. Accessed 9/7/19.

[24] Although these tactics were refined in the 1990s (Milkman, 2002), they were used more recently in several campaigns, most notably the SEIU-backed Fight for $15 campaign, organizing fast food workers. SEIU locals have also launched campaigns to organize workers at "big box stores," supermarkets, car washes, etc. (Turner, 2014: 107).

[25] For example, the National Nurses United's Main Street Campaign is building coalitions to advocate for financial transactions tax. SEIU launched its Fight for a Fair Economy, an attempt to build community-labor coalitions to support progressive revenue policies, a living wage, and other progressive economic policies in cities around the country.

unions and allies have built third parties or other institutional bases for sustained attempts to win institutional power at the state and local levels.[26]

Organizations associated with the Movement for Black Lives may be included in this overview insofar as they also advance progressive and socialist economic agendas, in addition to their agendas on policing and criminal punishment, issues related to identity, and other non-economic issues.  This wave includes national groups with memberships in local chapters, such as the Black Lives Matter Network and Black Youth Project 100, and myriad membership groups based in single locations.[27]   These organizations have different analyses of economic issues and visions of economic justice.[28]  Some explicitly reject capitalism as inherently exploitative of labor and call for non-capitalistic forms of political economy.[29]  Others do not criticize capitalism per se, but demand large-scale, universal redistribution (including universal health care, free college tuition, expanded public investment in public primary and secondary schools, a right to a living wage job, etc.) and democratization of the economy, asserting state and corporate responsibility for broadly defined economic well-being.[30]  Most of these groups also call for additional redistribution along racial lines, as reparations for identity-based economic injustices (although implicitly asserting forms of state and corporate responsibility for economic conditions that are compatible with socialism but not capitalism).[31]

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[26] Notable examples include the Stamford Organizing Project in Stamford, CT (MacAlevey, Chapter 2; Fine, 2000); the Working Families Party in New York City; and United Working Families in Chicago, formed by SEIU Health Care Illinois and Indiana, the Chicago Teachers Union, and progressive community-based organizations.

[27] For a partial list of organizations associated with the Black Lives Matter movement, see https://policy.m4bl.org/about/

[28] This review does not include groups and tendencies associated with BLM with more moderate economic programs.

[29] Ransby, 2018.  Ransby and Denvir, 2019.

[30] This includes a right to health care, a right to a fully funded education (including post-secondary) education, a right to job, and a guaranteed basic income.  These groups offer an interesting issue frame, constructing economic deprivation as "state violence."

[31] These are compatible with socialism insofar as they imply state and corporate responsibility for economic investment and provision.

see public and private "disinvestment of blighted communities" as an injustice warranting reparations.  Others do not critique capitalism itself, but argue that undoing centuries of identity-based economic discrimination requires large-scale redistribution of wealth and economic power (i.e., control of capital and possibly governing power of firms), resembling a social democratic program. This is an attempt to redress with they call "racial capitalism," an economic system based on hyper-exploitation and expropriation of racial minorities (and most would include gender).  This involves more than reparations (or compensation).  They argue that every

## 2. Neighborhood Organizing and Economic Contention

### The residential neighborhood in theory and historical practice

Residential neighborhoods are one key site of contemporary contention over economic policy. Theorists have shown that structural features of urban neighborhoods make them potential sites for grassroots mobilizations and grassroots organizing. More recent work has shown how specific conditions of neoliberal capitalism have exacerbated problems experienced in residential and non-workplace contexts, creating new potentials for grassroots mobilization and grassroots organizing around contemporary economic issues in those contexts. In line with these theories, all of the aforementioned organizations with progressive and socialist economic programs are attempting to advance their visions in part by grassroots organizing in residential neighborhoods.

One line of scholarship holds that the structure of urban neighborhoods makes them an important site for the formation of collective consciousness and collective political action, in general. Engles, Katznelson, and other theorists observe that capitalist development and capitalist housing markets produce neighborhoods that are densely populated and "homogenous in both the Marxist and Weberian sense of class" (although in the U.S., racial segregation produced multi-class, Black neighborhoods, a fact discussed later).[32] This density and homogeneity make urban neighborhoods potentially important terrain for political contention. Katznelson argues that these spaces provided "the generative locale for the

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aspect of the economic system continues to manifest patterns established through race- and gender-based oppression, with direct causal linkages to those historical oppressions. Addressing these contemporary manifestations would require largescale redistributions of wealth (to address racial maldistributions). It would require programs to restructure labor markets, either through targeted education, or jobs programs. It would require redistribution of economic power, e.g. through programs allowing members of historically oppressed groups to determine capital investments or corporate decisions.

[32] Katznelson, 1994: 11.

formation of collective identities and collective action."[33]  While the substance of these

collective identities and orientation of this collective action is determined by patterns of

incorporation into the political system, and other supra-neighborhood factors, the structure of

urban neighborhoods makes them an important site of identity and preference formation.

Contemporary urban neighborhoods retain these features.  While rent-intensifying

redevelopment of urban neighborhoods is displacing poor residents to exurban neighborhoods

(which are not the focus of this dissertation), about one third of low-income households in the

U.S. lived in cities as of 2017, where market sorting mostly concentrates them in predominantly

low-income spaces, whether at the level of neighborhoods or census tracts.[34]

Historically, formations attempting to organize working class populations have tried to

do so in neighborhood contexts, in addition to the workplace.[35]  In the 1930s, union organizers

conducted outreach in working-class neighborhoods, via neighborhood institutions and

networks, to supplement workplace outreach, and to mobilize working-class communities to

support unions in labor disputes.  In the 1960s, there were several attempts by radical

formations to organize Black and White working-class neighborhoods.[36]

Scholars have argued that the distinctive conditions of modern or contemporary cities

make urban neighborhoods the most important site of grassroots mobilization and organizing

around challenges to capitalism.  Manuel Castells (1983) argued that the expanded role in

advanced capitalism of the state in providing collective goods (to bolster consumption and

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[33] Ibid, 11.

[34] As of 2017, about half the U.S. poor population (49%) lives in suburban and small metro counties, while 34% live in cities and 17% in rural areas. (Parker et al, 2018).  On concentration of low-income populations at level of census tract, see Sugrue, 2004:  xvii)

[35] E.P. Thompson (1963) details how working-class neighborhoods of industrial centers like Manchester and Liverpool were the site of the development of movements which underpinned the Chartist movement.  Lichtenstein (1995) recounts how UAW organizers engaged workers in community institutions (such as fraternal societies), and propagated their discourses via media with circulation in residential communities (especially chapters 4 and 5). Lichtenstein, as well as Rosemary Feurer (2006) and Piven and Cloward (1977) note that workers mobilized social networks based in residential communities to support moments of intense struggle.  Piven and Cloward (Chapter 2) recount the extensive community organizing of communists and socialists during the Great Depression. Community organizing efforts in the 1960s are described in a later section of this chapter.

[36] These are described later in this chapter.

facilitate the reproduction of labor) has catalyzed movements, demanding expanded state

provision and resisting state intrusions into quotidian life.  According to Castells, these

movements, centering on institutions and processes in "the sphere of reproduction," i.e.,

"community institutions… [associated with] housing, healthcare, education, cultural life," are

the most important source of resistance to capitalism.  David Harvey (2003) points to the

increasing importance in the neoliberal city of "accumulation by dispossession," the extraction

of wealth through rent, foreclosure, and displacement from valuable land.  The rapid expansion

of the real estate redevelopment industry has made these conflicts over space and property an

increasingly important axis of class conflict in the city.  Harvey argues that this is the most

critical form of resistance to neoliberalization and should be seen as a strategically important

site

     Although Castells wrote before the neoliberal era, the retrenchment of public services

since the 1970s has exacerbated problems of access to collective goods and deprivation.[37]

Similarly, Harvey's claim that neoliberalization has exacerbated affordable housing crises and led

to widespread displacement is also clearly accurate.  However, I argue that these structural

changes and associated exacerbation of problems in the sphere of reproduction are best seen

merely as creating a structural potential for mobilization and organizing around these

problems—a potential mediated by institutional and cultural contexts and fulfilled (or not)

through the agency of political actors.  Spontaneous mobilizations around these issues may be

more likely, and any formation attempting to organize lower classes around a progressive or

socialist economic agenda has opportunities to organize around these issues.  I do not accept

Harvey's more sweeping claim that conflicts over housing and space are the *most* important site

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[37] Mayer, 2006:  202-3.

of resistance to neoliberalization, given the continued importance of workplace conflict, and of the central role of labor unions in sponsoring and organizing conflict around consumption and housing.  And I do not accept Castell's claims that structural features alone make movements around consumption, self-determination, and identity the most important forms of resistance in advanced capitalist societies, instead treating any mobilization as contingent.

The same structural changes have also created a set of chronically disinvested neighborhoods.  Scholars have not considered how these conditions shape the potential for mobilization and organizing.  It is possible that these conditions create opportunities to organize around demands for reinvestment.  On the other hand, political scientists have shown that newly experienced losses (as in eviction and displacement, the characteristic problems of redeveloping neighborhoods) galvanize stronger reactions than chronically felt absences (as in divested neighborhoods).

## Community organizing of contemporary progressive and socialist formations

Contemporary progressive and socialist formations are treating urban neighborhoods as a key site of movement-building.  Each is attempting to organize in lower-, working-, and in some cases precarious middle-class communities, even as most also organize in workplaces.  Urban neighborhoods are thus an important site of contemporary contention over economic issues.

A segment of DSA's national leadership, and that in several chapters, view labor organizing as the most important avenue to building working-class power.  Nevertheless, many chapters have invested in grassroots community organizing, particularly in the context of issue and electoral campaigns.  Some embed their grassroots outreach in issue-based campaigns,

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organizing rent control, Medicare For All, and other demands.  Some DSA chapters conduct

outreach by providing services to working-class and low-income populations, such as clinics to

repair car break lights.  Others have done extensive door-knocking and grassroots outreach in

the Sanders campaign and other local, state, and national electoral campaigns, attempting to

build chapter memberships through these drives.  Smaller membership organizations like

Reclaim Philadelphia and Reclaim Chicago canvass around issues and elections, and attempt to

recruit residents to their organizations in the process.[38]

Labor unions' issue and electoral projects also involve community organizing.  SEIU's

Fight for a Fair Economy involved "door-to-door canvas operations in communities of color in

seventeen cities across the nation."[39]  For example, United New York (the New York City branch

of FFE), convened two SEIU locals with three community-based non-profits (each with large,

existing grassroots base) to conduct grassroots outreach, with focus on organizing the

unemployed in working-class and high-poverty neighborhoods of Brooklyn, Queens, and the

Bronx.[40]  Another coalition of unions and community-based non-profits launched the New York

Civic Participation Project, to organize residents of working-class, Latinx neighborhoods of three

boroughs and on Long Island for lobbying for progressive legislation in local and state

legislatures.[41]  Unite-HERE's New Haven Rising project involved several years of community

organizing and voter education.[42]  In Chicago, the Chicago Teachers Union and SEIU Health Care

Illinois and Indiana have created programs to train and fund organizers in selected

neighborhoods.[43]

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[38] Denvir interview with Saval, Krajewski, and Mcillmurray, 2018.
[39] Milkman, 2014:  9.
[40] Turner, 2014:  90, 96-8.
[41] McFarland, 2014:  188, 191-3.
[42] Simmons, 2016.
[43] See Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

BLM-associated groups conduct "community engagement and organizing happening on the hyperlocal level."[44]  Local chapters of BYP100 and BLMN, as well as single-city groups, have conducted outreach around issues and electoral campaigns, including their aforementioned economic agenda.[45]  Some had been doing base-building and political education steadily for years prior to the post-2012 popular mobilizations.[46]  In one well-funded national project, the Movement for Black Lives' Electoral Justice Project uses foundation funds to "[help] communities build successful electoral campaigns," providing training in canvassing and other grassroots organizing skills.[47]  Leaders intend this to complement, not "supplant grassroots organizing and movement-building."[48]

The vast majority of community-based non-profits have divested from grassroots base-building (in a trend described later in this chapter).  However some groups have continued to organize around progressive and socialist economic agendas.  Most of these groups have modest budgets, raised through membership dues and small grants, and thus operate at a small scale.  While there is no national database of these organizations, one national network lists 72 community organizations with some investment in community organizing around affordable housing and displacement.[49]  Some community-based non-profits receive funding from labor unions, enabling expansive community organizing.  In New York, for example, Make the Road has built a grassroots membership of 14,000 people, predominantly Latinx foreign-born or first

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[44] Frost and Colon, 2015.
[45] Denvir interview with Ransby, 2018; Dawson interview with Taylor, 2019.
[46] Denvir interview with Ransby, 2018.
[47] Ransby, 2017:  114.
[48] Ibid, 114.
[49] Right to the City Alliance, 2018.  https://righttothecity.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/RTC_Member_Map_October2018.pdf. Accessed 9/29/19.

generation immigrants, through outreach largely funded by 5 prominent union locals.[50]  A few

progressive community-based organizations, funded in part by the Chicago Teachers Union,

conduct grassroots outreach and leadership development, with focus on local policy issues.

## Summary and Outline of Subsequent Chapters

The following chapter examines neoliberalization in Chicago, and the political regime

which has articulated and supported this project.  I describes the agendas for policy change and

institutional reform, and the underlying growth strategies which guide them.  I briefly describe

the regime's mechanisms for cultivating grassroots constituencies in high-poverty

neighborhoods (especially noting its investments in community development and partnerships

with neighborhood-based organizations).  And I place the regime in national and historical

context.

The following chapter describes the UWF coalition.  I review the coalition's historical

roots, and especially its steady growth since the early 2010s.  I present data on the actors who

comprise the coalition and the coalition's core agendas.  I also describe the coalition's vision of

neighborhood-based building, and its base-building projects to date.

Chapter 4 describes UWF's attempts to organize a new grassroots electoral organization

in the Austin neighborhood.  I report the results of ethnographic field work, focusing especially

on the ideologies which local recruits brought to the nascent organization, and how these

shaped the organization's development.  I also review biographical information about some of

these recruits, showing that many are linked to Austin's many non-profit organizations.  I also

describe the field of neighborhood-based non-profit organizations in Austin (including their

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[50] SEIU locals, the United Federation of Teachers New York, Communication Workers of America local in New York City "collectively provide hundreds of thousands of dollars" Goldmacher and McKinley, 2018.
https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/13/nyregion/cuomo-nixon-wfp-labor-governor-election.html.  Accessed 4/19/18.

discourses, programs, connections to elites beyond the neighborhood). I show that the field of neighborhood-based activism is dominated by development organizations invested in neoliberal real estate development and groups committed to a conservative vision of restoring social fabric and norms. I show that many of these groups have grassroots constituencies of their own, and connections to churches and block clubs with grassroots constituencies.

Chapter 5 describes the rapid development of a highly effective, electorally-focused, socialist organization in Albany Park, affiliated with UWF, Working Families of the 33rd Ward (WF33). I argue that the growth of this organization is rooted in three factors: 1)the long-term growth, at the city-level, of a population of activists, journalists, academics, and politicians, who share elements of a common analysis, agenda, and strategy collectively developed by Chicago's left organizations and movements; 2)the sorting of many of these individuals into Albany Park amidst the gentrification process; 3)the growth of a secondary activist population, with shallower and vaguer commitments to progressive and socialist politics, since the 2016 elections.

Chapter 6 describes the base-building work of the new socialist organization described in the previous chapter. I describe the milieu of non-profits and activist organizations in Albany Park, showing that it contrasts starkly with Austin's, and with national trends. I review WF33's successful alliances with existing grassroots organizations, with shared commitments to grassroots organizing and socialist agendas, especially local groups focused on affordable housing and protection of undocumented residents. I argue that it was possible to find socialist allies in Albany Park because of three features of the neighborhood: 1)the presence of activists steeped in radical trans-national activist networks; 2)the non-development of a field of organizations incorporated into the neoliberal regime; 3)the rapid gentrification and intense

enforcement of immigration law in the neighborhood, which have catalyzed militant, grassroots,

issue-based organizing.

# CHAPTER 2.  Post-1960s Institutional Development and the Terrain for Grassroots Organizing

The previous chapter demonstrated that grassroots organizing in urban, residential neighborhoods is an important dimension of the emerging contention over poverty, inequality, and related economic issues.  The remainder of this dissertation analyzes the terrain for grassroots organizing in contemporary urban neighborhoods.  What factors shape grassroots reactions to these contemporary economic problems, and particularly to the issues exacerbated by neoliberalization?  What factors shape the possibilities for grassroots organizing, creating opportunities or impediments for organizing around particular projects?  This chapter begins the investigation by reviewing past research on the historical development of neighborhood-level institutions and political cultures.

Past work describes the development of a field neighborhood-based activism, through the interaction of racial justice movements; federal, local, and foundation policies; changing economic structures; and demographic shifts, since the late 1960s.  These changes were driven by neoliberalization at the federal level, and built on forms of capitalist dominance in the Post-War era.  I will trace these institutional developments, and suggest that they entailed the creation and institutionalization of discourses which fused moderate and pro-capitalist—and later distinctively neoliberal—ideas about social problems and collective interests with militant discourses on racial justice.  Drawing on the theories of Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser, I will consider how these developments might shape the terrain for neighborhood organizing. This chapter will close by reviewing the methodology of the dissertation and explaining the choice of case studies and primary data sources.

# 1. Hegemony and the Construction of Consciousness and Interests

This investigation does not consider the factors known to enable or repress mobilization, given residents' propensity to mobilize, such as the availability of elite resources and opportunities for influence within political institution.[51]  I am interested in the class of cases in which progressive or social democratic formations invest significant resources in organizing and offer opportunities for at least some political influence.  This includes many (though certainly not all) of the contemporary efforts at grassroots organizing around left economic agendas.

Instead, this inquiry focuses on neighborhood residents' ideologies—specifically their understandings of contemporary social issues and individual and collective interests—and their material investments in particular distributive regimes or modes of accumulation, and how these structure their reactions to contemporary problems, and to the overtures of organizers. Past research has reinforced the intuitive position that people's interpretations of their conditions, of their individual and collective interests and identity, and of political options, shape their propensity to mobilize, and to support particular project.[52]  Material investments in a social arrangement or process, institutional arrangements, or distribution of political power also shape these propensities.[53]  This project is an empirical investigation into patterns of ideology and material investment among the populations in question, and how these shape reactions to grassroots organizing.

I draw on theories of hegemony, which suggest that consciousness and behavior are shaped by patterned or institutionalized social processes and relationships.  Past work has

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[51] The "resource mobilization" perspective holds that the key variable explaining grassroots mobilizations is the availability of resources to facilitate required mobilize (usually via elite allies).  Scholars working within the "political process" framework argue that discontented groups mobilize when they perceive opportunities for political influence.
[52] McAdam, Tilly and Tarrow, 1999; Johnston, 2004.
[53] Ibid.  Katzenlson, 1981.

identified myriad social structures and processes affecting thought and behavior at many levels,

through as many mechanisms.  As explained in later sections of the chapter, I am particularly

interested in a set of theories which posit the internalization of conceptual categories, or the

development of semi-conscious impressions or expectations about the world, through

immersion in institutionalized social relations.  I am interested in how dynamic features of

political life, like public policies and institutional developments, can introduce new discourses

into quotidian social relations, altering subjectivities.

By showing that beliefs and commitments are reproduced by particular social structures

and processes, this approach captures that distributions of belief and commitment are

conditional on particular social arrangements, and that their reproduction may be more or less

likely, depending on the durability of those arrangements.  This perspective is especially useful

for elucidating the possibilities for grassroots organizing.  Since organizing is an attempt by a

political actor to shape someone's conceptions of their own interests or options, it is important

not simply to measure their opinion, but to understand the extent to which their beliefs are

continually reproduced by social experiences, or grounded in material commitments, and

therefore more or less susceptible to change.

This perspective also makes it possible to see current patterns of consciousness and

material commitments in historical context, as the product of particular historical

developments.  We can identify key sequences of institutional development or policy change as

creating or changing the social structures which pattern consciousness and behavior.  Relatedly,

this perspective can reveal the role of particular social actors and their political projects in

constructing this terrain.  For example, we can trace the construction of a particular distributive

regime centered on a particular group's interests, or the embedding of a particular group's ideology in local social contexts.

Through such analysis, some scholars have demonstrated a circular process, in which the terrain for organizing in contemporary struggles was shaped, deliberately or not, by powerful actors who are the very parties to those contemporary struggles, or by actors with similar interests in earlier eras. In such cases, the construction of terrain for future organizing may be an important form of political action, a way in which actors pursue their goals. And we can see the ability to shape the terrain of organizing as a key advantage of powerful actors.

It is only possible to identify which processes and effects matter in a particular political conflict through historically specific analysis. As Tom Nairn argued, "there can be no easily abstractable 'theory'" of the mechanisms of hegemony nor "any philosophical 'strategy' for transforming them."[54] The case studies of this dissertation are an open-ended empirical study of the terrain for contemporary organizing, seeking to inductively identify important factors.

## 2. The development of neighborhood-level activism since the 1960s

Past scholarship describes the development of urban and neighborhood institutions since the 1960s. Specifically, this work describes two related developments: changes in field of neighborhood-based activism, from an ideologically and strategically diverse field as of the late 1960s, to a predominantly moderate pro-capitalist, and later neoliberal field of organizations; the rise of minority-led, neoliberal urban regimes, which pursue racial and class justice within the framework of market-oriented, corporate-led economic growth.

This section of the chapter reviews, integrates, and extends this literature. I will highlight the ways in which these emerging institutions produced discourses on social problems,

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[54] Nairn, 2000.

racial and class justice, and collective interests, which synthesized pro-market ideas with elements of militant racial justice discourses of the 1960s. I will also foreground the ways in which these institutions helped build constituencies for market-based development and other neoliberal policies. In the following section, I will consider how these developments constructed the terrain for contemporary organizing around economic issues.

Throughout this review, I will show how these developments at the urban and neighborhood levels are driven by neoliberalization at the federal level, and by features of Post War liberal order. First, the orientation of community-based organizations and minority-led regimes were shaped by the economic conditions that Harvey and others describe as the characteristic features of a neoliberal economy (and thus the neoliberal macroeconomic and fiscal policies which helped produce those conditions): intensified capital mobility, financialization, growth of the advanced service sectors, and increased investor interest in urban real estate. Second, federal and foundation anti-poverty and social service programs, guided by identifiably neoliberal ideas about market superiority, also helped create the aforementioned field of community-based organizations.

The key developments were also rooted in instantiations of capitalism within the Post-War liberal political order. The marginalization of social democratic tendencies in the Democratic Party after World War II, the domestication of most labor unions, and the dominance of certain liberal ideas among federal and foundation policymakers shaped opportunity structures for grassroots racial justice activists in the 1960s. The former two factors left radical groups without powerful allies, and vulnerable to attacks. The latter shaped the raft of federal, foundation, and corporate programs which channeled racial justice activists toward

moderate goals and strategies.  These factors remade the field of neighborhood-based activism

and began to inculcate moderate outlooks in an emerging leadership stratum.

These points are the basis for the hypothesis that the terrain for organizing against

neoliberalism is constructed by neoliberalization itself (building on instantiations of capitalist

domination in the Post-War order).  Neoliberal policies create economic conditions and

programs which shape the development of institutions and political formations at the urban and

local level, which *may* establish new patterns of thought and behavior that constitute the

conditions for organizing.

*Development of the field of neighborhood-based racial justice activism*

From the mid-1960s through the 1990s, federal policy, foundation programs, market

forces, and state coercion continually reconstructed the field of neighborhood-based racial

justice activism  From an ideologically and strategically diverse field in the 1960s, these factors

created first a field of moderate, liberal organizations, focused on service provision and

community development, and later a field of distinctively neoliberal organizations, seeking

community development through participation in rent-intensifying real estate redevelopment.

Most organizations committed to other modes of activism (such as grassroots organizing and

militant protest) were pressured to switch to service and development work, or were defeated

by political attacks and coercion.  These developments also eliminated groups with radical

ideologies from the field of neighborhood activism, either by forcing them to disband or go

underground, or by coopting them into depoliticizing financial dependency on elites and modes

of practice that embody moderate philosophies.

Alongside urban regimes (discussed later), these neighborhood organizations were

important nodes of discursive production.  With roots in militant Black and Latinx Power

movements, activists in these organizations constructed their work in discourses drawn from

those movements, as racial empowerment, community control, and expression of an authentic

racial culture.  As they constituted a domain of neoliberal civic activism, they produced

neoliberal visions of racial justice.  The demise of more radical organizations entailed that radical

versions of these discourses ceased to have organizational bases in minority communities.

This field of community-based organizations also helped incorporate neighborhood

residents into distributive regimes.  Black and Latinx middle-classes, expanding after the 1960s

due to federal civil rights policies, use community development organizations as vehicles for

economic mobility amidst institutional racism.  In the 1980s and 1990s, as community

development organizations embedded their work in the real estate redevelopment industry,

middle-class populations used community development organizations as vehicles for

participation in this distinctively neoliberal mode of accumulation.  These organizations thus

helped residents take a material interest in neoliberalization.  Working- and lower-class

residents, increasingly immiserated by economic restructuring, became clients of non-profit

service providers, and subjected to intensified policing and high rates of incarceration.

I trace these developments to policies, foundation programs, and other arrangements at

higher scales.  I show that developments in the 1960s reflect fundamental features of the liberal

Post-War order, and that developments in the 1970s through the 1990s were driven by

neoliberalization at the federal level and the spread of neoliberal ideas among foundation elites.

**Narrowing the field of neighborhood-based racial justice activism, 1960s-early 1970s**

As late as the 1960s, there was a diverse field of racial justice activism in urban

neighborhoods, reflecting the ideological and strategic diversity within the Black and Latinx

power phase of the 1960s racial justice movement.  Some cities had vibrant radical activist

milieus—networks of reading groups, cooperatives, Marxist and radical Black Nationalist

political parties and membership groups—which produced a continual stream of organizations

and projects, some of which involved attempts at grassroots organizing in neighborhoods.[55]

Some chapters of national civil rights organizations launched community organizing drives in the

1960s: chapters of the Congress on Racial Equality in New York City and Baltimore, for instance,

seeing working-class power as integral to Black Power, organized low-income tenants to press

demands for guaranteed adequate housing, and organized low-wage service workers into

"community unions."[56] Street gangs turned activists organized tenants and welfare recipients

into unions in low-income neighborhoods of Chicago and other cities, to assert demands for

progressive economic policies.[57] Across the country, diverse activists (including militant Black

Power groups and middle-class progressive activists with professional backgrounds) demanded

public support for locally controlled cooperative economic ventures, based on assertions of

state and corporate responsibility for development of the ghetto economy. Others, part of an

ideological tradition viewing black-owned business as the crux of Black economic

empowerment, launched more conventional capitalist enterprises.[58] Many groups organized

ghetto residents to support demands for community control of public bureaucracies, to be

exercised by neighborhood-based organizations or popular participatory neighborhood

councils.[59] Others, like the Committed for a Unified Newark, operationalized community

control as a combination of electoral projects, community-oriented economic ventures, and the

development of an authentic cultural milieu, and organized grassroots participation in these

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[55] E.g., The League of Revolutionary Black Workers in Detroit, for example, collected members of at least two radical Black Nationalist formations, a Trotskyist political party, ex-members of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and Congress on Racial Equality (kicked out for excessive radicalism), and less experienced activists exposed to radical ideas in local study groups convened by leading black Marxist intellectual James Boggs (Georgakas and Surkin, 1975: 14-17).
Self (2003: 222-4) describes a milieu of Black Nationalist intellectuals in Oakland, who synthesized Marxism with themes of Black Power such as the unity of racial justice struggles in the U.S. with anti-colonial struggles in the Global South.
[56] Schultz, 1986; Flug, 1990; These were part of an attempt to establish a new agenda for CORE, and an operational definition of Black Power, focused on lower- and working-class Blacks' interest in workplace power and economic rights (Flug, 1990: 329).
[57] Dawley, 1973; Ellis, 1975; Fish, 1974.
[58] This and previous sentence, Hill and Rabig, 2012: 26.
[59] Rhomberg, 2003; Fish, 1974; Todd-Breland, 2013.

projects.[60]  Already by the mid-1960s, others defined community control narrowly, as simply

electing black leaders to office, or gaining representation in elite-dominated bodies.[61]

Throughout the 1960s, peaking with the Federal War on Poverty and Ford Foundation's

community development and community action programs, a spate of government and

philanthropic programs channeled racial justice activists toward moderate forms of community

control, service provision, and community development, remaking the field of neighborhood-

based activism.  Groups which tried to use these programs to launch more radical projects, or

who pursued radical goals outside of these programs, were disciplined by market forces, or

undermined by opposition of entrenched political interests.

Several programs, based on the concept of "community action" highly influential among

liberal policymakers, offered opportunities for activist participation in planning and

administration of service and development programs.[62]  Most famously, the Community Action

Program required "maximum feasible participation" of representatives of high-poverty

communities in agencies administering the anti-poverty programs within the Economic

Opportunity Act of 1964.[63]  Model Cities (1965), the Secondary Education Act (1965), and the

Department of Labor's Comprehensive Employment Program (1967), also created opportunities

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[60] Rabig, 2016:  182.

[61] This was the orientation of CORE's new national leadership in 1966.  The priorities of CORE president Floyd McKissick were running "U.S. Department of Labor-funded job training programs, the election of black officials, and the growth of black-owned businesses" (Flug, 1990:  342)

[62] O'Connor (1996); Greenstone and Peterson (1973:  4-6).  Ferguson, 2007:  70.  This idea held that poverty was perpetuated by the political and civic passivity of the poor, and that effective anti-poverty measures must socialize poor people into the norms of pluralist political participation, as well as cultivate a leadership stratum among the poor.  The idea drew on modernization theory, then current in the field of sociology, longer-standing ideas about localism and democratic participation, and assumptions about the poor's lack of political and civic norms and skills.  The idea had been developed through a series of Ford Foundation programs since the 1950s, and spread among a network of social scientists, liberal elected officials, members of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, and foundation officers, (including Ford staff, who had a "large and loyal following among policy officials in the Kennedy administration," including personnel on the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime (PCJD), the Bureau of the Budget, the Housing and Home Finance Administration, "many of them foundation alumni or grantees (First quote: Biles, 2011:  114.  Second quote:  O'Connor, 1996.)."

[63] The Office of Economic Opportunity instructed city-level program officers to "assist the poor in developing autonomous and self-managed organizations which are competent to exert political influence on behalf of their own self-interest" (Amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, 1966)

for activist participation in governance (a testament to the influence of the community action idea among liberal policymakers at this time).  Philanthropic programs, and especially those of the Ford Foundation (which was responsible for formulating the community action idea) created similar opportunities.[64]

Other federal and philanthropic programs fused entrepreneurship with community action, while others simply supported entrepreneurship among racial minorities.[65]  Beginning with the Special Impact Program in the 1966 renewal of the Economic Opportunity Act, a series of federal programs allocated federal funding for "community development corporations," non-profits developing neighborhood-level economies by building housing and real estate, offering low-interest loans, launching or incubating economic enterprises, and other activities.[66]  CDCs were also a priority of corporate and foundation philanthropy since the mid-1960s.[67]  Laura Warren Hill, Nishani Frazier, and others recount corporate and foundation initiatives in several cities, responding to urban unrest, helping minority residents start and grow businesses.[68]

These programs elevated the many racial justice activists who already possessed relatively moderate understandings of community control, and capitalist visions of economic empowerment.  The secondary literature cites many examples of relatively moderate activists collaborating with local government and other stakeholders in governance, and launching Black Capitalist ventures, under the auspices of War on Poverty and Ford Foundation programs.[69]  The programs also channeled activists committed to more militant tactics and radical goals.  In New

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[64] Ford's programs in the mid- and late-1960s (i.e., after their Grey Areas programs) are described at length by Ferguson (2013).
[65] The Department of Labor provided grants for community groups to launch businesses in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Dawley, 1973: 127-130).  The Nixon administration introduced a "Black Capitalism Initiative" in his first term (Hill and Rabig, 2012:  26)
[66] The Housing Act of 1968 and Housing and Urban Development Act of 1970 offered additional federal funding for CDCs.  In the 1960s, most models envisioned financial and technical assistance provided by government, philanthropists, and private sector actors, who could also participate in joint ventures and offer sheltered markets.
[67] Frazier, 2012; Ferguson, 2007 and 2013; Berndt, 1977 (see Case Study:  Union Sarah Community Corporation for evidence of corporate support for CDCs rooted in racial justice movements).
[68] Hill, 2012; Frazier, 2012; Dawley, 1973.
[69] Ferguson, 2007: 94.  For example, the Cleveland CORE chapter, with corporate and foundation backing, started the CORE Enterprises Corporation, a CDC geared toward fostering black-owned businesses in the inner-city.

York City, for example, War on Poverty programs absorbed CORE activists, frustrated by their unsuccessful attempts to organize tenants to pursue radical demands.[70] Street gangs turned activists in Chicago, holding contradictory ideas about public responsibility for economic development of the ghetto and Black responsibility for racial uplift, embraced a program of Black Capitalism embodying the latter, when it was offered by corporate philanthropists and the Ford Foundation.[71]

Activists who tried to use War on Poverty programs to pursue more radical goals were eventually defeated by entrenched political opposition or state repression, particularly as federal policymakers revised programs to give local governments more control of program administration, and to defund wayward activists, in the late 1960s.[72] For example, militant activists in Oakland used the Oakland Economic Development Council (Oakland's official Community Action Agency under the Economic Opportunity Act and Model Cities program) to organize a grassroots base, and launch mass protests against City Council and bureaucratic agencies, demanding control of federally funded job training and community development programs.[73] Conservative forces in the city and state (including governor Ronald Reagan) consistently attacked these activists and eventually succeeded in having their federal funds cut off, after which the OEDC quickly collapsed.[74] Scholars describe similar episodes in Chicago

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[70] Schultz, 1986.

[71] Dawley, 1973. Dawley recounts Operation Bootstrap in Chicago, which convened representatives of the mayor's office, West Side Aldermen, Chicago police, representatives of some of the region's largest employers (Sears Roebuck, Ryerson Steel, Illinois Bell Telephone, and Western Electric) and four street gangs-turned racial justice activists, to fund a series of business ventures in 1968-9, co-funded by grants from the Ford Foundation and the federal Department of Labor. The gang member turned activists were motivated by Washington-esque ideas about blacks' responsibility for uplift and "respectability" (which they held alongside contradictory ideas that white racism caused black poverty and whites were responsible for alleviating it). Ellis (1969) and Brown (1979) tell similar stories about the West Side Organization in Chicago. Those groups which survived became "vehicle[s] for Black Capitalism," embedded in high-poverty neighborhoods, by the early 1970s. Others, seen as irredeemably criminal, were destroyed by funders' ambivalence and ferocious state repression.

[72] Biles, 2011: 148-150; Cazenave, 2007: xii. The Green Amendment to the 1967 Office of Economic Opportunity appropriations bill gave city governments more control over Community Action Programs.

[73] Rhomberg, 2004. Self, 2003.

[74] Especially important was the Green Amendment to the Economic Opportunity Act, restoring municipal control of distribution of federal funds. Nixon-appointed officials at the Department of Labor also helped defund insurgents in Oakland (Rhomberg, 2003).

(Fish, 1974; Todd-Breland, 2013), New York (Fainstein and Fainstein, 1974; Katznelson, 1981; Cazenave, 2007), and Los Angeles (Bauman, 2007), in which activists attempted to use War on Poverty programs to win substantive control over school systems and other public functions, eventually losing to entrenched bureaucratic and political interests, amidst declining federal support for insurgency.[75]

Many activists tried to use community development corporations to create "alternatives to capitalism," building substantive community control over local economies through collectively owned and governed enterprises and reinvesting profits into grassroots organizing and other political projects.[76] Most of these ventures quickly proved financially unsustainable, due to the inherent challenges of economic enterprises in a competitive environment, and to the erosion of consumer bases as industry fled cities in the late 1960s. Brednt (1977), Frazier (2012) and Rabig (2016) recount CDCs' abandonment of political ambitions and adoption of standard corporate models of governance within their first years.[77] Rabig concludes that "[m]any community economic development corporations across the country tended to follow a predictable trajectory: once energized by radical critiques of a system seemingly immune to conventional reform, they settled into a more comfortable relationship to existing power."[78]

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[75] Perhaps the most famous instance was the attempt by Black activists to control public schools in the Ocean Hill-Bronseville neighborhood (see Fainstein and Fainsten, 1974: chapter 6; Katznelson, 1981: chapter 6). Todd-Breland (2012, chapter 2) and Fish (1974, chapter 4) recount attempts by The Woodlawn Organization (TWO) in Chicago to pressure Chicago Public Schools and the University of Chicago to incorporate TWO into public school governance. The War on Poverty, for all its cooptive effects, briefly created a window in where activists could sustain such challenges, winning funds and political cover from sympathetic federal bureaucrats.

[76] Rabig, 2016: 187. Frazier, 2012: 69-74. Berndt (1977) notes that Prominent Black intellectuals saw CDCs in this way in the late 1960s, citing Stewart Perry: Black Institutions, Black Separatism, and Ghetto Economic Development; National Policy and the Community Development Corporation; Charles Hampden-Turner (7).

[77] Berdnt, (1977): The Union Sarah Community Corporation started in 1969 as an experiment in community capitalism, soon switched to more conventional business models, and then became a government-funded affordable housing developer by 1973 (see Part 2). Frazier, 2012: The Hough Area Development Corporation in Cleveland "transitioned form a promising, but not quite effective, community organization to an effective" to a profitable business with few ties to the community (84). Rabig, 2016: "Many community economic development corporations across the country tended to follow a predictable trajectory: once energized by radical critiques of a system seemingly immune to conventional reform, they settled into a more comfortable relationship to existing power" (213).

[78] Rabig, 2016: 213.

Ultimately, most such institutions survived only if they repurposed as government- and foundation-funded affordable housing developers.[79]

The decade's most significant attempts to organize working-class and low-income populations around progressive and socialist programs were defeated by political opposition from entrenched interests, including labor unions, municipal leaders, and employers. Segments of CORE and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, for example, attempted to organize low-wage workers into "community unions—worker organizations outside of formal labor unions, which backed up unionization and collective bargaining efforts with grassroots mobilizations of surrounding community members.[80] While such projects garnered interest among workers, they eventually collapsed due to intense opposition of city governments and labor unions (who withheld support from SNCC and threatened to defund CORE unless the projects ceased).[81] Black activists also formed radical caucuses within labor unions, some of which attempted to organize around radical economic programs in Black neighborhoods.[82] These projects ultimately collapsed under intense opposition of established union leadership, as well as employers and local governments. While smaller radical Black and Latinx organizations continued to operate after the 1960s, historians consider these defeated projects as the most

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[79] Frazier, 2012; Rabig, 2016; Purnell, 2012.
[80] On CORE: Flug, 1990. On SNCC: Moye, 2004; Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee: "Mississippi Freedom Labor Union"
[81] CORE discontinued its "community union" organizing due to pressure from the UAW (which was its primary funder at the time), and incoming president Floyd McKissick's preference for other economic agendas (Flug, 1990: 328-9). Radical formations in unions, like the Detroit Revolutionary Union Movement, were able to sustain themselves mostly by remaining underground and exploiting loopholes in liberal institutions, and encountered ferocious opposition from the state and UAW whenever they acted openly (Georgakas and Surkin, 1975). Schultz (1986) notes "the differences in tenement dilapidation, between lease holders and subletters, between families and single occupants, between the working poor and welfare recipients, between those resigned to substandard walk-ups and those aspiring to enter city projects" all made it difficult to establish a common tenant agenda or sense of solidarity.
[82] These left-leaning activists were only some of the many racial minority caucuses that "sprang up in literally dozens of unions in 1967-1971" (Flug, 1990: 342). Some pursued more moderate visions, such as racial equity in union leadership and promotions, and sought to increase their bargaining leverage with union leaders, rather than control of the union. Others union-based formations, like the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, formed in 1972, sought racial equity within unions, and supported the progressive wing of national AFL-CIO leadership.

significant attempts within the racial justice movement to organize low-income and working-class populations around left-leaning economic goals.[83]

These developments were the first step in construction of a moderate field of neighborhood-based racial justice activism. Although few of the community-based organizations created in the 1960s lasted through the next decade, the moderate goals and strategies they embodied were carried by a stratum of activists, socialized by these experiences. Toure Reed (2019) argues that War on Poverty programs reinforced participating activists' tendency to think about political representation in terms of "ethnic pluralism and racial group authenticity."[84] Bette Woody (1982) similarly argues that experiences in CDCs and Community Action Programs socialized activists into an orientation toward consensus-building and cooperation rather than antagonism. Moreover, activists emerged with access and relationships in "the world of local public administration."[85] While many brought these perspectives and connections to positions in Black urban regimes (discussed below), others brought them to the second wave of community-based organizations, developing in the 1970s and 1980s.[86]

As Cedric Johnson (2017), Toure Reed (2019) and other scholars have argued, these developments can be traced to features of the Post-War order. First, they reflect "the decline of left-labor militancy during the Cold War," and especially the incorporation of organized labor into a liberal pluralist framework.[87] By the 1960s, anti-communist pressures and resurgent corporate power had forced most labor unions to accept this framework, and unions had developed organizational interests in protecting "turf."[88] During the period under study, unions

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[83] Marable, 2012 (forward to the 2012 edition of Georgakas and Surkin's *Detroit I Do Mind Dying*; Dawson, 2013.
[84] T. Reed, 2019.
[85] Johnson, 2017.
[86] Julia Rabig (2016), observing the "first generation" of CDCs in Newark, comments that "CDCs served as a career ladder for activists, many of whom continued to work in these organizations after they acquired professional credentials" (191).
[87] T. Reed, 2019.
[88] Dudzick and A. Reed, 2015: 353-4. Levi, 2003.

primarily backed liberal civil rights organizations. Although a social democratic tendency within

labor existed, based in the A. Phillip Randolph Institute, it focused more on elite-level policy

negotiations than organizing or supporting grassroots groups.[89] Leftist racial justice formations

were thus deprived of powerful organizational allies, and organizational prerogatives caused

some unions to oppose attempts by Black activists to organize low-wage Black workers in cities.

Second, the substance of War on Poverty and foundation programs reflects the

dominance among liberal elites of a perspectives which "uncoupled inequality from political

economy," attributing it instead to behavior and culture.[90] The "community action" concept, for

instance, was based on the idea that poverty was perpetuated by the political and civic passivity

of the poor, and that effective anti-poverty measures must socialize poor people into the norms

of pluralist political participation, as well as cultivate a leadership stratum among the poor.

Scholars have traced the genealogy of these ideas, showing that an essentialist notion of culture

supplanted class as an explanatory variable in a range of social theories by the mid-twentieth

century.[91] The dominance of this perspective in the Democratic Party in the 1960s was partly

caused by the rehabilitation of capitalism through its apparent successes in World War II, beliefs

that capitalist production had effectively solved the problem of scarcity, the discrediting of

socialist ideas during the Cold War, and prejudice likely rooted in a middle-class sensibility.

These developments in the organizational field also had important effects on discourses

about racial justice. The emerging field of neighborhood organizations elaborated moderate

discourses on racial justice, and established the dominance of those moderate discourses.

Specifically, these developments narrowed the meaning of contested concepts like "community

control" and "Black Capitalism." Moderate (or moderated) activists attached these concepts to

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[89] Hamilton and Hamilton (1997, especially chapter 8). Johnson, 2017.
[90] T. Reed, 2019: 5.
[91] Michaels, 1992; A. Reed, 2004: 5-6.

a concrete set of moderate practices (service provision, community development, and participation in governance), implying that these activities fulfilled those racial justice goals. Moreover these articulations were institutionalized in the new organizations. Radical articulations of these concepts were not institutionalized, as the organizations producing them were coopted or greatly diminished.

Even as they moderated their definitions of racial justice, activists tried to construct their work as militant. The accounts of Feguson, Frazier, and Rabig describe activists' attempts to ensure that their moderate versions of community control and Black Capitalism retained the connotations of separatism and assertiveness which comprised some of the emotional resonance of the Black Power movement. Rabig (2016) notes that even as they dropped social democratic practices, Community Development Corporations still tried to fulfill "calls for collective ownership that echoed through the black power era…on mostly symbolic terms," presenting themselves as wielding economic power on behalf of the community, and their projects as collective assets.

### Further narrowing, lower-class demobilization, and expanding middle-class development activism, 1970s-1980s

Three trends in the 1970s and 1980s, driven by neoliberal federal policy in multiple areas, and changing foundation practices, continued to reconstruct the field of neighborhood-based racial justice practice:

- Federal and foundation programs furthered narrowed the field of community practice, undermining remaining militant groups and causing the proliferation of service and development groups which eschewed grassroots organizing and mass mobilization.

- Working- and lower-class populations became clients of non-profit service providers, effectively demobilizing politically. This trend was driven, firstly, by neoliberal

macroeconomic and fiscal policies, which accelerated deindustrialization, and led to rapid

increases in unemployment and poverty in working-class sections of Black and Latinx

neighborhoods in many cities.  These dire conditions generated intense need for support.

The aforementioned federal and foundation programs ensured that these needs would be

met via non-profit service provision, rather than through militant mobilization.

- Cadres of middle-class neighborhood-based activists focused on community development,

  serving primarily middle-class constituencies, grew in many cities.  This was rooted in the

  expansion of Black and Latinx middle-classes, due to civil rights legislation and enforcement,

  and federal and foundation programs creating opportunities for activists to pursue

  homeownership and entrepreneurship through community development non-profits, rather

  than other strategies.

Federal urban and welfare policies in the 1970s and 1980s, part of the crystallizing

neoliberal perspective on economic questions, continued to reconstruct the field of

neighborhood activism.[92]  These policies maintained federal commitments to funding a variety

of social services but devolved program administration to the neighborhood level, creating

numerous opportunities for non-profit participation in service provision.[93]   The Community

Development Block Grant program (1974) and the Carter Administration's Urban Development

Action Grant program (1976) and later the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program (1986),

created numerous opportunities for non-profits to participate in low-income housing and

commercial development.  One practitioner summarized that "by 1980 there were over a dozen

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[92] Neumann, 2014: 284.  Neumann writes that "By the late 1970s, ideas about urban governance had narrowed among public and private sector actors until federal policymakers saw devolution and privatization as the only politically viable options for national urban policy."

[93] Biles, 2011; Neuamn, 2014: 287; Harris, 1980: 95, 106-7, 144-6).  These included grants to run job training programs under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (1973); grants for community development under the Housing and Community Development Act (1974); grants for provision of various services distributed by the Community Services Administration (which replaced the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1974) and the Office of Neighborhood Development, created in 1978.

federal programs providing important sources of support for local staff and projects...and an increasing number of foundations and corporations were making serious commitments to community groups."[94]

Meanwhile, federal and urban governments and foundations took care not to fund militant political work.  Federal urban policies throughout the 1970s and 1980s gave city governments' control of the disbursement of federal funds, and urban politicians made political support, or at least quiescence, a condition of receiving Community Development Block Grants, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, and other federal funds.[95]  Abandoning experiments with "community action," many foundations began to explicitly require grantees to eschew militant political work, and to adopt cooperative postures toward government and other stakeholders.[96] As many have observed, foundations also encourage technical solutions to problems, which erase antagonism and structural inequality.[97]

The most obvious effect of these developments was the continuing proliferation of service and development organizations in Black and Latinx neighborhoods.  Harris (1980) describes the proliferation of state-funded social service agencies in high-poverty neighborhoods in this period.[98]  Stoecker (1997), Steinbach (2003) and Boyd (2007) each refer to a "second wave" of community development corporations, forming in these years, and funded by the aforementioned federal and foundation programs.[99]  Per their patrons' requirements,

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[94] Andrew Mott, quoted in Peirce and Steinbach, 1987: 26.
[95] Neuman, 2014: 288; Biles, 2011: 189; Immergluck, 2005.  Revenue sharing and CDBGs replaced the categorical grants of the War on Poverty programs with a block of annual funds, giving "municipalities broad discretion in deciding where and how." (Grodach and Ehrenfeucht, 2015: not paginated) E.g., in Chicago, Daley consolidated both LIHTCs and CDBGs into the larger pool of patronage, alongside city contracts, city-owned properties, and TIF funds (Betancur and Gills, 2004: 103).
[96] Local Initiatives Support Corporation, for example, eschews "assertive postures and contentious tactics as counter-productive" (Chaskin and Karlstrom, 2012:  ES 3).  This orientation is often express in rubrics of "relationship and trust-building" and "stakeholder collaboration."
[97] Kohl-Arenas, 2015; Arena, 2012; Sites, Chaskin, and Parks (2007).  This is partly enforced through requirements for "data-driven and 'evidenced-based'" programs and "performance-measurement outcome evaluation." Sites, Chaskin and Parks, 2007: 530.
[98] Harris, 1980: 95, 106-7, 144-6.
[99] Stoecker, 1997:  2; Steinbach, 2003; Boyd (2007): 49.

these groups tended to eschew grassroots politics, prioritizing "technical details of development over community empowerment."[100]

The neighborhood-based groups which maintained commitments to grassroots organizing and militant mobilization through the early 1970s either repurposed or declined in these years.  Even groups that "would [have] prefer[red] to spend more time on 'pressure campaigns' instead found [themselves] occupied with making contributions to constituents through social service and community development projects."[101]  In the words of one organizer, "we've gotten sucked into social services…residents just bring their problems to us."[102]  John Gills (1991) and Michelle Boyd (2007) both conclude reviews of the post-1960s history of neighborhood practice with the observation that, by the late 1970s, militant CBOs had been replaced by community development organizations and service providers.[103]

As described earlier in this chapter, federal macroeconomic and fiscal policies, enacting the emerging neoliberal perspective, expedited economic restructuring in the 1970s and 1980s.  Rapid deindustrialization led to widespread unemployment and poverty in working-class sections of Black and Latinx neighborhoods, as elsewhere.  Whereas such conditions might have been the basis for political action, by the mid-1970s, most urban neighborhoods had no organizational or institutional bases for grassroots mobilization.  Seeking social services from government- and foundation-funded non-profits, was the only option available to immiserated working- and lower-class neighborhood residents.  As Michelle Boyd (2007) observes, these trends "steer[ed] poor blacks into service and welfare programs."[104]

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[100] Stoecker 1997, 9.
[101] Fisher, 1994:  199.  Harris (1980) makes the same point.
[102] Katz, 1990:  51.
[103] Gills, 1991: 43.  See Boyd (2007, 47): "By the next decade [i.e., the 1970s] …the protest and organizing orientation of these community groups was overshadowed by a focus on community economic development"
[104] Boyd, 2007:  64.

At the same time, federal civil rights policies caused a rapid growth of Black and Latinx middle-classes.  The 1964 Civil Rights Act established a framework for combatting employment discrimination, enforced by the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, leading to gradual increases in private sector hiring of Black and Latinx people.  Affirmative action programs in federal agencies expanded public employment of Black and Latinx people.  Brown and Erie (1981) summarize that "[b]etween 1960 and 1980, the proportion of black men working in professional, technical, and managerial jobs doubled, with more than half of the increase due to public social welfare programs.[105]

Michelle Boyd (2007), Mary Pattillo (2007) and others note that the expanding middle-classes increasingly pursued community development, via the vehicles of neighborhood-based community development corporations.  These non-profits helped aspiring households and entrepreneurs attain loans and technical assistance with home purchases and renovations and small business development, amidst redlining and discrimination.[106]  Logan and Molotch similarly observed the proliferation of these groups, by the mid-1980s:

> Operating through the community organization mechanism, the 'better element' in an otherwise disadvantaged area can function as a vanguard for change...Not surprisingly, those who ordinarily join and become leaders in a community organization tend to be the middle-class (or aspiring middle-class) homeowners.[107]

The staff and leading participants of these organizations formed a "community-development elite," a new stratum of civic and political leadership, expressing the distinctive politics of an expanding middle-class subjected to institutional racism.[108]  Boyd (2007) and Pattillo (2007) and

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[105] Brown and Erie 1981, 308.  Quoted on Boyd, 2007:  49.
[106] Boyd, 2007:
[107] Logan and Molotch, 1987:  141.  Pattillo (2007) also notes the dominance of neighborhood-based
[108] Boyd, 2007:  chapter 2 (especially 50).

Monique Taylor (2002) found these actors highly active in planning, implementing, and contesting issues of neighborhood development, closely tied to the city's political leadership.[109]

The demobilization of the lower-classes and growth of community development activism had effects at the level of discursive production.  The growing field of community development organizations produced discourses constructing community development as racial empowerment and authentic racial expression.  Many of the activists involved had participated in the racial justice mobilizations of the 1960s.  Seeking reinvestment amidst redlining in the 1970s and 80s, community development practitioners continued to construct their work as a vital racial justice practice.  One scholar, summarizing interviews with a national sample of community development practitioners in the 1980s, concluded that development activists identified as "descendants of neighborhood associations or protest groups of the 1960s that determined that empowerment is better obtained through the control of the economic resources within their communities rather than through advocacy tactics."[110]  These organizations and their projects helped establish that moderate forms of community development and service provision were important, legitimate, and even militant form of racial justice practice.  Moreover, the elimination of remaining nodes of militant practice left still fewer organizational bases for articulations of racial politics which emphasized the exercise of popular power through grassroots organizing and militant mobilization.

**Market-oriented real estate redevelopment in the neoliberal city, 1980s-1990s**

A distinctively neoliberal articulation of this middle-class community development activism emerged in the 1980s and 1990s.  As neoliberal growth strategies and global capital

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[109] Ibid, Pattillo, 2007.
[110] Rubin, 1995: 129.  Hegelson, 2014:  Chapter 6. Gills, 1991:  43.   Even in the neoliberal era, activists and politicians continued to reference racialized divestment, and the pursuit of redevelopment as resistance to white oppression, and universally beneficial to all neighborhood residents, or members of the race (Boyd, 2007).

flows fueled gentrification, neighborhood community development activists faced pressures and opportunities to participate in market-driven neighborhood revitalization processes, controlled by private developers and city planning bureaucrats.  Depending on their neighborhood's place in the cycle of reinvestment, development activists lobbied local governments for inclusion in programs to stimulate market-based revitalization, participated in foundation programs designed to channel benefits of revitalization toward a broader swath of neighborhood residents, or struggled to control and shape rapid reinvestment already underway.

While the public-private real-estate development industry's interest in disinvested neighborhoods beyond Central Business Districts was the primary cause, neoliberal federal and foundation policies also encouraged non-profits to participate in market-based revitalization.  In the 1980s and 1990s, federal policymakers and foundation officers reconceived the role of community-based non-profits as mediators between free markets and neighborhoods, expressing the bi-partisan consensus on the superiority of market-based policies. [111]  Federal and foundation programs required community groups to leverage private investment and partner with private sector developers as a condition of funding.[112]  A new spate of programs offered grants to groups promising to help marginal communities access local markets.[113]  Non-profits were also expected to function as corporations, with the "business talent and development skills once thought to be the exclusive province of the for-profit sector."[114]

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[111] The report was the work of The Futures Committee, a conference of civic and neighborhood leaders convened by LISC/Chicago.  It was reportedly inspired by a prior presentations by then State Senator Barack Obama (Blistein, 2009).  Marketization was one, sometimes implicit, element of the framework.

[112] Gordach and Ehrenfeucht, 2015: CDBGs encouraged cities to use grants "as a catalyst for private investment."   On the requirement of market-based interventions in post-Nixon federal urban policy, see O'Connor, 1999: 111.

[113] Fisher, 1994: 181. Fisher observes that CBOs could win foundation, as well as government, funding by "developing highly specific and measurable development projects in which community people could work for their own economic betterment."

[114] Pierce and Steinback, 1987: 30.  Also, Rubin, 1995: 134.  This perspective was articulated by LISC/Chicago's report, *Changing the Way We Do Things*.  For LISC, as for federal policymakers, market-oriented forms of community practice were premised on the idea that government intervention had not worked, and that only projects which harnessed market forces were viable.

Federal and foundation programs helped establish frameworks for inter-sector collaboration on real estate redevelopment.  The federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (1986) linked non-profits to private developers and investors.  Political scientist John Betancur and co-authors (2015) argue that the federal HOPE VI program (under which the federal government directed local Public Housing Authorities to replace high-rise projects with "mixed-income developments") was especially influential in encouraging and coordinating collaboration between non-profits, private developers, and city agencies.  Margaret Weir (1999), William Sites and coauthors (2009) and several others recall that public-private-non-profit partnerships to stimulate market-driven neighborhood development was unquestionably the dominant paradigm for neighborhood improvement among major philanthropic foundations in the 1990s.[115]

Once again, these activists, many of whom are rooted in militant racial justice mobilizations of the 1960s, continued to frame their work in discourses on racial empowerment and authenticity.  In a common trend, community development practitioners use discourses about racial authenticity both to legitimate redevelopment and to construct marketable spaces, as in "heritage tourism."[116]  The community development organizations studied by Boyd (2007) constructed Black-led gentrification as way to preserve an authentic, inter-class racial community.  Sternberg and Anderson (2014), Betancur (2005), and Betancur and Kim (2015) find that a pro-development coalition (comprised of non-profits, elected officials, and upwardly mobile Latinx residents) similarly constructed market-driven real estate development as a way to express an authentic Latinx identity, while overcoming racialized disinvestment.  As Boyd (2005) observes, these groups "describe neighborhood development as a response to long

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[115] Margaret Weir (1999); Sites et al (2009); Kubisch et al 2010; Chaskin and Karlstrom (2012); Betancur et al, 2015 (91)
[116] Johnson, 2015:  186.

patterns of racial discrimination, understand it as a form of resistance to racial subordination,

and see it as a way to advance the race."[117]

**A partial exception:  Neo-Alinskyite organizing**

While the bulk of the non-profit sector focuses on service provision and community

development, a minority of non-profits use Saul Alinsky's model of community practice,

mobilizing neighborhood residents in advocacy campaigns.  These groups are cultivated by left-

leaning activists (many with roots in organized labor and the social movements of the 1960s)

and by national institutions which train activists in Alinskyite strategies and help start new

neighborhood organizations.  While some such groups have been instrumental in passing

progressive policy changes, their activities are limited by financial dependence on government

and philanthropic foundations, by federal tax laws regulating political activity by non-profits,

and by groups' tendency (an effect of Alinsky's model) to pursue issue campaigns divorced from

larger political strategies.

There is no national database of such organizations.  However, the size of this field can

be appreciated by reviewing national networks and umbrella organizations of such "power

building" organizations.  Perhaps the most important of these networks was the Association of

Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), which at its peak represented an estimated

150,000 members nationally, in 700 local chapters in 50 cities.[118]  Other significant national

networks include People's Action, a network of 41 "state and local grassroots power-building

organizations;"[119] Industrial Areas Foundation, with 65 local affiliates;[120] Faith in Action

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[117] Boyd, 2008:  752.
[118] Hurd and Kest, 2003:  120.
[119] People's Action website, https://peoplesaction.org/.  Accessed 9/4/19.
[120] Industrial Area's Foundation website, http://www.industrialareasfoundation.org/.  Accessed 9/4/19.

(formerly the Pacific Institute for Community Organizing), with 44 affiliated organizations;[121] and the Partnership for Working Families, comprising 17 local community-labor coalitions in 11 states.[122]

Many of these groups are rooted in and partly funded by religious congregations, and some receive funds from labor unions. These groups are fostered and trained by national networks and institutions, such as the National Training and Information Center in Chicago, the Highlander School, and the Midwest Academy, which provides training in Alinskyite organizing and direct-action tactics.[123]

These networks (and presumably the hundreds of member organizations) focus on a range of progressive policy issues. Before its demise in 2010, ACORN organized around tenants' rights, living wages, affordable housing, access to bank loans, and exploitative state and corporate practices including workfare and predatory lending. ACORN chapters were instrumental in forming community-labor coalitions in many cities.[124] Groups affiliated with People's Action (at the time National People's Action) and ACORN led the national policy campaign which resulted in the Community Reinvestment Act, and ACORN spearheaded the wave of living wage campaigns since the 1990s.[125]

Withal their commitments to progressive agendas and pressure campaigns, these organizations are severely limited by three factors. First, while groups receive some funding from membership dues, religious congregations, and labor unions, they receive most of their funds from government and foundation grants.[126] The precipitous fall of ACORN after cuts in its

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[121] Faith in Action website, https://faithinaction.org/about-us/history/. Accessed 9/4/19.
[122] Simmons, 2016.
[123] Heathcott, 2011: 278; Domhoff, 2005.
[124] Kelleher, 1986: 34, 40-1; Fisher, 2009.
[125] On the Community Reinvestment Act campaign, see Mariano, 2003. On ACORN's role in the living wage campaigns, see Brooks, 2008.
[126] Domhoff, 2005.

federal funding in 2009 illustrates the vulnerability of even the most established such

organizations.  This financial dependence constrains these organizations to pursuing progressive

causes within the framework of the national Democratic Party, and from using excessively

disruptive strategies.

Second, these groups' financial solvency depends on their status as 501(c)(3)

organizations under the federal tax code:  such organizations are tax-exempt, can receive

foundation grants, and donations to them are tax-deductible.  Tax law bans 501(c)(3)

organizations from partisan political activity.  These restrictions prevent the organizations from

turning out their memberships in the electoral sphere, except in non-partisan campaigns.  This

also limits such groups' utility as coalition partners for groups operating advancing electoral

projects.

Finally, most of these groups pursue campaigns that are not part of a larger strategic

project to win institutional power or enact structural change.  As noted, many of the activists are

trained in Saul Alinsky's model of organizing, which insists on letting local populations determine

the organization's agenda—organizers are not to begin with an analysis of their own.  This has

led to failures to develop effective challenges to key drivers of inequality and poverty.[127]

*Minority-led neoliberal urban regimes*

The minority-led neoliberal urban regime refers to a type of municipal administration

governing many U.S. cities after the mid-1960s.  These regimes enacted a moderate racial justice

program, focused on patronage, attacks on racial disparity and discrimination, and descriptive

representation (sometimes coupled with moderate devolutionary programs) within a neoliberal

economic framework.  These programs were shaped by officeholders' socialization into

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[127] Heathcott (2011:  290).  E.g., the community reinvestment campaigns "can never fully stabilize neighborhoods, because the mechanisms that ultimately unravel the material basis of communities remain intact." (290)

established modes of governance through the War on Poverty programs, the weakness of

radical racial justice formations in most cities in the 1960s, and especially by the structural and

political constraints facing all urban regimes (and especially those in declining, older cities) by

the late 1960s.

These regimes were a key institution producing neoliberal discourses on racial justice.

Like neighborhood organizations, the regimes defined the meaning of racial interest, and of key

concepts like community control and empowerment, in ways compatible with or supportive of

neoliberal economic programs, uncoupling them from analysis of structural inequalities or

exploitation, and demands for redistribution or democratic control of economic processes.

Through patronage and coordination of grassroots participation in real estate redevelopment,

these regimes also helped organize primarily middle-class segments of minority communities

into distributive relationships within the neoliberal political economy.

**Origins and programs of minority-led, neoliberal urban regimes**

Demographic changes and minority political mobilization created the conditions for the

election of Black officeholders in many cities after the mid-1960s.  Continuing white flight, and

migration into cities of Black and Latinx populations, increased minority population shares.

Black political mobilization, associated with the Civil Rights and minority Power movements,

made minorities a larger share of the electorate.  From 1965 to 1980, the number of black

elected officials in the U.S. increased from 100 to 1,813.  The number of black officials elected at

the urban-level increased 619% in this time, and at the county-level 960%.[128]

The same historical forces that reconstructed the field of neighborhood-based activism

shaped the programs of minority-led regimes.  First, like leaders of neighborhood organizations,

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[128] This and previous sentence, Katz, 2008:  190-1.

members of minority administrations were socialized and linked to networks of political and

economic elites through War on Poverty programs.  Surveying the post-1965 wave of Black

urban mayors, Bette Woody (1982) comments that "most were active in neighborhood, civil

rights, and Office of Economic Opportunity politics in cities during the mid- to late 1960s" and

many served on official Community Action Agencies.[129]  These roles were an entry point into "a

complex recruitment and training process," in which activists developed relationships with

federal officials, liberal politicians, foundation officers, and corporate executives.[130]  This

"political apprenticeship" introduced politicians and staffers to the "public management

system's entrenched protocols and operating logic, initiating them into the common sense of

existing policy processes," including dispositions toward consensus-building and stakeholder

collaboration.[131]

Second, though minority communities comprised the bulk of minority-led

administrations' electoral base, these administrations won power only on the basis of coalitions

of radical and moderate racial justice activists, minority populations, and liberal establishments

(including local Democratic Party organizations, labor unions, and segments of the business

community).  Simply put, left-leaning activists were not powerful enough to win citywide

elections on their own.[132]  In the few cases where Black Power formations dominated electoral

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[129] Woody, 1982:  22.

[130] Woody (1982) suggests that experiences in the WOP, and perhaps subsequent experiences, "contributed to the later 'policy' orientation" (i.e., their disposition toward certain policy choices).  She refers to Newark's Kenneth Gibson and Gary's Richard Hatcher as having outlooks shaped by their professional experiences in think tanks associated with the Democratic Party (xvi). Woody suggests that one effect was a tendency toward mediating between opposed interests.  Several mayors had, in their previous experiences, "generous measure of experience as mediators, particularly between black and white interests as in the case of Wilson in Oakland and Young in Detroit, or between radical and conservative wings of black political factions, including nationalist and civil rights movements and organized labor."

[131] On "political apprenticeship" see Moynihan, 1969; quoted in Johnson, 2017.  Second quote from A. Reed, 1999:  131.

[132] For example, in Oakland Black Power activists launched mostly unsuccessful electoral campaigns, around agendas of radical devolution and redistribution, in 1969 and 1973.  Three of the four candidates lost, mostly for the lack of financial and logistical support from the city's powerful institutions (such as the Democratic party organization and labor unions) and for lack of a base beyond the black population in West Oakland. Remnants of these mobilizations "joined with white liberals, labor unions, and Democratic Party politicians" to support the liberal, black candidate Lionel Wilson in the 1977 mayoral election (Rhomberg, 2004). Georgakas and Surkin describe radicals' need to compromise with liberals in Detroit to elected Mayor Coleman Young.

coalitions, such as Baraka's Committee for a Unified Newark, they were unable to discipline candidates after their election.[133]

Most importantly, minority-led coalitions won power in the context of severe fiscal crisis and worsening poverty and unemployment (rooted in economic restructuring, demographic changes, and federal cuts in urban aid).[134] By the mid-1970s, per the emerging bi-partisan consensus on neoliberal economic policies, the Democratic Party rejected pleas for bailouts or other forms of stimulus for declining cities.[135] These conditions effectively imposed a corporate-driven economic growth strategy on urban regimes, as the only possible way to create desperately needed jobs and revenue.

Socialized into strategic moderation, politically reliant on moderate and liberal coalition partners, and lacking other policy options, minority-led administrations adopted corporate-centered economic growth strategies. As Eisinger (1983) observes, "black mayors operate on the basis of a simple equation: private economic development in the city produces jobs in the private sector and tax money that may be used for jobs and purchases in the public sector."[136] Administrations provided generous subsidies to businesses and developers to spur corporate growth and maintained the low tax rates and balanced budgets preferred by businesses and investors. Reviewing the performance of black mayors and minority-led coalitions, scholars find few attempts at redistribution of resources to lower-classes through enhanced city services,

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[133] For example, the Committee for a Unified Newark successfully elected Mayor Gibson, Councilman King, but quickly found them, once in office, more responsive to entrenched bureaucratic and corporate interests.

[134] Indeed, as A. Reed (1999) points out, the election of minority politicians was enabled by the very processes causing urban fiscal crisis.

[135] These decisions were described above. See Biles, 2011.

[136] Eisinger, 1983.

progressive taxation, or transfers.[137]  Relatedly, minority politicians did not use their office to

forge new political coalitions capable of winning elections around redistributive agendas.[138]

       As Reed (1999) and Woody (1982) show, these regimes maintain popular support in

minority communities through racial redistribution of patronage, and by incorporating

symbolism and some demands of racial justice movements.  Browning et al's comprehensive

review shows that regimes increased minority shares in contracts and employment in city

government.  In particular, regimes tried to satisfy movement demands for community control.

As Woody recounts, some regimes attempted various forms of devolution of city functions and

authority to the neighborhood-level.[139]  Browning and coauthors report minority-led coalitions

increased minority representation in city boards and commissions.  Mostly, however minority

mayors interpreted the principle of community control as representation of the community by

authentic leadership—not as institutional reform or mass mobilization.  Politicians thus

presented themselves as authentic representatives of the Black community, and constructed

their office (and that of their appointees) as the fulfillment of community control.[140]

## Discursive production and organization of constituencies

       Like neighborhood organizations, the regimes were a key node articulating definitions of

racial justice and interest, and of key concepts such as community control and empowerment, in

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[137] Browning et al, 1985; Eisinger, 1983; Sharon Watson (1983) similarly concludes that black mayors, and mayors in cities with high levels of black political participation, saw no increases in spending on social services.  A few mayoralties, considered "insurgents" pursued policies to preserve affordability (such as rent control) or policies to redistribute the wealth generated through corporate development to outlying neighborhoods.

[138] Eisinger (1983) summarizes, "[c]oalition with poor whites, that is, the pursuit of a politics of class is seen as a threat that could drive white business from the city…black mayors have come to the ironic conclusion that they must forge a coalition with local private money."

[139] Woody, 1982.  Even as they tended to centralize authority and professionalize staffs related to finance, planning, and economic development.

[140] Cedric Johnson (2007) observes, like all politicians managing class contradictions, members of minority regimes could signal their authenticity and commitment to the interests of the community by affecting a certain vernacular associated with the working-classes.  Johnson suggests that this form of authentication was particularly important for post-1960s Black politicians given the exceptional importance, among minority constituencies, of cultural nationalist conceptions of racial identity, and related notions of authenticity.

ways that were compatible with neoliberal economic policies.  They also helped to organize

constituencies around expectations for patronage and participation in the neoliberal real estate

development economy.

The regimes helped define community control as descriptive representation, and to

establish criteria for assessing the legitimacy of representatives.  As regimes legitimated

themselves in assertions that their office fulfilled community control, they reinforced the notion

that the core of racial empowerment was political representation by authentic representatives.

And in their reliance on discourses of authenticity to validate their status as a legitimate

representative of the community, they reinforced the centrality of this concept in conversations

about representation.

Regimes also helped to define racial interests.  As Reed (1999) comments, the agenda of

patronage, community control, and attacks on racism shaped constituent expectations,

"defining what benefits political action can legitimately be used to pursue."[141]  Constituents

could seek jobs and contracts, and later opportunities to participate in real estate

redevelopment.  But programmatic goals, and especially those related to economic

redistribution, were excluded from this definition of racial interest.

The regimes helped to defined legitimate modes of political practice.  Insofar as

community control was realized through election and appointment of Black officials, and black

interests were served through conventional politics, the regimes delegitimized militant forms of

activity, such as protest.  This effect was strongest where the regimes and their officials have

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[141] A. Reed, 1999; chapter 4

roots in the militant struggles of the 1960s, and thus "carry the historical sediment of

adversarial, protest politics."[142]

Finally, these regimes were critical in organizing constituencies around the distribution

of patronage and real estate redevelopment.  They have created networks of corporate clients

relying on city contracts and procurement, creating strong ties between a minority petite

bourgeoisie and the neoliberal regime.[143]  As Johnson (2015), Pattillo (2007), and others discuss,

city governments help organize the participation of neighborhood residents and non-profits in

real estate redevelopment, for instance by selling city-owned properties to targeted groups of

neighborhood residents, creating quasi-official neighborhood planning entities, and providing

grants to fund small development projects.  These programs provide opportunities to benefit

from market-driven redevelopment.

## 3. Research Questions Revisited—Historical Developments and the Terrain for Organizing

These developments created and institutionalized definitions of racial interest and racial

justice compatible with neoliberalism.  They ensured that discourses linking racial justice with

critiques of capitalism or a left economic program were not institutionalized.  The developments

also established modes of racial justice practice contained within the political system and reliant

on elite funding, and left few organizations committed to grassroots organizing and mass

mobilization.  Moreover, as global economic restructuring and neoliberal growth strategies

reshaped urban political economy, the urban regime and neighborhood-based development

organizations crafted a place in this economy for segments of minority populations in this mode

of practice.  Regimes' programs helped allies in minority neighborhoods profit from

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[142] Ibid.
[143] Bennett, 2006: "opportunities for politically connected African Americans and Latinos to participate in residential development consortiums, or to bid on city contracts for various public works improvements, are legion" (54).

redevelopment, and community development organizations coordinated grassroots participation.  Many lower-class neighborhood residents became clients of non-profit service provider organizations.

There are few published empirical studies about the effects of these structures on organizing.  However, I will discuss three possible impacts.   First, I will assess which actors and population segments are likely to have material investments in neoliberal regimes and neoliberal policies or economic processes.  Second, drawing on theories of hegemony, I will suggest that these developments made certain ideas about racial interest and political practice into taken-for-granted, "common sense" ideas for neighborhood residents.  Third, drawing on recent studies on the politics of neoliberalization, I will consider one specific ideological effect, in which non-profits and regimes may diffuse constructions of contentious political issues, legitimating displacement and inequality.  The goal of this section is to sketch general possibilities to be evaluated in the case studies in later chapters.

*Material commitments*

These institutional developments may have shaped neighborhood residents' material interests in ways that make them less receptive to progressive or socialist projects.  First, neighborhood-based community development non-profits and regime policies help some population segments invest in neighborhood revitalization.  It is not clear, however, just which population segments have the capacity to benefit from revitalization.  Second, people who work for or run "the ever expanding ever shifting array" of non-profits likely have material commitments to neoliberal regimes who provide grants and contracts.[144]  While these groups

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[144] A. Reed, 2016.

also have vested interests in devolution, this interest may align them which neoliberal or social democratic projects, depending on contingent factors.

As structural changes in the economy have grown the Black and Latinx middle classes, non-profit development organizations and neoliberal urban regimes help these population segments participate in and benefit from real estate redevelopment. The rise of the field of community development non-profits and the practices of neoliberal regimes have likely increased the number of neighborhood residents with a vested interest in the redevelopment economy. We might expect property owners, focused on rising property values, and residents with secure tenures in the neighborhood, hoping able to enjoy new amenities, to actively or passively support rent-intensifying real estate redevelopment as a mode of pursuing community interests.

However, it is not clear how wide a swath of property owners have real interests in neighborhood development. Within the category of homeowners, there is a wide spectrum of financial, logistical, and other capacities, conferring differential abilities to afford rising property taxes, access "private and state sources of rebuilding capital," navigate the investment process, and even evade unscrupulous investors' attempts to buy properties for less than market value.[145] Taylor (2019) argues that material interests in rising property values are also qualified by the level of precarity of property ownership. Many Black and Latinx homeowners have sub-prime mortgages, and underwater or nearly underwater mortgages—a fact dramatized by the extraordinarily high foreclosure rates in minority neighborhoods during the Great Recession.[146] Such factors complicate residents' material interests with respect to redevelopment.

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[145] Quotation from Johnson, 2015:
[146] This and previous sentence, Taylor and Denvir, 2019.

People who work for or run non-profits may have material commitments to neoliberal regimes, and to neoliberalism per se. Firstly, non-profits may function as a form of patronage: people who receive contracts or grants from the state are likely to be committed to the regime that provided those funds. As in most patronage relationships, beneficiaries would be unlikely to support political challenges to neoliberal regimes.

Second, insofar as non-profits perform former state functions, delegated to non-governmental organizations, they have a vested interest in privatization and devolution, as such. The connection between devolution and neoliberalism is arguably contingent. Historically, provision of goods and services via non-profits was juxtaposed to state provision, as the neoliberal alternative to Great Society-era liberalism. For instance, in John Arena's (2012) case studies, activists who became invested in non-profits gained a material interest in eliminating public housing.[147] However, in different historical conditions, non-profit service providers could have a material interest in the expansion of public funding for social services, which would align them strongly with progressive and social democratic projects, than neoliberal ones.

### Effects on consciousness

The work of Gramsci and Althusser suggests the possibility that these developments could influence the consciousness of neighborhood residents. Their work provides a way of thinking about consciousness as "the effect of the system of ideological relations into which the individual is inserted."[148] They suggest that we should consider the way that the aforementioned discourses about racial justice and political possibility are embedded in the institutions and processes comprising quotidian life, such that individuals may absorb elements of them into their practical thought.

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[147] Arena, 2012.
[148] Mouffe, 1979: 186-7.

Gramsci depicts a process of ongoing ideological production and diffusion within

quotidian social life.  His account focuses on "intellectuals," actors embedded in social life who

discursively construct quotidian social and economic processes, either as commentators, or as

institutional actors who set up and coordinate those processes.[149]  Though they speak about

mundane social elements, their discourses implicitly contain basic premises and concepts,

including fundamental beliefs about the nature of the world, society, or justice.  People exposed

to these constructions in the course of daily life internalize both the explicit content, and the

implicit premises and concepts.[150]  These ideas come to form "common sense"—the

unquestioned or unconscious assumptions used in thought and analysis.  In Stuart Hall's reading,

the concepts and categories absorbed through quotidian social life create the "forms of

spontaneous thought within which the [individual] represents [the world] to himself [sic]...and

'lives out' (i.e., genuinely experiences) his [sic] practical relations to it."[151]

Gramsci has an elaborate account of how the ideas of dominant groups tend to be

embedded in quotidian social practices, such that they are absorbed into common sense.[152]  The

institutional developments described in the previous section can be seen as inserting neoliberal

ideas into political and economic institutions embedded in the lives of Black and Latinx

communities.  The programs, practices, and discourses (and in the case of neighborhood-based

institutions, the organizational form itself) of minority-led regimes and neighborhood-based

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[149] Gramsci, 1977.  Gramsci's account of intellectuals:  6-10 (for definition of this category), 11-13 (for their role in embeddedness in quotidian social life).

[150] Ibid.  For example, Gramsci argues that students absorb the liberal conception of the individual implicit in certain forms of pedagogical practice (102-3), and Catholics from the forms of religious practice then propagated by "the Moderates" (53).  Mouffe (1979) reads Gramsci's account of ideological influence it this way too.

[151] Hall, 1986:  30.

[152] Gramsci, 1977.  This account mostly rests on the claims that 1) coalitions advancing large-scale political projects tend to produce discourses, articulating their goals in terms of basic moral principles and based on basic premises. 2)"intellectuals" from all social strata tend to become incorporated into dominant partisan coalitions and leading institutions of knowledge production, driven by careerist incentives, and the need to pursue group interests within dominant systems; 3)This cooptation and incorporation entails accepting the core principles and premises of the dominant coalition; 4)the intellectuals then reproduce discourses on myriad social subjects, in myriad institutional and social contexts, using these core ideas.

institutions have been deeply shaped by neoliberalization, and embody neoliberal ideas.  From a Gramscian perspective, the question is simply a matter of the extent to which people encounter the discourses, programs and practice (and their implicit discourses) of those institutions in everyday life.

There is not much empirical data on this question.  But, it's plausible that people would encounter them regularly.  Consider that neighborhood-based community development institutions generate a continual stream of initiatives, development projects, events, and programs.  These objects are surely presented in the institutions' discourses about the benefits of development and its importance as a mode of racial empowerment.  These constructions would imply additional ideas about racial interest and practice, and presume the validity of basic concepts such as "race" or "community."  Of course, the impact of these processes would depend on the extent of organizational activity in the neighborhood—the degree of organizations' capacities, and thus the number and stature of objects they produce; the number of such organizations; their public visibility; and the depth and breadth of their social networks among neighborhood residents, among other factors.

As noted above, the neighborhood organizations and regimes have created community development as a participatory field, creating many opportunities for residents to engage in development projects or other development related work (e.g., attending planning meetings, joining "investment clubs," improving public spaces to prepare for investment, etc.).  As people enact these practices, they may come to think in terms of the discourses of the development field:  they may start to think of themselves as property owners, entrepreneurs, investors, or consumers, and think of their interests in terms of property values.  While such subject positions are likely encouraged by many institutions in the neoliberal economy, the participatory nature

of neighborhood-based institutions might make them important sites of the formation of neoliberal subjectivities.

Non-profit service providers may also shape the subjectivities of their clients. Past work has not found that non-profit service providers tend to degrade clients, the way welfare agencies have been found to do. Some work suggests that non-profit service providers' programing is suffused with behavioral and cultural explanations for poverty and inequality. The absence of public responsibility for benefits, implicit in the dependence of some non-profits on philanthropy, may suggest to clients that they are not entitled to benefits.

*Constructing contentious issues*

Past work highlights a particular discursive intervention of urban regimes and non-profits. Cedric Johnson (2015) and Michelle Boyd (2007) argue that these actors mediate conflicts over neoliberalization by constructing the contentious issues related to redevelopment in ways that fail to challenge political economic drivers of displacement, channel discontent toward moderate grievances and demands, and ultimately legitimate displacement.

In Boyd's (2007) study of the politics of redevelopment in a South Side neighborhood Chicago, non-profits and local political officials constructed issues in racial and cultural terms: actors were categorized by race, and as authentic community members or outsiders (by virtue of origins in and ties to the neighborhood); redevelopment was problematic insofar as Whites displaced Blacks from a historically Black enclave, erasing an authentic culture, and insofar as the redevelopment process benefitted outsiders rather than community residents. Boyd notes that this construction elided class, hiding neighborhood segments' conflicting material interests, and the unique vulnerability to displacement of lower-class residents. By making race and authenticity salient, elites presented "black gentrification," mixed income development, and

historic preservation—programs disproportionately benefitting middle-classes—as class-transcendent common interests.[153]

Johnson (2015) observes similar phenomena.  When speaking about gentrification and displacement, actors (not limited to urban regimes and non-profits) "criticize the motives and sincerity of newcomers and the implications of their presence and attitudes for the neighborhood life of natives."  Again, actors are categorized as insiders and outsiders, eliding class.  Moreover, this narrative makes "individuals the center of the gentrification story," taking the focus off systemic processes that produce ghettoization and housing crises, and potential remedies.[154]

It is plausible that these issue constructions diffuse among neighborhood residents, affecting the terrain for organizing.  According to Boyd and Johnson, multiple elite actors frequently construct issues in this way.  These constructions are propagated during high-profile episodes of conflict over gentrification.  Moreover, these constructions would likely appear plausible to many residents, as they presuppose concepts of race and authenticity already likely to be common sense.  Residents who internalize these constructions of displacement might find it more difficult to articulate grievances and demands around the issue, and may be more likely to accept displacement as legitimate.  This could affect their reactions to grassroots outreach which proposed progressive or socialist positions on redevelopment.

*Questions for Empirical Research*

These analyses raise questions about the extent of participation in neoliberal modes of economic practice, and the extent of diffusion of neoliberal discourses—and relatedly about the dynamics of incorporation and of ideological production and diffusion at the neighborhood

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[153] Boyd, 2007:  147.
[154] This and previous quotations:  Johnson, 2015.

level.  They also suggest the possibility of the demobilization of clients of service provider organizations.

First, how widespread are direct investments in neoliberal modes of economic practice? The strata well-positioned to profit from real estate redevelopment and commercial revitalization, and with direct financial ties to neoliberal regimes, could be expected to be directly invested.  However, large swaths of even the middle-class have more ambiguous material relationships to redevelopment and neoliberalism.  The extent of investment likely depends in part on the extent to which non-profits and government programs facilitate residents' investment in redevelopment and access to benefits from the government.

Second, how common are beliefs supporting neoliberal modes of practice among populations of interest, either as consciously affirmed beliefs, or as unreflective assumptions? This raises questions about the dynamics of ideological production and diffusion in the neighborhood:  do non-profits have a significant audience, such that they could diffuse discourses broadly?  Do they have grassroots constituencies of their own?  or broad social networks?  Have the syntheses of neoliberalism with widely resonant discourses on racial justice been diffused, over time?

Finally, it is not clear whether to expect particular political outlooks and behavior among neighborhood residents receiving services from non-profit providers.  While past work suggests these relationships may encourage political passivity and quiescence, the extent of such effects among neighborhood residents is unknown.

# 4. Methodology

The following chapters present case studies, designed to elucidate how the institutional developments above have created neighborhood-level contexts which enable and foreclose particular types of political agency. This project is designed to develop, rather than test, hypotheses. While the analysis is guided by the preceding review of institutional developments, and by theories of hegemony, we do not have empirically grounded expectations about which elements of neighborhood context matter, or the causal pathways through which they affect organizing. As several methodologists have affirmed, research questions at this stage require open-ended investigation to develop hypotheses about relevant factors and mechanisms.[155] The case studies use in-depth analysis of neighborhood contexts and detailed process tracing of a progressive coalition's attempts to organize, to organically identify the factors shaping outcomes of the organizing project.[156]

*Contextual description and process tracing*

I conduct in-depth case studies of a left formation's attempts to organize a popular base around progressive and socialist economic programs in two neighborhoods of Chicago since 2015. The two main components of these case studies are: 1) an analysis of neighborhood contexts, focused on neighborhood institutions and political cultures, using data drawn from local newspapers and publicly available organizational documents; and 2) tracing the organizing

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[155] Gerring, 2007: 79. King, Keohane, and Verba, 1994: 141. George and Bennett, 2005: 28-30.

[156] This coalition is the subject of Chapter 3. In brief, the coalition includes the city's two largest labor unions, the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), and SEIU Healthcare Illinois Indiana (SEIU HCII); approximately twenty community-based organizations (CBOs), including Alinskyite neighborhood councils, and neighborhood-based non-profits with roots in civil rights and immigrant rights movements; and several non-profit advocacy and service provision groups. This formation seeks a redistribution of wealth to the working and lower-classes, primarily through progressive taxation, the cessation of corporate welfare, and the expansion of public provision of services, goods, and employment. The formation regularly mobilizes large amounts of personnel and financial resources on well-planned and successful electoral and issue campaigns. Through an increasingly sophisticated electoral apparatus, the formation has recruited, trained, and supported candidates for city, county, and state government, winning several races against regime-backed incumbents. Since 2015, the formation has launched several grassroots base-building projects to try to expand its base of popular support among Chicago's low-income populations.

process, using ethnographic data and publicly available information about organizations and

personnel's biographical histories.

I perform an in-depth analysis of the institutions, patterns of activism, and political

culture in both neighborhoods. Using databases of local organizations, (e.g., those published by

the city or by local organizations), I obtained complete (or as nearly complete as possible) lists of

the civic, social, and political organizations in the neighborhood, including non-profits, business

associations, grassroots associations (such as block clubs and neighbor associations), local

movements, and official government institutions. Using organizational documents, public

statements of organization leadership, and local media, I analyzed: the types of projects these

actors work on, including their typical goals and strategies; the discourses through which actors

explicitly and implicitly construct their work and related elements; actors' financial and political

relationships to powerful actors beyond the neighborhood, particularly the city government and

philanthropic foundations; actors' organizational and social networks in the neighborhood, and

ability to reach neighborhood residents.

With this data, I attempt to glean important insights about the local context. First, by

reviewing neighborhood actors' work, discourse, and relationships to forces beyond the

neighborhood, I can specify their relationship to neoliberalization, showing how neighborhood-

level structures have been shaped by, express, and mediate the institutional developments at

the city and federal scales discussed in this chapter—or, alternatively, how neighborhood-level

structures have escaped the influence of these forces. Second, I hope to depict the modes of

practice constituted in neighborhoods and available to neighborhood residents as ways to

address social problems and pursue interests. Relatedly, I hope to uncover the discourses about

social problems, collective interests, political possibilities, and other important elements which

are reproduced and propagated in the neighborhood.  Finally, by analyzing actors' networks and

relationships to neighborhood residents, I can clarify pathways through which residents are

exposed to these discourses and participate in these modes of practice.

I trace a left formation's attempts to organize in these neighborhoods.  I collected data

on the interactions between organizers and neighborhood residents.  By observing organizers'

outreach and through in-depth interviews with organizers and neighborhood residents, I

examined the process of recruitment and formation of new neighborhood organizations.  I

analyzed what factors drew residents to work with organizers or with the nascent groups.[157]  I

also examined the ideas which recruits brought to the nascent neighborhood group.  Through

interviews, and observation of the debate and discussion in which participants determined the

nascent group's goals and strategies, as well as of less formal conversations, I gathered textured

data about recruits' perspectives on social problems, their visions of social change, and their

views on the goals and strategies which the nascent group should pursue.  I examined how

these ideas shaped the development of the organization, informing its work, and leading to

internal harmony or tensions.  For each of these questions, I supplemented ethnographic data

with a complete review of the organization's publicly available texts, including social media

posts, website content, and statements in media.

I was especially concerned to understand ways in which neighborhood-level structures

and actors shaped organizing processes and outcomes.  First, I considered the ways that

neighborhood organizations had shaped the ideas of neighborhood residents.  I noted close

similarities of recruits' discourses to those reproduced by neighborhood organizations.  And I

collected biographical information on recruits, through interviews and analysis of publicly

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[157] I was unable to obtain interviews with people who chose not to join the organization.

available documents, identifying experiences and relationships which appeared to shape their outlooks, including experiences and relationships with neighborhood institutions.  Second, I examine direct interactions between the nascent formation and extent neighborhood groups, documenting any collaborations or friction.

### Case selection and inferential logic

I studied organizing projects in Austin, a predominantly Black neighborhood on Chicago's far West Side, and Albany Park, a predominantly immigrant neighborhood on the Near West Side.  The neighborhoods have been shaped by Chicago's neoliberal political economy, and neighborhood-level actors face the same city-level opportunity structures, encouraging particular kinds of political, economic, and social activities.  However, neighborhood-level factors of interest, including institutional milieus and political cultures, differ across the two neighborhoods.  By varying these neighborhood-level factors, within a single city-level context, I am able to gain additional purchase on the impact of the former, complementing the in-depth within-case process tracing.  While the case selection accentuates factors of interest in ways that is ideal for the development of hypotheses, the cases do not permit validation of hypotheses, for reasons discussed below.

Given the limited number of existing cases, and limited access to those cases, case selection was driven in part by availability.  UWF, or actors closely affiliated with UWF, launched 8 neighborhood-level organizing projects around 2015.  Of these, I studied the two at which I was most readily able to gain access.  I sought, but was unable to maintain, access at two other UWF-affiliated neighborhood-level organizing projects.[158]

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[158] I attempted to study United Neighborhood of the 35th Ward and the 25th Ward Independent Political Organization.  Organizers at the former were eventually non-responsive.  The latter was undergoing internal divisions at the time and requested privacy.

By studying two neighborhoods in the same city, I was able to hold constant several city-level factors. The neighborhoods were steeped in the same political economic structures, and have been similarly affected by economic restructuring and neoliberalization. Both neighborhoods experienced private divestment associated with white flight and deindustrialization since the 1970s, although Albany Park has since experienced a surge in reinvestment while Austin has not (discussed more below). Both neighborhoods have high poverty rates, exacerbated by recent cuts in public services, amidst dramatic city-wide economic inequalities. Neighborhood actors face the same city-level opportunity structures: a powerful neoliberal regime offers a range of material benefits to allies and punishment for political enemies; the regime, along with Chicago's robust philanthropic sector, offers opportunities for neighborhood-level service and development work; Chicago's thriving real estate redevelopment industry similarly offers opportunities for developers, investors, and property owners. At the same time, a powerful progressive-left coalition, rooted in the city's largest labor unions, and an array of community-based organizations, mass-membership organizations, and social movements, offers opportunities for left political projects and influence within the coalitions.

The two neighborhoods selected differ with respect to important neighborhood-level factors. First, neighborhood-level institutions have developed differently in the two neighborhoods, reflecting the neighborhood's different demographics. In Austin, an activist milieu has evolved in line with the national trends sketched in this chapter: militant advocacy groups demobilized or disbanded in the 1970s and 1980s; service provider and business-oriented groups have formed and thrived, supported by foundation grants and city contracts. Recently, leading groups have focused on community development, under the auspices of city

programs. In Albany Park, institutions have been shaped by the neighborhood's position as a

point of entry neighborhood for immigrants. Having arrived in the United States recently, many

of Albany Park's activists have not developed relationships with neoliberal regimes and

foundations. Many formed their political outlooks in their country of origin, or through

transnational activist networks, where they were exposed to ideas about strategy and social

visions largely eliminated from mainstream U.S. political culture. Several of Albany Park's

leading institutions have militant views on strategy, and radical, anti-neoliberal social visions.

Second, although the neighborhoods have similar poverty rates, they face different

economic problems, characteristic of their respective places in the cycle of disinvestment and

reinvestment within the neoliberal economy. Austin has been chronically disinvested since

deindustrialization and White flight in the 1970s. This is manifest in the deterioration of

property and public spaces, a depressed commercial economy, and high rates of public disorder.

Albany Park is undergoing rapid reinvestment, as one of the "hottest" real estate markets in the

city. This is manifest in a crisis of affordability, displacement, and cultural erasure. I will argue

that Albany Park's gentrification has also brought a population of relatively young, affluent

leftist activists into the neighborhood, shaping the context for grassroots organizing.

The cases cannot function as the type of comparative case study which can validate

hypotheses about the effects of particular factors. As Gerring (2007) notes, comparative case

studies can validate a hypothesized effect of one factor only by, in essence, holding important

confounding factors constant.[159] As noted, multiple important neighborhood-level factors differ

across the two cases. Given the lack of well-matched cases, I cannot isolate the role of any

particular factor as accounting for different outcomes.

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[159] As Gerring (2007) notes, to generate externally valid conclusions about an effect, "differences across cases must be sizeable enough to be interpretable in an essentially dichotomous fashion...and similarities must be close enough to be understood as essentially identical" (143).

Nevertheless, as Bennett and George (2005) recommend, I use inter-case comparisons to complement within case process tracing, to refine hypotheses about the effect of neighborhood-level factors.[160] I am able to develop a more nuanced conception of how factors of interest matter by studying them in multiple contexts, in which those factors are constituted differently. For example, I can examine how substantively different neighborhood-level institutions and activist milieus matter toward similar organizing projects. The case studies are opportunities to observe more of the possible functions and impacts of these neighborhood-level institutions and milieus, specify conditions in which these impacts may occur, and thus produce more nuanced hypotheses.

Chicago's progressive-left coalition has attained a size, amount of resources, degree of coherence, and level of political power beyond those of other contemporary, urban-level left formations. The coalition has invested significant resources into neighborhood-level organizing, and can offer any recruits opportunities for influence within a powerful citywide coalition, and for power in the city's governing institutions. I will consider the exceptional power resources of Chicago's left milieu when interpreting case study findings. Insofar as organizing projects fail, the cases will have functioned as a "hard test": an inability to organize neighborhood-level support in this context would suggest that neighborhood residents' ideological or material commitments to neoliberalism or opposition to left projects can be strong enough to impede even well-resourced organizing efforts by a powerful coalition. Insofar as organizing projects succeed, outcomes must be interpreted with caution. Such outcomes would not suggest that neighborhood-level factors under study are sufficient to enable a progressive-left base-building project.

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[160] Bennett and George, 2005: 18.

## Alternative Explanations

As George and Bennett (2005) and Collier (2011) argue, a key component of process-tracing is evaluating plausible alternative explanations for outcomes.[161] I consider several alternative explanations for the processes and outcomes I observe, beyond the neighborhood-level factors of interest. I rule out some of these factors through the case study design, and reject others as inconsistent with my ethnographic data. However, I am unable to rule out several alternative explanations for my findings about neighborhood residents' ideologies. I conclude that several ideologies, diffused through neoliberal reforms, as well as ideologies predating neoliberalization, concurrently shape neighborhood residents' views, with implications for organizing outcomes.

The study design controls for some factors known to influence organizing and movement-building outcomes. First, the level of elite resources invested in the project was constant across the two cases. The resource mobilization perspective would propose that organizing outcomes reflect the level of material investment by elites. At least initially, the United Working Families organization invested a similar level of resources in organizing in the two neighborhoods (and UWF ultimately invested more money and personnel in Austin, the less successful of the two cases). The level of elite resources invested in base-building cannot explain the cases' divergent outcomes.

I also rule out the proposition (suggested by some recent social movement scholarship) that, in any given moment, neighborhood residents rationally evaluate which coalitions and projects offered the best opportunity to realize their goals, and respond to organizers accordingly. Actors in the neighborhoods faced the same opportunities at the city-level and

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[161] George and Bennett, 2005: 30. Collier, 2011.

made very different choices.  Moreover, my examination of neighborhood residents' ideologies and decision-making produced no evidence of such contemporaneous rational evaluations.  I do, however, consider how supra-local opportunity structures affect outcomes indirectly, by shaping local organizational milieus over time.

I attempt to show how the neighborhood-level factors of interest may articulate with additional influences on neighborhood residents' ideologies.  First, I consider the impact of several other discourses produced by neoliberalization.  In addition to the conceptions of racial interests and identity described in this chapter, neoliberalization entailed the production and diffusion of several neoliberal discourses which could cause attachments to neoliberalism or antipathy to progressive-left projects in general, or could undergird attraction to community development in particular.  Encouraged by many aspects of public discourse and neoliberal economic policies, these discourses include:  individualistic understandings of interest, which deprecate solidarity; entrepreneurial discourses, encouraging individuals to pursue interests through financial investment and business enterprise; and discourses about the superiority of markets to government modes of resource allocation and decision-making.[162]  Second, I consider the interaction and relative importance of distinctively neoliberal articulations of racial interest and identity and older ideologies which predate neoliberalization.  For instance, I consider the impact of ideologies about self-help and racial uplift, which assign responsibility for neighborhood conditions to residents rather than the state or corporations.  I also consider visions of Black Capitalism long predating neoliberalization, which see entrepreneurship as a key to racial empowerment.

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[162] Lerner, 2011; Hall, 1989; Brown, 2015.

Through ethnographic data, in-depth analysis of individuals' ideologies and decision-making, I attempt to identify which ideas mattered in particular contexts, and how these ideas were acquired. I consider the possibility of complex interactions, in which commitments to one set of ideas draw people to modes of practice which embody compatible but distinctive ideas. I cannot completely account for or rule out the impact of all of the aforementioned ideologies, and I consider the possibilities that multiple forms of neoliberal ideology, absorbed via multiple channels, concurrently shape consciousness and reactions to progressive-left organizers.[163]

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[163] As methodologists George and Bennett write, "scholars may at times have to live with some degree of indeterminacy when competing variables push in the same direction" (2005: 54).

# CHAPTER 3: Chicago's Neoliberal Urban Regime in Historical and National Context

This chapter describes the neoliberal regime which has governed Chicago for the last three decades.  Using primary and secondary sources, this chapter reviews the regime's policy agendas, modes of governance, and bases of political support.  Along with Chapter 3, this description is intended as a foundation for the case studies of neighborhood organizing in subsequent chapters.

I argue that Chicago's regime is an instance of a type of neoliberal regime common in U.S. cities since the 1970s.  This neoliberal regime formed in response to national and global trends, including the restructuring of the national and global economies since the late 1960s, major changes in federal urban policy since the Gerald Ford administration, and the spread of neoliberal ideas among urban elites.  These regimes prioritized the growth of the advanced corporate service sector and downtown real estate development, used supply-side growth strategies, adopted market-oriented institutional reforms, expanded the involvement of investors and financial markets in governance, and implemented policies through public-private-non-profit collaborations.  These growth strategies shaped policymaking in other areas, constraining and orienting fiscal, social, and other policies.  While these policies drove the growth of highly skilled sectors of the economy, they also expedited private disinvestment in declining neighborhoods, contributed to polarized labor markets, and reduced public benefits to working-class and low-income populations.  Most neoliberal regimes thus presided over increasing economic inequality and high rates of poverty.  I will review the secondary literature on the emergence of neoliberal urban regimes nationally since the 1970s.  And I will show that the regime presided over by Mayors Richard M. Daley, Rahm Emanuel, and Lori Lightfoot,

closely resembles this type of regime, with similar goals, policies, and practices, and similar effects on low-income and working-class populations.

I will also show that neighborhood-level institutions and racial politics have developed in Chicago in line with the national trends described in Chapter 1. This chapter reviews anti-poverty programs in Chicago, showing that the neoliberal regime and philanthropic foundations have established market-oriented development and service provision programs in Chicago's troubled neighborhoods. I will also show that the regime has helped establish a neoliberal framework for racial politics, channeling Black and Latinx politicians and activists toward demands for descriptive representation, shares of municipal patronage, and participation in real estate development.

This chapter is intended to show that Chicago can be considered "typical" of a larger class of cases. First, along with Chapter 3, this chapter shows that the political conflict in Chicago is typical of the conflicts between neoliberal regimes and social democratic formations happening in several cities nationally, with similar contestants, stakes, and salient issues. Second, this chapter shows that Chicago is typical with respect to the dissertation's main explanatory variables—the historical developments of neighborhood-level institutions whose impact on possibilities for neighborhood organizing I hope to study. Chicago's typicality of post-1960s U.S. cities, and of contemporary neoliberal-left conflicts, suggests that the findings of this study may have external validity. The hypotheses developed through this study of Chicago may apply to neighborhood organizing around economic conflicts in other contemporary U.S. cities.

In addition to describing the regime, this chapter makes an additional historical point, not directly related to the main arguments of the dissertation. By showing historical continuities between the Post-War and neoliberal urban regimes, I argue that the current regime should be

seen both as a phase in the continuous control of the city government by economic elites with investments in local markets and property and as a historically specific formation.  This point advances a secondary argument of the dissertation, referenced in Chapter 1, that neoliberal formations are built on historically prior forms of upper-class domination.

*Outline of the chapter*

The first section of this chapter describes Chicago's Post-War regime and its context. The suburbanization of firms and upwardly mobile, white residents diminished property values and consumer bases in central cities from the 1940s through the 1970s.  This eroded profits of central city firms and investors and the revenue of city governments, galvanizing local economic and politics elites to use public policy to drive central city revitalization.  Federal policy shaped these coalitions' methods, providing opportunities for federally-funded public-private revitalization projects, especially the Urban Renewal Program.  Direct federal aid to cities and federal anti-poverty programs also eased urban governments' fiscal constraints and underwrote public provision of welfare and other social goods.

The second section describes the rise of neoliberal regimes in U.S. cities.  Beginning in the 1970s, global and national economic restructuring and major changes in federal urban policy encouraged urban policymakers to adopt neoliberal growth strategies.  I also review evidence that neoliberal ideas, the political power of local pro-growth elites, and the power of financial institutions pushed urban governments to adopt neoliberal agendas.  I then review the evidence of the wide adoption of neoliberal policies in US cities since the 1970s.

The final section is an empirical overview of the current neoliberal regime in Chicago.

I describe the coalescence of the regime in the 1980s; the ideas of its leading actors; the

patterns of collaboration between private, public, and non-profit actors; and the most

consistent and consequential policies and practices.

## 1. Chicago's Post-War Regime

This chapter begins with a review of Chicago's regime in the Post-War era.  I describe

the national trends in the era's political economy which shaped this regime, including the

suburbanization of firms and upwardly mobile, white residents, and the resulting erosion of

urban tax bases and property values.  The regimes of urban regimes were shaped by the

Keynesian federal urban policies, which attempted to offset deindustrialization and stimulate

development of declining areas, which funded social programs.  I also describe the "growth

machines," elite coalitions focused on growth of Central Business Districts, which dominated

politics in Chicago, and other Post-War cities.

## The context for accumulation in the Post-War era:  suburbanization and Keynesian federal policy

### *Suburbanization*

The Post-War suburbanization of firms and upwardly mobile, white households was

driven by racialized aversion to the industrial city and underwritten by federal policy.  Racially

and economically exclusive suburbs had been marketed by real estate firms and sought by

upper- and middle-class whites as havens from racially transitioning cities and their machine

governments since the turn of the century.[164]  Since the New Deal, federal housing,

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[164] See for example the description of racialized appeals in marketing for suburban homes described by Judd, 1999.  Real estate interests also invented several mechanisms to ensure the economic and racial exclusivity of new suburbs at this time (Hayward, 2007: 142; Judd, 1999:  128-9).

transportation, and fiscal policies greatly accelerated suburbanization.  Federal housing

programs, most importantly the Federal Housing Administration's home loan and mortgage

insurance program, financed 11 million home purchases between 1934 and 1972, almost

entirely in the suburbs.[165]  Starting in the 1940s, and booming in the 1950s, federal

transportation policy financed the construction of regional highway networks, linking suburbs to

central cities, and into regional transit networks.[166]  This accessibility made suburbs more

attractive to residents and firms.  Fiscal policy, and especially accelerated depreciation

allowances, created financial incentives for firms to invest in new facilities (as opposed to

upgrading existing ones).  These allowances were written into the tax code of 1954 and were

expanded in the Tax Act of 1961.[167]

     Nationally, the population of suburbs increased 60% from 1950 to 1960, and the ratio of

suburban to urban housing construction inverted between 1934 and 1954 (the first 20 years of

the FHA loan program) to nearly 80:20.  As suburbs drew mostly well-to-do households (and for

decades almost no non-whites of any economic status), in addition to firms, suburbanization

entailed major cuts to cities' tax and consumer bases.

*Federal policy*

     According to historians and political scientists, Post-War federal policy on cities was

based on the same liberal ideas underlying other federal economic policies of the era.[168]  First,

urban policies presumed federal responsibility for offsetting urban decline (even as other

federal policies helped drive that decline) and ameliorating poverty and other social

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[165] FHA's homes were located mostly in the suburbs because FHA, a self-funding government corporation staffed by real estate professionals and collaborating extensively with the real estate industry, made loans according to "actuarial principles," and assessed suburban homes much more favorably than urban ones (Gelfand, 1975:  216-19; Sugrue, 1996:  66; Judd, 1999:  128-9).
[166] Biles, 2011:  77-8.
[167] Ibid, 67; 153.
[168] Biles, 2011; Weir, Wolman and Swanstrom, 2005.

problems.[169] Second, federal policies presumed a Keynesian principle that government stimulus

could counter-balance cycles of investment and divestment. Records from the Senate

Committee on Urban Problems exhibit both ideas informing policy proposals and debates. For

example, Senator Paul Douglass (D, Illinois), who chaired the committee, argued for federal

funding to stimulate reinvestment in "communities with high unemployment caused by new

technology and stiff competition from low-wage regions such as the south," urging that "such

communities should not be abandoned to the vagaries of modernization."[170]

The era's most important federal urban policies were based in established economic

policy paradigms. Since World War II, liberal policymakers understood their task as creating

favorable conditions for private investment and corporate growth, not participating directly in

production or development.[171] This was the premise of Urban Renewal, which funded local

governments' efforts to demolish and clear "blighted areas" and "sell the vacant land, at a

substantial 'write down' in price, to private builders," and of other smaller federal urban

redevelopment programs.[172] Second, as historian Roger Biles observes, federal policymakers

assumed that "urban reclamation depended on saving the central business district."[173] Urban

Renewal and other programs used commercial and residential real estate redevelopment in

downtown areas as a driver of the city's economy—a presumption blending perfectly with the

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[169] Dennis Judd and Todd Swanstrom argue, federal urban policy in this era was premised on the recognition that problems were concentrated in cities, and the belief that the federal government was responsible for addressing these problems (2004); Weaver, 2015: 30.

[170] Douglass; quoted in Biles, 2011: 88.

[171] Weir and Skocpol, 2010.

[172] Abu-Lughod, 1999: 223. Gelfand (1975) also notes that "federal funds were available only for the purchase and clearance of blighted properties; rebuilding was to be the task of private enterprise" (207). Other programs with this premise include the 1958 program sponsored by Douglass, and a bill he introduced intended "to attract private industry into areas with high and protracted unemployment rates by providing government incentives" (Biles, 2011: 90).

[173] Biles, 2011: 85

interests and perspectives of the elite coalitions running urban governments, as described

below.[174]

Initiated in the Housing Act of 1949, renewed by the Housing Act of 1954 and the

Omnibus Housing Act of 1960, Urban Renewal was "the federal government's principal policy

answer to the question of how to save urban America."[175] The program allocated billions of

dollars to urban governments over its lifespan. Urban Renewal offered cities many

opportunities to use federal money for demolition and private redevelopment of central urban

land. The federal government also provided economic stimulus to the localities in which it

located its military research, development, and production.[176] These programs were urban

governments' primary tools for redevelopment in this era.

From the New Deal through the Great Society programs of the 1960s, the federal

government assumed much of the financial burden for alleviating poverty and providing social

services. Beginning with the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act of 1937, the federal government built

over a million units of public housing, most of it in cities.[177] The federal government also

distributed cash grants to poor families, through the Aid for Families with Dependent Children

after 1935, and other programs.[178] The 1964 Economic Opportunity Act and Model Cities

program funded myriad welfare and other social service programs in U.S. cities.[179]

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[174] Other ideas informing liberal federal urban policy at this time include a belief in regional planning, preferences for holistic approaches to urban poverty, and in the 1960s, a commitment to democratic participation of the urban poor. The many other considerations shaping federal policies in this era (especially positions on racial integration) are described by chapters 3 and 4 of Biles, 2011.

[175] Ibid, 85.

[176] This was particularly true of industrial centers in Northern Cities during and immediately after World War II. In the 1950s and 1960s, most military production moved to coastal cities. Federal investment in R&D for new military technology was concentrated in the Western and Southwestern areas known as the "Sun Belt," and was the most important driver of that region's growth in the post-war era (Abu-Lughod, 1999).

[177] Gelfand, 1975: 62-3. The Taft-Ellender-Wagner Housing Act of 1949, authorized an additional 810,000 units (though not all were built) (Gelfand, 1975). Kennedy's Omnibus Urban bill in 1960 funded 100,000 units of public housing, previously authorized by the Taft-Ellender-Wagner Act, but built only a fraction of them (Biles, 2011: 93).

[178] Stocker and Wilson, 2004.

[179] O'Conner, 1999.

*Post-war growth machines*

The "growth machine," in Harvey Molotch's term, were coalitions of actors with investments in local property and commercial markets and local businesses. Growth machines were typically made up of realtors, developers, and real estate lawyers; businesses whose profits increased with the growth of local consumer markets; and investors concerned with return on investment in property or those businesses. Numerous studies of urban policy-making in the Post-War era found such coalitions dominating economic development policy (among other policy areas).[180] In many cases, the coalitions formed, or were galvanized, when suburbanization eroded tax bases, property values, and consumer markets. These actors sought public support for economic development. In general, they advocated policies intended to stimulate an "entire syndrome of associated events," including the expansion of industry, the labor force, and consumer markets; increased population density; and intensified land use.[181]

Federal policies provided a framework in which to pursue this growth. In many cities, growth coalitions coalesced around the federal Urban Renewal program. The real estate, banking, and business interests comprising growth coalitions, for example, dominated the redevelopment authorities in charge of the program's local implementation.[182] Typical projects cleared large tracts in center cities, building high-end commercial, office, residential properties, as well as university campuses, convention centers, hospitals, and stadia (and exacerbating racial segregation, destroyed thriving neighborhoods, and displacing over one hundred thousand residents, while ignoring federal requirements to supply replacement housing).[183]

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[180] See for example, Hunter's classic work on elite governance in Atlanta (1964); Stone, 1989.
[181] Molotch, 1976; 310.
[182] Gelfand, 1975: 209.
[183] Gelfand (1975) estimates that the program was responsible for the destruction of 140,000 units of housing, and created 40,000 units of replacement housing (208). The social and political consequences of this and other post-war policies are discussed in Chapter 3. See also Anderson, 1964; Gans, 1962; Jacobs, 1961.

Urban-based coalitions of corporate actors and investors also lobbied the federal government to

include their cities in targeted federal stimulus programs, or for a share of direct federal

investment.[184]

Through the 1960s, growth-oriented urban governments also performed regulatory and

redistributive functions, within the frameworks established by the federal government.  These

governments implemented federal programs, such as the public housing program and the many

service and welfare programs within the War on Poverty and Model Cities initiatives (after

urban governments successfully secured control over the local implementation of those

programs in 1967)[185].  As urban sociologist Jason Hackworth (2010) notes, "In the immediate

postwar period, local governments also functioned as an arbiter between capital and labor."[186]

Like the counterparts in neoliberal urban regimes, Post-War growth coalitions also

sought local policies designed to create a "business-friendly climate," including fiscal austerity,

management-friendly labor policies, and additional public subsidies for firms.  As in the

neoliberal era, these policies were understood to attract mobile firms and investors, choosing

among localities.  However, growth coalitions appeared to pursue such policies less intensely,

and urban governments to enact them less often, than in the neoliberal era.  Federal policies

both bolstered cities' fiscal situation and provided alternative (and often more politically

attractive) pathways to economic development.  Both factors mitigated Post-War urban

governments' needs to compete for mobile investment.  As explained in Section 2, inter-local

competition for investment (and the mobility of capital) would intensify greatly in the 1970s.

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[184] Molotch, 1976:  312.
[185] Gelfand, 1981; Biles, 2011;
[186] Hackworth, 2010:  26.

## Chicago's post-war growth machine

From the entire post-war era, Chicago was governed by "a characteristic, growth-oriented 'urban regime.'"[187]  As elsewhere, the coalition included corporate and civic elites, specifically real estate developers and builders, banks, construction trades, merchants, corporate officials, professional planners, public administrators, and white and black civic leaders."[188]  Historian Arnold Hirsch finds that this coalition formed through initiative of downtown real estate and commercial firms, and that these were the predominant actors.[189]  Later, the coalition was coordinated by Mayor Richard J. Daley, a consistent proponent of downtown redevelopment and corporate growth.[190]  This coalition's policy priorities reflected its members' interests in maximizing the returns on fixed investment in local markets, property, and firms.

As in other cities, "local elite anxiety over the city's future has been a subtext for much of Chicago's planning and redevelopment activity as far back as the 1950s."[191]  These national trends toward suburbanization of firms and middle-class residents were pronounced in Chicago: The exodus of firms and households to the "wealthier set of 'collar counties' around the city" was reflected in the ratio of urban to suburban housing construction, which inverted from 74:26 in 1928 to 28:72 in 1954.[192]  Chicago lost manufacturing firms to the suburbs, at first slowly, and

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[187] Demissie, 2006.

[188] Smith, 2012: 18-19.  Demissie (2006) agrees, noting a coalition of the "mayor, municipal planning and redevelopment agencies and the city's business leadership" (Demissie, 2006:  26).

[189] Preston Smith paraphrases the argument of Arnold Hirsch, in Hirsch's Marking the Second Ghetto (1983): "before Mayor Daley's reign the initiative for urban redevelopment emanated from real estate, banking, and commercial elites and not from political entrepreneurs" (Smith, 2012:  19).

[190] Fuchs, 1992.

[191] Demissie, 2006:  26.

[192] Abu-Lughod, 1999:  221.

more rapidly after 1957.  By 1972, Chicago had lost just over one quarter of its manufacturing

firms, leaving 7,318.[193]

In retrospect, the loss of firms in the post-war era was dwarfed by the more precipitous

decline from the late 1960s.  And losses in municipal revenues were partly offset by federal

programs, as noted above.[194]  Nevertheless, declining retail sales, real estate transfers, property

values (particularly in the downtown) and other firm profits, galvanized corporate and real

estate elites to stimulate growth.[195]  The resulting growth coalition saw revitalization of the

central business district, or "the loop," as the key to a larger renaissance, using similar

arguments as pro-growth actors since:  a thriving downtown would spur residential and

commercial redevelopment in the surrounding neighborhoods, which would in turn reinvigorate

"the circulation of capital and labor," and drive a regional economic resurgence.[196]  Chicago's

cities were also self-consciously competing with other localities to attract mobile firms and

private capital, and a revitalized downtown was seen as an asset in this competition.[197]

To this end, "Chicago's strategy of central area revitalization had been anchored

primarily in supporting office, headquarters, and institutional development, with specific

enclaves also set aside for high-rise residential projects."[198]  One element of this plan was

"infrastructural investment…particularly through the expansion of the city's transport system."

[199]  For example, the "Development Plan for the Central Area of the City of Chicago," released by

Planning Department in 1958 proposed to augment commerce in the Loop, through a network

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[193] Firms also contracted after the war-time production.  The number of manufacturing jobs peaked at 668,056 in 1947 and fluctuated between 575k and 660k for the next decade.

[194] For instance, Douglas' program, allocating $100 million in loans to industrial, rural, public areas "to attract private industry into areas with high and protracted unemployment rates by providing government incentives" (Biles, 89).  See also Harvey, 1989; Weaver, 2015 (especially Chapter 1) on federal responsibility for welfare at this time.

[195] Demissie, 2006:  26.

[196] Ibid, 2006:  29.

[197] Smith, 2012:  19.

[198] Demissie, 2006:  29.  Also Fainstein and Fainstein, 1986:  14)

[199] Ibid, 29.

of expressways between the central city and outlying suburbs, with designated parking facilities."[200]  The city also expanded its rail transit system in ways designed to facilitate commuting to the central business district.  In these projects, Chicago drew on federal funds for public works initiatives.[201]

As in other cities, the most important vehicle for downtown redevelopment was the federal Urban Renewal program.  Chicago's renewal projects mostly created "downtown shopping and business centers and luxury housing."[202]  This vision of reversing suburbanization and maximizing profits through revitalization of the CBD was sustained through the early 1970s.  For example, this was still the framework for urban policy and planning in an influential planning document released in 1973 by the Chicago's then leading civic group, the Central Area Committee.  "Chicago 21" envisioned the CBD as growing center of business, leisure, and cultural activity, and advocated continued public investment in the redevelopment.  The CBD's expansion would cyclically drive and be reinforced by upscale residential development in surrounding neighborhoods and would attract firms from other localities.

Like other urban governments in the post-war era, Chicago's government implemented federal programs to redistribute income and bolster the social wage.  As historians describe in detail, federal public housing, welfare, and infrastructural investment programs were filtered through local governing arrangements, with most benefits distributed through the ward-based networks of the Democratic machine.[203]  Chicago's politicians (like those in most other cities) implemented in these policies in racially discriminatory ways.[204]  The Daley administration was

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[200] Ibid, 28-30.
[201] Bennett, 2006.
[202] Gelfand, 19975: 207
[203] These were supplemented by local largesse, in which politicians "material gifts in times of need and intervening on behalf of their 'clients' to gain them access to city jobs and the resources of social service agencies" (Abu-Lughod, 1999: 215)
[204] Smith, 2012; especially Chapter 7.

also more fiscally conservative than those in other northern cities, initiating less social provision overall.[205]

## Review and summary of Part 1

The post-war urban regime in Chicago was dominated by similar social forces as those which helm the neoliberal formation—corporate elites, and particularly those with fixed investments in local markets and property. This coalition pursued a similar agenda of market-expanding and rent-intensifying growth. This agenda centered on the redevelopment of the CBD—an immediately self-serving goal, which was also articulated as in the public good.

The post-war regime pursued growth through tactics unique to the post-war policy context. Generous federal programs, and especially the Urban Renewal program, stimulated private investment, and provided a set of development tools, reducing reliance on business-and investor-friendly fiscal austerity. Cities' reliance on firms and private investment, and thus the pressures to compete for it, was also mitigated by direct federal aid, and federal backing for the city's welfare functions.

Chicago's post-war regime can thus be seen as a coalition of economic elites, using government to support forms of profit accumulation centered in the city, in the distinctive context set by Post-War federal urban policy, and suburbanization.

## 2. National Emergence of Neoliberal Urban Regimes

Urban governments around the U.S. adopted a new policy agenda, beginning in the 1970s. This agenda included:

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[205] Abu-Lughod, 1999: 215.

- Growth strategies focused on attracting firms in the financial and advanced corporate

  services sectors, private investment in urban real estate and debt, and affluent consumers;

- Supply-side policies, including fiscally conservative tax and spending policies and public

  subsidies for firms, developers, and investors;

- Institutional reforms, including the privatization of public functions, reformation of public

  institutions along market principles, and insulation of public decision-making from political

  pressure.

These reforms were adopted to varying extents, in various combinations with other programs,

and in varying sequences, but have been documented in many U.S. cities since the 1970s.

This section reviews the reasons for the wide adoption of neoliberalism at the urban

level. I argue that global economic restructuring since the late 1960s, demographic shifts, and

federal policy changes created pressures and opportunities for urban policymakers to adopt

neoliberal reforms. Neoliberal ideas, the political power of local growth coalitions, and the

power of financial institutions may also have contributed.[206] This section then review evidence

of urban governments' adoption of neoliberal policies since the 1970s.

This section demonstrates that the regime emerging in Chicago since the 1980s

(described in Section 3) is an instance of a type of neoliberal regime which emerged in many U.S.

cities since the 1970s. As discussed above, this fact is one basis for the claim that the case

studies in subsequent chapters of this dissertation have external validity.

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[206] I do not attempt to answer ongoing debates in political science and urban studies about the relative influence or precise interaction of those factors (such as the degree of autonomy of local politics from supra-local factors), instead accepting that all factors were relevant to some degree.

## Context:  new pressures and opportunities

From the 1970s onward, cities around the country faced a new set of economic

conditions.  Starting in the late 1960s, changes in the structure of the national and global

economies accelerated the deindustrialization of northern, industrial cities.  This

deindustrialization, continuing white flight, in-migration of low-income residents, and cuts in

federal funding left many cities in fiscal crisis.  National and global economic restructuring also

drove the rapid growth in the financial and skilled corporate service sectors of the economy,

enhanced capital mobility, and increased investor interest in municipal debt and urban real

estate—changes which portended new pathways for urban growth.

### Economic Restructuring

A series of interrelated developments altered the structure of the national and global

economy, beginning in the late 1960s.  These changes had three linked consequences:

deindustrialization, as industrial firms moved operations overseas and contracted; the further

expansion of the financial and advanced corporate services sectors of the economy; and

increased investor interest in urban real estate and municipal bonds.

**Deindustrialization and financialization**

While there is no single agreed on explanation for deindustrialization, most economic

historians agree that the declining profit rate of American manufacturing firms, beginning in the

late 1960s, was a crucial cause.  Between 1965 and 1973, average profit rates of manufacturing

firms fell by 41%; average profits of all private firms declined 30%.[207]  To bolster profit rates,

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[207] Brenner, 2009.

firms leveraged improving logistics and communication technologies and relocated overseas to tap low-cost labor in developing countries.[208]

Meanwhile, the decline in manufacturing profits, and the general volatility of financial markets at this time (due to the collapse of the international financial system in the early 1970s) helped spur the expansion of the financial sector of the economy.[209] To meet the growing demand for profit-bearing financial activity, the private financial sector "grew in size and influence in the years following the profit crisis of the 1970s."[210]

The expansion of the financial services sector drove the further downsizing of domestic manufacturing in the U.S.. With profits declining, industrial firms faced difficulties obtaining private investment. The declining profitability of manufacturing and growth of the financial sector also encouraged non-financial manufacturing firms (and other non-financial firms) to "financialize" their own activities—expanding their own financial functions, increasing the role of investors in corporate governance, and orienting strategies toward the [prerogatives] of the stock-market.[211] Krippner summarizes, "Confronted with labor militancy at home and increased international competition abroad, non-financial firms responded to falling returns on investment by withdrawing capital from production and diverting it to financial markets," just like investors had.[212]

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[208] Abu-Lughod, 1999: 228-280. As Abu-Lughod summarizes, "relocation of production plants overseas was the preferred strategy of transnational corporations" facing declining profits.

[209] Weber, 2010. Around this time, financers developed new instruments through which they could turn profits of off financial transactions themselves, such as the securitization of various assets (debt, property, revenue streams).

[210] Weber, 2015: 255.

[211] Krippner, 2005: 182. Brenner describes the change in the same way: "with low returns on capital stock discouraging long-term placement of funds in new plant and equipment, money went increasingly to finance and speculation" (2006: 189). Berger (2013) explains that firms "shareholder orientation" produced a preference for "firms with a single focus to larger, vertically-integrated conglomerates, as this allowed investors to balance their portfolios with firms in different sectors, thus distributing investment risks."

[212] Krippner, 2005: 182.

This reorientation of firms' policy was reinforced by the increasing power of investors and financial managers within firms.[213]  The late 1960s also saw a wave of purchases of manufacturing firms by institutional investors, like asset management firms and pension funds.[214]  Firms' shareholder orientation led firms to shrink or eliminate activities which, though profitable, did not raise short-term stock prices, which generally included activities which produce returns over longer time horizons, require large capital investment up-front, or require large workforces.[215]

**The growth of the advanced corporate service sector**

The expansion of the corporate services sector followed from the globalization of production.  As described above, technological advances allowed firms to relocate production overseas, to disperse production among many locations, and to market and distribute products globally.  This created increasingly complex logistical and managerial tasks for firms:  regular activities required management of complex, global production and distribution chains, coordinating activities and the movement of materials and money, among operations in many different places.  These tasks increased firms' need for various logistical management, accounting, and other business services.[216]  Fainstein and Fainstein (1986) summarize that advanced corporate services have been the "growth sector" of the US economy since the 1960s.[217]  Their proportion of firms and employees has increased steadily since the 1970s.  By

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[213] According to Krippener (2005), there is not a consensus on whether shareholder orientation "come[s] from inside non-financial corporations, initiated by management, or has…been imposed on non-financial firms by financial sector 'outsiders'" (2005:  201).  In some firms, investors intervened directly in corporate management (Useem 1996); in others, firms' financial managers became increasingly powerful within the governance structure; others adopted policies to align the incentives of management more closely with those of investors, such as by tying executive compensation to stock market performance (Davis and Kim, 2015:  206)
[214] Berger, 2014; Davis and Kim, 2015:  206.
[215] Berger, 2014.
[216] Sassen, 2005: 28-9.
[217] Fainstein and Fainstein, 1986:  4-5.

the late 1990s, "the value of financial corporations and funds dwarfed the net worth of

nonfinancial corporations."[218]

**Investor Interest in Urban Real Estate and Municipal Debt**

As noted, the decline in manufacturing output and profit rates made investors seek

profitable outlets for investment elsewhere.  As early as the 1980s, real estate became a

primary "outlet for surplus reserves of money capital fleeing the primary sector of

production."[219]  Investors thought real estate values likely to be insulated from trends affect

other sectors of the economy.  Thus, "[i]nstitutional investors developed a penchant for urban

real estate investments as a way to balance their portfolios of corporate equities and bonds."[220]

In addition to increasing steadily since the 1980s, investment in urban real estate also increases

rapidly when rates of profit from other forms of investment dip.

Private investors' share of municipal debt also started to increase in the late 1980s.  This

was rooted in the same search for profitable outlets of surplus capital, and urban governments'

increasing reliance on private investment (noted above) and corresponding solicitousness of

private investors.  Municipal bonds, long considered low-yield investments, became increasingly

popular among private investors.  Investor interest in these areas increase even more in the late

1990s, when investment banks sought outlets for surplus capital.[221]

**Federal Policy and Economic Restructuring**

It should be noted that, all along, federal macroeconomic, fiscal, and monetary policies,

founded on principles of *laisse-faire* and monetarism, abetted and accelerated this economic

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[218] Weber, 2015:  255.
[219] Weber, 2015:  256.
[220] Hagerman, Clark, and Hebb, 2007.
[221] Weber, 2015:  258.  This surplus was produced by the "dramatic expansion of capital markets and the global savings glut."

restructuring.  These federal policies are described in Chapter 1.  Key federal policies included:

the rejection by congressional majorities and the Carter and Reagan administrations of

proposals to bolster the declining industrial sector and industrial regions; revisions to federal tax

code that accelerated corporate relocations, and thus deindustrialization; reductions in federal

taxes on profits from investment and deregulation of financial markets further encouraged the

shift of investment from productive activities to speculation; and drastic cuts in federal aid to

cities.

*Fiscal crisis*

Several factors created a fiscal crisis for cities in the 1970s and 1980s.  The loss of

industry, especially from older, northern cities, diminished cities' tax bases.  This loss of revenue

was compounded by continuing departure of upper- and middle-class residents, caused by the

departure of industry and racial integration of cities.  Cities' revenues were depleted further by

the aforementioned cuts in federal aid.  Cities' service burdens increased in this decades as well,

with the aforementioned devolution of welfare responsibilities and (in some northern cities),

the in-migration of relatively poor residents.  These factors comprised a fiscal crisis, pushing

many cities to the brink of bankruptcy.

## Urban governments embrace neoliberalism

The aforementioned changes did not simply cause urban governments' adoption of

neoliberal policies.  However, they created a context in which cities were desperate to raise

revenue and create jobs, in which attracting corporate service firms and private investment was

a relatively attractive option, and in which supply-side growth strategies and business- and investor-friendly policies were necessary to attract such firms and investment.[222]

The fiscal crises created intense pressures for city governments to generate jobs and revenue.  And cuts in federal aid made urban governments more dependent on private investment and corporate expansion.  As geographer Helga Leitner (1990) explains, declining federal aid "increased dependence of the local state on the health and tax base of its own local economy," and thus on private investors and firms, "since they control the availability and flow of capital and credit."[223]

The expansion of the financial and advanced corporate service sectors heralded a new niche for cities as the sites of firms in the ascendant financial and specialized corporate service sectors of the economy, and as a site for the investment for surplus capital.  An economic niche as a center of advanced corporate services was suggested not just by the proliferation of advanced corporate service firms, but for their tendency to locate in geographically concentrated clusters of other such firms.[224]  David Harvey explains that "economies can be generated by bringing together diverse activities within a restricted space of interaction so as to facilitate highly efficient and interactive production systems," sharing information, and enjoying reduced transaction costs among each other.[225]  This feature of the new economy portended a role for cities as sites of such clusters.

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[222] It should be noted that the aforementioned federal policy changes were explicitly intended to push urban governments to adopt neoliberal policies.  The President's National Urban Policy Report of 1982, for example, affirmed that "state and local governments have primary responsibility for making their urban areas attractive to private investors" (US Department of Housing, 1982: 14.)  As Weaver (2015) summarizes, federal policymakers envisioned cities competing for private investment, and benefiting from the discipline imposed by this competition.

[223] This and previous quotation, Leitner, 1990:  157.  Sites (2003) makes similar points (42-3).  As Weaver (2015) notes, this dependence on the market was an implicit or explicit purpose of federal policy changes.

[224] Sassen, 2005:  29.

[225] Harvey, 1989:  8.  Saskia Sassen (2005) calls this an "agglomeration economy."

Some scholars argue that the need to obtain favorable credit ratings from financial

institutions was the key factor driving policymakers' support for neoliberal policies. Their

increased reliance on investors makes local governments more dependent on the institutions

which mediate access to financial markets. Since the 1970s, urban governments' ability to

access financial markets is determined by "bond ratings agencies," such as Moodies and S&P,

who rate the credit-worthiness of municipal governments. Governments with low ratings are

effectively frozen out of bond markets or must pay exorbitant interest rates.[226] Credit ratings

are "based on the municipality's financial history (past and current debt), its economic outlook

(whether growth is going to occur), and its administrative structure and history."[227] In

particular, bond ratings agencies reward city governments who reduce expenditures, maintain

business-friendly climates, exert reliable control over sources of revenue (e.g., real estate

development process) and who can "hold claimants other than investors at bay" (i.e., discipline

or marginalize constituencies such as labor or the poor).[228] Weber (2015) Hackworth (2007)

thus argue that bond ratings agencies pressure urban governments to adopt neoliberal policies

including corporate-led growth strategies, fiscal austerity, and entrepreneurial forms of

governance.

Others suggest that urban elites' ideological commitments to market-based growth

strategies and institutional reforms also inspired neoliberal reforms. Several studies describe

widespread enthusiasm among intellectuals and policymakers about managerialist ideas, or

"public entrepreneurialism," "which attempts to apply the outlook and techniques of private-

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[226] The weight of these agencies ratings has increased as long-term trends in financial markets make a larger share of investors depend on the rating agencies for risk assessment. Since the early 1970s, bond markets are comprised increasingly of buyers legally required to buy only high-grade bonds (as determined by the ratings agencies). Local banks have also scaled back their role of mediating the sales of municipal bonds, leaving investors more dependent on the knowledge of the ratings agencies.
[227] Hackworth, 2007.
[228] Hackworth, 2007. Rachel Weber (2015) adds that "The growing interdependency, complexity, and uncertainty of global economic activity…raises the premium paid for demonstrable control over the factors that might threaten repayment and cause owners to default on their obligations" (253).

sector management."[229]  Widely read and discussed books like Robert Poole's *Cutting Back City Hall and* Osborne and Gaebler's *Reinventing Government* argued that privatization of public functions, corporate firm-style management of public institutions, and shrinkage of government, produced improved outcomes.  According to such texts, "through tax cuts and private provision of 'so-called public goods,' a city could actually '*improve* service and make it much more *responsive* to citizen desires.'"[230]  Bennett (2010) suggests that urban policymakers were exposed to such currents (e.g., through networks and associations of public officials and conferences) and were persuaded by their arguments.  Other studies suggest that many urban elites were persuaded by the "global city hypothesis"—the idea "globalization is restoring vitality to major control centers because they are involved in the upper circuits of trade and finance."[231]  Abu-Lughod (1999) and Harvey (1989) each describes conferences of urban policymakers, in which attendees agreed that forms of development which "have the strongest…capacity to enhance property values, the tax base, the local circulation of revenues, and…employment."[232]

And still other scholars attribute urban government's adoption of neoliberal policies to local interest group pressures.  As noted by Weaver (2015), "[m]any scholars of urban politics have illustrated the degree to which 'developmental,' pro-market elites have come to dominate urban regimes in recent decades."[233]   Just as in the Post-War era, coalitions of "business and its prominent organizations—the downtown corporations, large developers and their supporters" united "in a general program of fiscal parsimony and central-business-district growth."[234]  Many

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[229] Leitner, 1990:  147.
[230] Weaver, 2015:  30.
[231] Abu-Lughod, 1999:  327.
[232] Harvey, 1989:  13.  Abu-Lughod describes a 1989 multi-city conference on "restructuring" in the Rust Belt (1999:  323).  Harvey describes a similar conference in Orleans, England in 1980 (1989:  2).
[233] Weaver, 2015:  14.
[234] Sites, 2003:  44.

studies of neoliberalization at the urban level show that such elite coalitions functioned as political entrepreneurs, mobilizing to articulate a neoliberal agenda, building political coalitions to pass it, and participating in its implementation.

Although they attribute the change to different combinations of the aforementioned factors, scholars agree that urban governments around the US adopted some version of a neoliberal policy agenda beginning in the 1970s. This agenda included a focus on growth of the corporate services sector and real estate development, supply-side growth strategies, and managerialist institutional reforms.[235] This agenda was adopted unevenly and at different times across cities. The timing and extent of its implementation, and the substance of reforms, reflects local political and institutional condition. However, there was also significant consistency across cities, particularly among older, erstwhile centers of manufacturing.

*Fiscal austerity and business- and investment-friendly climate*

The agenda includes revenue and spending policies oriented to the preferences of corporations, investors, and relatively affluent individuals and households for low taxes—and as a necessary consequence, cuts in social spending. Many cities cut taxes, particularly corporate and income taxes. Insofar as cities instituted or raised taxes in this era, they tend to prefer sales or vice taxes, or other taxes which 1) target consumers rather than corporations; and 2) distribute the tax burden across all residents, regardless of income. These governments also cut public expenditures in areas other than economic development. Common areas of retrenchment included community-based social services (e.g., libraries, public education, health centers) and welfare (financial assistance, public housing), and basic city services like housing-code enforcement, sanitation, and even fire-fighting.

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[235] "a persistent and recurrent theme since the mid-1970s" (Harvey, 1989b: 5); "such a diverse array of municipalities have 'chosen' such a common path" (Hackworth, 2007: 16)

Most cities maintain expenditures on economic development.  Governments offer a range of direct financial incentives to firms to locate in the city, or to expand.  Commonly used incentives include subsidies, tax abatements, giveaways of publicly owned resources, and access to federal funding.[236]  Cities also indirectly subsidize corporate activity by funding the infrastructure needed for corporate activity.  This includes investment in communications, transportation, and utilities infrastructures.  It may also include investment in "qualities, quantities, and costs of local labor supply," which may lead urban governments back into investment in some forms of public education.[237]

*Investment in economic and real estate development*

As in the Post-War era, urban governments invest public resources in the redevelopment of commercial and residential areas.[238]  The creation of spaces and amenities oriented toward high-end consumers is part of the strategy to attract corporate service firms and retain their middle- and upper-class employees as city residents (and thus taxpayers).  These spaces are also intended to attract tourism more generally.  Summarizing such initiatives, David Harvey observes, "[a]bove all, the city has to appear as an innovative, exciting, creative, and safe place to live or to visit, to play and consume in."[239]

In addition to creating attractive spaces and amenities, real estate development is a source of revenue which does not impinge on the business climate through taxes.  Real estate transfer fees and rising property values (and thus property taxes) "allow the municipality to sustain low tax rates, attain favorable bond ratings, and increase borrowing for expensive

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[236] Logan and Molotch, 1984:  58.
[237] Harvey, 1989b:  8.
[238] Investment in office space, consumer attractions, entertainment facilities, spectacles, "have all become much more prominent strategies for urban regeneration" (Harvey, 1989b:  9)
[239] Harvey, 1989:  9.

infrastructure schemes"[240]  Thus, "property-led development becomes one of the few tools available for enhancing revenues."[241]

To stimulate these forms of development, the city provides public funds and logistical support to the real estate development industry.  In her review of urban development policies, Leitner (1990) concludes "a greater amount and new variety of financial incentives are now made available to developers and businesses for property development," including "tax abatements and rebates to land-purchase subsidies, low-interest loans, loan guarantees and equity-financing."[242]  The city underwrites loans by investors to developers, backing loans with its "full faith and credit."

City governments have created new mechanisms to raise revenue for development projects.  Through various kinds of state enabling legislation, governments have securitized city assets, such as infrastructure, public employee pensions, and tax revenues—that is, they have arranged for those assets to be bought and traded by investors on commodities and financial markets.[243]  To ensure the city's existing revenue streams are allocated to development, some governments have created "special taxing districts," in which property taxes are diverted into a special fund dedicated to financing development projects in that district, instead of going into the city's general fund.[244]

*Changes in governance*

City governments have created new forms of governance, designed to heed the preferences of firms and investors for 1) insulation of financial and fiscal decision-making from

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[240] Weber, 2015:  146.
[241] Weaver, 2015:  17.
[242] Leitner, 1990:  147.
[243] Weber (2015) "assets once thought to be valued only for their uses (infrastructure, pensions, and tax revenues) were converted into securities and traded at a distance."
[244] Fainstein and Fainstein, 1986:  19.

political pressures and 2) institutionalized collaboration between the city and investors and developers, respectively.

Some cities remove authority over financial and fiscal policy to unelected boards, as in New York City.  More commonly, cities create autonomous districts, with autonomy over their finances, and not subject to political pressures.  Cities control and manage economic development processes through unelected, "public-private" agencies—i.e., official governmental bodies, comprised of city bureaucrats and private stakeholders in economic development.[245]  These institutions generally have the power to issue bonds, use eminent domain, and other key decisions associated with the development process.  In their non-democratic form, these institutions insulate economic development from political contention, and ensure the influence of pro-development corporate and political actors over development decisions.   Such arrangements also signal to investors that the city's lucrative corporate and real estate development will continue.

City planning and development agencies changed their practices to more directly support real estate redevelopment.  In New York, for example, expedite the planning agencies' primary task was redefined as "shepherd[ing] developer-initiated projects through New York's complicated land-use disposition process."[246]  Departments in other cities also formed new routines for collaborating with real estate developers.[247]  This reorientation was also reflected in the department personnel, increasingly drawn from business and real estate development backgrounds.[248]

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[245] Brenner and Theodore, 2002.  They observe the replacement of old bureaucratic agencies with "managerialist and networked institutions."  Leitner (1990) similarly finds that "local public and quasi-public development agencies…have been newly instituted or invigorated in most cities" (147).  Other authors make similar observations.  Federal urban policy required city governments to create public-private agencies as a condition of federal funding (Leitner, 1990:  155).

[246] Sites, 2003:  45.

[247] Harvey, 1989.

[248] Leitner, 1990:  149.

# 3. The Neoliberal Regime in Chicago

This section will describe the historical origins of Chicago's neoliberal regime, and its contemporary policy paradigms, practices, and bases of political support. I will note historical continuities with Post-War growth machine. And I will describe the consistent neoliberal orientation of the regime's public policies and institutional reforms since the late 1980s. Finally, I will show how the regime has constructed a neoliberal racial politics, similar to that articulated by the Black urban regimes, described in Chapter 1.

## Origins of the neoliberal regime

By the late 1970s, Chicago faced many of the same economic and fiscal problems as other deindustrializing cities. Civic and political elites, maintaining a long-standing commitment to Central Business District growth, adopted new growth strategies, envisioning Chicago as a "corporate center" and tourism destination. Policymakers oriented policy in multiple areas to competing with other locales for mobile investment, firms, taxpaying residents, and tourists, in line with their counterparts in other cities.

*Context:  Economic Restructuring and Fiscal Crisis in Chicago*

**Deindustrialization**

Whereas Chicago lost manufacturing firms to the suburbs through the late 1960s, after the 1968, the entire region (Chicago and suburbs) lost firms to the Sunbelt, and other countries.[249]  Alongside these relocations, several of Chicago's most prominent industries and firms contracted or shut down altogether. Chicago's famous Stockyards closed in 1971. US Steel's plants in Chicago, which were making record profits as late as 1973, didn't survive the

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[249] Abu-Lughod, 1999.

recession of 1979-83.[250]  In 1970, Chicago was home to eight of the country's largest railroads

companies.  By 1990, 2 had gone bankrupt, and 5 others were consolidated into larger rail lines,

based in other cities.[251]  Manufacturing continued to decline, and by 2000, Chicago had lost

about 267,000 industrial jobs.

**Loss of Tax-Paying Residents**

Relatively affluent whites continued to leave Chicago after the late 1960s.  Between

1960 and 1980, the number of middle- and upper-income families living in Chicago declined

more than 30%.[252]  This was driven partly by declines in household wealth associated with job

loss, but mostly by continued exodus of middle-class whites to the suburbs.  This exodus is

reflected in the declining percentage of whites in Chicago, falling from 68% in 1950, to 51% in

1960, and 39% in 1970, with most of the departures middle- and working-class whites.[253]  The

erosion of Chicago's tax base is also reflected in declines in median family income, which

dropped from $34,500 in 1970 to $30,707 by 1990;[254] and the percentage of residents below the

poverty line, which increased from 14.4 % in 1970 to 21% in 1990.

**Fiscal Crisis**

The decline in Chicago's tax base was manifest in a series of fiscal emergencies in the

1970s and 80s.  Starting in the early 1970s, "fiscal crises struck the city's public school and

transit systems, and the decay of public infrastructure was visible across Chicago."[255]  Chicago

Public Schools accumulated a deficit of $85.2 million in 1976 and declared bankruptcy in 1979,

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[250] Ibid.
[251] Schwieterman, 2008:  291.
[252] Squires et al, 1987:  Chapter 2.
[253] Ibid:  Chapter 2.
[254] Abu-Lughod, 1999:  344.
[255] Bennett, 2006:  45.

rescued only by an emergency bailout by the city and state.  The school district's bond rating

was also lowered to lowest possible grade at this time.[256]

*Growing elite consensus on neoliberalism*

Texts from the late 1970s and 1980s show that elites adopted neoliberal ideas about

economic development even before these ideas were articulated as a coherent policy agenda or

adopted by the urban government.  Past research and primary texts from those years show a

concern with interlocal competition for investment and belief in the necessity of supply-side

mechanisms for stimulating economic growth.

The focus on service sector growth and competitiveness is visible in a 1989 report,

written by three academics prominent in local policy-making circles.[257]  This report argued that

Chicago was well-positioned to compete with other localities for a share of service sector firms,

given its existing share of key service industries.[258]  Abu-Lughod (1999) argues that, around the

same time, some of Chicago's policymakers foresaw a competitive advantage in the competition

for service firms in the presence of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and the Chicago Board of

Trade, two of the most prominent stock market and commodities exchanges in the world.[259]

Elites also appeared to put an increasing emphasis on fiscal austerity and supply-side

growth strategies, framing them as necessary to attract firms and investment and stimulate

growth.  A 1980 comment by an executive of a locally based bank exemplified this:  "What we

need is control on the city's spending and a control on patronage."[260]  Leaders from prominent

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[256] Kyle and Kantowicz, 1992: 29.

[257] This includes, for example, David Allardice, Wim Weiwel, Wendy Wintermute.  Allardice was an economist at Chicago's Federal Reserve Board.  Wim Weiwel was an urban planner, who had worked in the Washington administration.  Wintermute was an economist who had evaluated Chicago's affirmative action and other programs, for their effects on Chicago's labor markets.

[258] Allardice et al, 1989.  (75; quoted on Abu-Lughod, 1999:  529 fn 11)

[259] Abu-Lughod, 1999: 327.  Chicago Mercantile Exchange houses the International Monetary Market, the busiest "futures market in international exchange rates" in the world.

[260] Nina Karlich, Executive Vice President of First National Bank, quoted in R.C. Longworth, "City on the Brink," Chicago Tribune; quoted in Squires et al, 1987:  13.

civic organizations, including Chicago's Urban League made similar arguments.[261]  A group of

four political scientists commented in 1987 that many in Chicago's planning community believe

the city "can compete only by offering bigger and better corporate incentives."[262]  Summarizing

the changing common sense of Chicago's political and economic elites, a group of political

scientists observed that "civic leaders in both the private and public sectors viewed their role as

primarily one of 'preparing the ground' for capital."[263]

Elites in the 1980s and 1990s also saw public support for redevelopment as a way to

maximize the impact of private investment in real estate, which had surged since the early

1980s.  Data on private investment in real estate in down Chicago show a marked increase

beginning in the early 1980s.[264]  This growth in private real estate investment reflected national

trends, driven by tax credits for building rehab in the Economic Recovery Act of 1981 and wider

developments in financial markets, as discussed in the previous section.  From 1983-1987, with

the Washington mayoralty providing relatively little financial support for real estate

development, private dollars flowed into the construction of "office, rental and condominium,

hotel, retail/recreation, and educational facility development" in the downtown.[265]  Throughout

the 1980s and early 1990s, pro-growth elites called for more public investment in real estate to

leverage this private investment.[266]

### Coalescence of a neoliberal regime

A coherent, neoliberal regime coalesced in the 1990s, and has governed Chicago since.

This regime is defined by close collaboration between city government, firms, individual

[261] Squires et al, 1987:  14.

[262] Squires et al, 1987:  49.

[263] Molotch, 1982; quoted in Squires et al, 1987:  11-12.

[264] Demissie, 2006:  The investment were partly "a response to publicly initiated redevelopment efforts, in some measure a consequence of broader economic forces"

[265] Demissie, 2006:  28.  This included significant investment in commercial and major expansions of university campuses and the redevelopment of the North Pier.

[266] See for instance journalist John McCarron's series of articles in the Chicago Tribune, "Chicago on Hold:  The Politics of Poverty."

corporate elites (acting via formal civic associations or informal relationships with government officials) and non-profits in formulating and implementing neoliberal policy, institutional reform, and planning agendas.  In this section, I will describe these regular forms of collaboration and review the most consistent themes of the regime's agendas.

Richard M. Daley, the son of long-time mayor Richard J. Daley, articulated a more coherent and consistent version of the "corporate center" vision and supply-side strategy than previous mayors, from his election in 1989.  The economic development programs of Mayor Harold Washington (1983-1987) and his successor Eugene Sawyer (1987-1989) attempted to keep industrial firms in the city and redistributed profits from downtown real estate development through hiring and other regulations.[267]  Prior mayors Byrne (1979-1983) and Bilandic (1976-1979) had not fully embraced a development strategy based on inter-local competition for corporate service firms, and mixed supply-side growth programs with old-style patronage and other vestiges of old regime.[268]  By contrast, Mayor Daley clearly articulated the corporate center strategy as early as his 1989 mayoral campaign.  In a typical speech, he remarked: "The city is changing.  You're not going to see factories back . . . I think you have to look at the financial markets, banking, the service industry, the development of O'Hare Field, tourism, trade. This is going to be an international city."[269]  In short, Daley's vision was "to entrepreneurialize government actions…build a more supportive local business climate, and fashion a globally competitive, consumption-oriented city" (or, in his own words, "a global competitive city").[270]

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[267] Clavel and Giloth, 2015.
[268] Bennett, 2007.
[269] Demissie, 2006: 22.
[270] First quotation from Wilson and Sternberg, 2013:  983.  Second quotation from Shaw, 2007.

This growth strategy was outlined in a series of planning documents, written by the Commercial Club of Chicago, a civic organization comprised mostly of corporate executives, and implemented almost unchanged by Daley's Department of Planning and Development. The document *Chicago Metropolis 2020*, written in 1997, articulated a set of general parameters and goals for Chicago's planning and development policies.[271] The plan frames economic growth as a fundamentally a matter of inter-local competition: Chicago necessarily "competes with practically every sizeable metropolis in the nation, and increasingly in the world, based on the quality of life we offer our residents and the quality of business environment we hold out to employers."[272] In addition to the usual supply-side mechanisms, the plan called for reforms to make shrink metropolitan government and make it better able to interface with the private sector, and the privatization of public services, especially education. These reforms were presented as enhancing Chicago's "competitiveness."[273] The same neoliberal arguments are visible in the Chicago Central Area Plan, written in 2003 by a group of consultants and implemented by the Departments of Planning and Development, Transportation, and the Environment.[274] This plan presumes the city's commitment to a corporate center strategy, and expresses confidence in "Chicago's prominence as a node in the network of global cities."[275] It foresees continued growth of office, commercial, and residential real estate in the Central Business District, as the district becomes "the downtown of the Midwest."[276]

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[271] written by Elmer Johnson, a former corporate exec; Ryerson International CEO Frank H. Beal, Inland Steel Vice-President George A. Ranney, Pittway Corporation CEO King W. Harris, and real estate titan Fritz Halstrom (Wilson and Sternberg, 983); all members of the Commercial Club, according to all observers Chicago's preeminent civic organization

[272] Johnson, 2001; quoted in Bennett, 2010: 127.

[273] Ibid.

[274] Authors included personnel from the architectural firm (and frequent city collaborator) Skidmore Owings & Merrill, and the non-profit financial institution Chicago Community Trust.

[275] Quoted in Bennett, 2010.

[276] https://www.spur.org/publications/urbanist-article/2006-08-01/chicago-central-area-plan

Where Post-War planners saw slum clearance and large-scale infrastructure as drivers of redevelopment, more recent strategies prioritize amenities and spaces for consumers, at small and large scales. This includes a general orientation to planning emphasizing the experience of pedestrians. The 2003 Chicago Central Area Plan, for example, prioritized "walkability" of the Central Business district. The redevelopment agendas for many areas in Chicago use "culture-driven strategies," building spaces to show case the area's "cultural heritage, exporting their cultural identity."[277]

By the late 1990's, the corporate center paradigm of economic growth was described as "hegemonic" among policymakers and the networks of elites with whom they worked. Rast (1999), and Clavel and Wiewel (2015) both describe the notion of economic growth driven by service sector expansion and consumption as unquestioned premises in the city's planning agencies, noting that the Department of Planning and Development's "executives shared the business elites' vision of a new Chicago."[278] These themes are present in subsequent planning and policy documents.[279]

## Public policy and institutional reforms

### Public Investment in Corporate Development

The Daley and Emanuel administrations have consistently offered direct financial incentives—such as tax abatements, subsidies, and other financial benefits—to firms to locate, remain, and expand in Chicago. They have also indirectly subsidized business by funding the construction of infrastructure used by firms.

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[277] Spirou, 2006: 295.
[278] Clavel and Giloth, 2015: 20; similar description of planning and development departments in Squires et al, Chapter 6.
[279] E.g., the 2006 report by the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce emphasized "the Chicago Region['s] competitive[ness] in the global supply chain" and the 2009 Chicago Central Area Plan.

One of the most commonly used mechanisms for subsidizing corporate and real estate

development is Tax Increment Financing (TIF).  The TIF program diverts portions of the city's

property taxes to a special account, separate from the city's general fund.  Funds in these

accounts can be spent at city officials' discretion.[280]  As of January, 2017, Chicago has $1.4 billion

in its TIF accounts.

It is common for the city government to offer firms a package of subsidies and tax

breaks to locate or expand operations in Chicago.  Packages usually include subsidies for firms'

construction of new facilities; breaks on property, income, and other taxes; waivers of city fees;

and other direct financial incentives.  As Bennett (2007) and others observe, it became common

for incoming firms to receive some such benefits.  For example, the city gave a package worth

$56 million to Boeing in 2001, to build their new headquarters in Chicago (creating 450 jobs).  In

2017, the city offered $8 million in tax breaks to Method soap plant in Pullman neighborhood

(creating 60 jobs).  A review of a monthly city council hearing reveals myriad such packages.

The Daley and Emanuel administrations have tried to attract firms to Chicago by building

infrastructure needed for firms' operations.  The Daley administration focused primarily on

transportation and communications infrastructure, for instance expanding the city's fiber-optic

and broadband networks.  The Emanuel administration has invested in research and office parks

and business incubators, financing the construction of new facilities, marketing them, and

offered financial incentives for firms to move in.   In 2012, the administration provided funds to

build 1871, a 50,000-square foot office space, designed to be an incubator for technology start-

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[280] Normally, property taxes flow into the city's general fund.  Property values are periodically reassessed, and any increase in property taxes (based on increased property values) flows into the general fund.  Under the TIF program, the city can freeze the amount of property taxes flowing in the general fund at their current level.  Any increases in property taxes (based on increased property values) flow into the separate TIF account.

ups.[281]  The Emanuel administration planned a similar hub for life-sciences and biotechnology

industries in the CBD and a "Digital Manufacturing Design Lab" to "create a manufacturing hub

for entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized businesses" in a nearby neighborhood.[282]

*Real Estate Redevelopment*

The city most directly supports real estate redevelopment by subsidizing private

development projects with public funds.  Developers usually initiate projects and obtain city

funds.  For instance, developers urged the city to create new TIF districts in the central business

district, to assist projects which the developers envisioned.[283]  The city also gave developers "a

range of resources typically used for community development," including CDBG funds.[284]

The city also drives residential and commercial real estate development indirectly

through its support for corporate development projects.  The aforementioned 1871 office space,

for example, spurred the revitalization of the surrounding "River North" neighborhood.   In the

words of one observer:

> The entire surrounding neighborhood was flourishing. Formerly full of warehouses and
> prostitutes, and abutting the old Cabrini-Green, River North had become the home to
> Groupon, Google's Chicago operations and hundreds of other digital start-ups — 7,500
> tech-industry jobs in total.

In 2016, 2,400 new luxury apartments were under construction in the neighborhood.  In other

cases, the city prepared the way for private redevelopment, assembling parcels of developable

land, and auctioning or gifting them to private actors.[285]  For example, after demolishing all 82

public housing high rises, the city sold much of the land to private developers.[286]

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[281] Lazare, 2014.
[282] Spielman, 2015.
[283] Weber (2015):  147, 152.
[284] Betancur and Gillis 2004:  103.
[285] Wilson and Sternberg, 2013:  988.
[286] On the South Side for example, the city demolished 5 housing projects (Stateway Gardens, Robert Taylor Homes, Dearborn Homes, Ickes Homes, and Madden Park–Wells-Darrow Homes), which "yielded almost 300 acres of newly cleared land."  At least half was slated for auction to private developers (Wilson and Sternberg, 2013).

The Daley and Emanuel administrations also developed largescale recreational facilities. The Daley administration's projects included Millennium Park, a plaza and park in the city's downtown; Grant Park, a large green space housing a series of museums and other attractions; the Navy Pier recreation and event center; and the refurbishment of Soldiers' Field football stadium.[287] The Emanuel administration has invested in upscale recreational facilities, such as a series of boathouses on the Chicago River and lake-front live music venues. Both administrations provided financial support for the expansion of "central Chicago-based universities, and other units of cultural capital."[288]

Public investment in all these forms has been highly concentrated in the central business district and abutting regions. During Daley's administration, public subsidies for real estate development were concentrated in four "redevelopment zones: South Loop–Bronzeville, Pilsen–University Village, the East-West gentrification corridor, and the Central Loop."[289] Betancur and Gillis (2004) also found that "the central business district and its surrounding areas have captured the bulk of infrastructure and capital improvements," and that TIFs have generally been used to build "middle- to upper-class residential development" in neighborhoods susceptible to upgrading.[290] As developers and investors take interest in redevelopment in further outlying areas, the city appears to be extending public support to projects in those areas.

Developers have enjoyed a striking degree of access and influence over planning and development decisions under Daley and Emanuel. Urban historian Pierre Clavel and former Chicago city planner Giloth recount that Mayor Daley instructed officials in relevant city agencies to work closely with private real estate developers, and to follow their lead on forming

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[287] For example, Millennium Park cost $475 million; The Soldiers' Field Renovation cost $600 million.
[288] Bennett, 2006: 276.
[289] Wilson and Sternberg, 2013: 986. Rast (1999) also reports that city investments in development projects were highly concentrated in the Loop and adjacent neighborhoods in the 1990s.
[290] Betancur and Gillis, 2004: 102.

area redevelopment plans.[291]  Rachel Weber similarly reports that Daley instructed officials in

the Department of Land Use and Zoning, the Department of Planning and Development, the

Department of Historic Preservation, and other relevant agencies to defer to private developers

when formulating plans.[292]  Developers have also influenced decisions over the creation of TIF

districts and other financing mechanisms, enjoying "great autonomy over budget decisions

worth millions to them in subsidies."[293]  At the neighborhood level, aldermen made decisions

about zoning and TIF allocation in close concert with developers.[294]  Many commentators note

the high degree of access to aldermen and influence over zoning decisions by developers.[295]

Since the mid-1990s, philanthropic foundations and non-profit development

organizations have partnered with government and the private real estate industry on

redevelopment.  Non-profit agencies receive city contracts to build affordable housing,

culturally expressive public works of art, or other projects, within a larger real estate

redevelopment project planned and implemented by private developers.  Non-profits can help

legitimate redevelopment projects, and integrate concerns with equity into private, for-profit

development, on the latter's terms.  Political scientist John Betancur (2015) argues that the

paradigm of non-profit agency work has become common since its operational success in the

transformation of Chicago's public housing.[296]

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[291] Clavel and Giloth, 2014.

[292] Weber, 2015: 152.  Weber writes that Daley eschewed a centralized or coherent city development plan, preferring the flexibility to meet developers' requests.  At the start of his second term, Daley appointed J.R. Boyle, who was committed to rent-intensifying development, commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development.

[293] Weber, 2015: 147.

[294] This trend was documented in the Chicago Tribune's "Neighborhoods for Sale," series of exposes in 2007.  See Mihalopoulos et al, 2007.

[295] See for example Betancur and Gillis, 2004.

[296] Betancur, 2015: 90.

*Fiscal austerity*

Mayor Daley mostly resisted tax and fee increases in his 22-year mayoralty.  After reducing property taxes in 1989, Daley's budgets raised them an average of 1% a year until 2009.  Daley also generally opposed sales tax increases, and raised other taxes or fees sparingly, until 2009.[297]  Daley did increase some business taxes, including the real estate transfer tax (2008), the hotel and motel tax, and a corporate head tax.  For additional revenue, the Daley administration sold public assets.  Daley proposed (and the city council approved) the privatization of the city's tow truck fleet (1989), a toll-bridge on Interstate 90 (2006), the city's parking garages (2006), and the city's parking meters (2008).  Daley attempted to lease other city assets.[298]

Mayoral Emanuel's budgets (addressing the short-falls created by Daley's unwillingness to raise taxes) have relied mostly on relatively regressive taxes and fees.  For example, Emanuel's 2018 budget raised water and sewer taxes, property taxes, and fees on the city's 911 service, ride-sharing services.[299]  Other sources of revenue advocated by Emanuel include an increased sales tax (exempting some goods and services typically used by lower-income consumers) and a casino.  Emanuel consistently opposes progressive taxes as hostile to business and investment, for example commenting in the 2015 mayoral campaign that "jobs, companies, and families would be fleeing the city of Chicago" if it passed a corporate head tax.[300]

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[297] An increase in water and sewer taxes in 1989 (offset by a property tax reduction), a tax on bottled water, and an increase the city's real estate transfer tax, to fund the Chicago Transit Authority in 2008.

[298] Daley attempted to lease Midway Airport (Chicago's second and smaller airport) to a consortium of private investors, but the deal collapsed due to uncertainty associated with the recession of 2008.

[299] The city fee for using 911 was also raised in 2014.  Property taxes were raised each year from 2015 to 2018.  The city also raised the amusement tax on large concert venues in 2017.  The Chicago school district also raised property taxes by $224.5 million in 2017.

[300] Chicago Mayoral Debate Forum March 25, 2015.

*Corporate regulation*

Mayor Daley's support for corporate growth and real estate redevelopment caused his opposition to most forms of economic and real estate regulation. Daley sustained some of the zoning regulations designed to retain manufacturing in designated areas of the city, but removed such restrictions from other areas, opening land for residential and commercial use.[301] Daley also opposed a living wage ordinance and used the only veto of his mayoralty to kill an ordinance regulating "big box stores."[302] Emanuel's moderate, progressive regulations are discussed below, under anti-poverty policies.

*Labor Policy*

Mayor Daley did not attempt to significantly reduce the power of organized labor and signed lucrative contracts with public employee unions. In 2009, Daley signed a 10 year contract with Teamsters and other unions (in part to bolster the city's Olympic bid with the promise of labor peace). A Daley-appointed panel recommended reform of public employees pensions, including reduced employee benefits and higher worker contributions. However, according to most commentators, Mayor Daley took new action to implement these changes.

Mayor Emanuel has also advocated reduction in public expenses on pensions. To date, his administration was stymied in its attempts to accomplish these cuts through contract negotiations, lobbying for state reform, and legal action. Emanuel's acceleration of school closings and lay-offs of public school teachers are widely seen by local commentators as efforts to discipline the Chicago Teachers Union.[303]

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[301] Clavel and Giloth, 2015.
[302] Tattersall, 2010.
[303] Interview with Jackson Potter, 3/8/17.

## Financialization of Urban Policy and Governance

Through the late 1970s, urban governments received federal funding for economic and real estate development projects.[304]  Since the elimination of the Urban Development Action Grant program in 1980, urban regimes have had to use local tax revenues and bonds to finance development.[305]  For example, in 2013, Emanuel created the Chicago Infrastructure Trust, to arrange financing of largescale development projects.

In addition to spending TIFs on development, the city securitizes TIFs and sells them to investors.  The city has been increasingly proactive in in marketing TIFs to investors, "developing a substantial staffing and clientele infrastructure for it" for engaging with investors, bond markets.[306]  The securitization of TIFs increasingly tied to the city's economic development to international bond markets.  As TIFs and other financialized funding mechanisms became the primary source for redevelopment funding, investors also gained influence over redevelopment priorities.[307]  This further constrained the city to prioritize "residential and high-end commercial development, because that was the best bet for generating the financing."[308]

## Neoliberal education reform

Since 1995, Daley and Emanuel have advanced a long-term reform agenda of the public school system.  This agenda institutes corporate forms of management and free-market forms to schools and education bureaucracies.  This includes top-down systems of accountability (such as evaluating teachers based on test-scores, centralized oversight by system administrators of underperforming schools, and incentive-based rewards for teachers, administrators).  These reforms also privatized education and related services, effectively replacing public schools with

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[304] Urban Renewal program; Urban Redevelopment Action Grants
[305] Was this the last federal urban dev program?
[306] Clavel and Giloth, 2015:
[307] Weber, 2015: "financing drove development priorities" (152).
[308] Clavel and Giloth, 2014: 30.

privately operated charter schools and contracting with firms to provide janitorial, food, and

other services.  Daley and Emanuel (and their allies in the education bureaucracy) have

attempted to remove constraints on the decision-making of administrators, such as union

contracts and institutionalized forms of participation in school governance by parents and

community members.[309]  Other reforms attempted to enhance students' and parents' ability to

choose a school.

Mayor Daley, his successive appointees to CEO of Chicago Public Schools, the

Commercial Club of Chicago, and other elites, articulated an understanding of school reform as

integral to Chicago's "economic competitiveness."  The Commercial Club of Chicago published

*Left Behind*, and *Still Left Behind*, describing the importance of a well-trained workforce to

Chicago's ability to compete for mobile firms.  Mayor Daley and CPS administrators made similar

points, and also noted the importance of school reform to attracting middle- and upper-class

taxpayers back to the city.

The educational reform agenda elaborated by these actors was distinctively neoliberal

in a second sense.  Policy proscriptions embodied the neoliberal and managerialist ideas.

Directly quoting Milton Friedman, *Left Behind* argued that the monopoly structure of public

education produced inefficiency and poor performance, and advocated the subjection of all

aspects of the CPS to market discipline.[310]  It also advocated forms of governance and operations

based on those of private firms.[311]  Officials in the Daley and Emanuel administrations made

similar arguments, as in Daley-appointed CEO of CPS Arne Duncan's comment, "I'm a big

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[309] Pauline Lipman, 2011.
[310] Left Behind defined creation of competitive markets and consumer choice, through privatization, as the top priority.  It argued that a voucher system would work best, but that expansion of the charter school market would work be more politically viable.
[311] Ibid.

believer in choice and competition.  You need to have strong charter schools with real accountability."[312]

The vision outlined in this arguments was implemented, beginning with Daley's "Renaissance 2010" plan in 2004.  This initiative closed underperforming or underutilized public schools and built 100 new schools, two thirds of which would be charter or contract schools.[313]  CPS also enacted new forms of performance monitoring, and systems of sanctioning and rewarding schools and teachers.

This reform agenda was implemented by, and helped foster, a far-reaching system of private and non-profit actors.  The city contracted with for-profit education companies, many of which are owned by investment firms; another civic organization comprised of corporate executives, Chicago's Civic Committee, formed a new organization and invested $50 million into new charters in 2006.[314]  More generally, "product lines, for-profit supplemental educational services, non-profit services, think tanks, and more have evolved to support, elaborate, and justify this agenda."[315]

*Other institutional reform*

Daley and Emanuel presided over the managerialist reforms of multiple city agencies, including the Chicago Transit Authority and Chicago Parks Department (both under the auspices of mayor-appointee and Ayn Rand-devotee Forest Claypool).  At each, reforms include sale of city assets, outsourcing core the agency's functions to private firms, and downsizing

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[312] Quoted in Lipman, 2011: 45.
[313] Charter schools are publicly funded and privately operated by outside firms.  These schools used nonunion teachers (until charter school teachers unionized in 2017).  Unlike Chicago's public schools, charters were not bound by the state law requiring governance of the school to include an elected body of teachers, parents, and community members, known as a Local School Council.
[314] Lipman, 2011.
[315] Lipman, 2012:  560.

workforces.[316]  Similar, but even more comprehensive reforms were made in the Chicago

Housing Authority.[317]

*Approaches to poverty and inequality*

According to my review of public statements and official documents, politicians and civic

elites associated with the regime most often define poverty and economic inequality as

problems of exclusion from the mainstream economy.  They implicitly or explicitly affirm the

existing economic structure, policies, and growth strategies as sound and potentially able to

benefit all Chicagoans.  Other commentators have observed the use of cultural explanations for

poverty.  Though less frequently in recent years, elites have also constructed low-income

populations as incurably pathological, to legitimate displacement and punitive policies.

In the late 1980s, political scientist Gregory Squires and coauthors observed that

Chicago's policymakers accepted the nationally influential idea that any attempts to address

poverty and associated social problems require economic growth.  Policymakers in Chiago saw

poverty and inequality "as issues that can only be addressed after higher-priority concerns—

generating economic growth—have been resolved."[318]  The influential planning document

(referenced above), Chicago Metropolis 2020, written by the Commercial Club of Chicago,

acknowledged the disparate impacts of Chicago's post-industrial restructuring, but asserted that

economic growth was universally beneficial, and the basis for any efforts to address poverty:

> [b]enefits to the majority have been accompanied by serious costs, borne mostly by
> those living in the distressed areas of the central city and in the worst-off suburbs…the
> interests of the inner-city poor, prosperous Gold Coasters, the working-class residents of

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[316] Claypool's Speech from "Achieving Great Parks," the March 1996 LWRD Urban Parks Institute conference held in Austin, Texas: "We privatized our harbors, garbage collection, equipment maintenance, parking lots, our computer system, medical and risk management, Soldier Field and the zoo, among other things."  At the CTA, cutting the workforce by over 8 percent; at the Parks Department by almost 30% (Kampf-Lassen, 2016)
[317] Reed and Bennett, 1999.
[318] Squires et al, 1987:  11-12.

outlying Chicago neighborhoods and inner suburbs, and the middle-class homeowners
of Wilmette, Oak Park, and Olympia Fields converge.[319]

Former mayor Rahm Emanuel most often proposed to address poverty under the rubric

of "inclusive growth," in which chronically disinvested and high-poverty neighborhoods on the

South and West sides benefit from the city's growth.  One of Emanuel's common rhetorical

tropes exemplifies this vision of inclusivity:  My real goal is that the kids out of Lindblom can see

themselves at a place like 1871.  Regardless of where they live in the city, I want children in

Chicago to see downtown, the central business district, and envision themselves as part of this

dynamic city — the city of energy and opportunity, the city that's on the move.[320]

The neoliberal regime's discursive constructions of impoverished populations, and that

of other actors participating the market-based development projects supported by the regime,

have varied according to political circumstances.  Wilson and Sternberg (2013) analyze

constructions of poor populations by politicians, real estate developers, and non-profit staff, in

articles in the Chicago Tribune and in their own interviews.  Residents were constructed through

one of two discourses.  One, resembling the "underclass discourse" described by Reed (1999,

2016b), constructs residents as pathologically unable to conform to important social norms.

Such people were barriers to the improvement of the neighborhood and needed to be removed

or controlled.  The other emphasized mutable cultural problems, rooted in structural exclusion,

and the poor's need and desert for uplifting interventions.  The director of a Community

Development Corporation in Bronzeville exemplified this construction: "Bronzeville…now

come[s] back after years of neglect, from the indifference of people…locked into a stifling…and

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[319] Commercial Club of Chicago, 1999:  46.

[320] Austin, 2013:  13.  Emanuel made a similar comment at the Chicago Mayoral Debate Forum March 25, 2015:  "people can look at the skyline, the energy, power, etc. and represents, and see themselves having a place in it."  In an interview during the 2015 campaign, Emanuel answered a question on poverty by stating that "we want all parts of the city to grow, all parts have strengths that we have to invest in" (NBC Chicago Interview, 1/14/15 https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/Rahm-Talks-Economic-Agenda-288619851.html)

afflicted culture. But it's a hurting and in-need population, and we cannot forget their needs."[321] Wilson and Sternberg find that the second discourse became more prominent than the first after 2005, when local resistance imperiled redevelopment plans, creating a need to coopt popular resistance and legitimate redevelopment.

The regime has primarily attempted to achieve inclusive growth through three types of program: citywide programs and site-specific actions to stimulate private investment in disinvested areas; programs and initiatives to expand access to early-childhood and post-secondary education; and modest progressive regulations of corporate activity designed to raise wages and worker benefits. The regime's neoliberal education reform programs were also intended to expand access to quality education (among other goals), but this was discussed above.

**Stimulating market-based development**

The Emanuel administration has tried to spur private investment in disinvested neighborhoods through a shifting mix of public programs and publicly funded projects. These programs and projects are always within the dominant paradigm of economic development: they use public investment to spur market forces, are implemented by private developers and neighborhood-based non-profit development groups, and are envisioned as alleviating poverty through economic growth and the creation of private-sector jobs. In some cases, the projects come with modest set-asides for affordable (i.e., below market-rate) housing and public job training programs. Some projects included mechanisms for public input in redevelopment planning.

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[321] Linda Kardasz, in 2009. Quoted in Wilson and Sternberg, 2013.

The 2013 Chicago Neighborhoods Now Initiative exemplifies this approach.[322]  The

initiative allocated tax revenues to business and developers to subsidize commercial and

residential construction projects in selected commercial corridors.  For instance, in Bronzeville,

the Emanuel administration pledged $153 million in subsidies, and also raised $800 million in

private investment, for the construction of upscale commercial and residential properties (which

became "The Shops and Lofts at 47th street).[323]  The project was intended to permanently make

the area more attractive to consumers and residents, driving self-sustaining economic

development.  It would also create "thousands upon thousands of construction jobs."[324]  Similar

projects were planned for 6 other neighborhoods.[325]  The Daley and Emanuel administrations

regularly provides public revenues for smaller-scale development projects, which are intended

to function in the same way.[326]

**Access to education and youth jobs**

The Emanuel administration has also pursued economic inclusion by supporting access

to early childhood education and post-secondary education.  In 2013, the administration

instituted full-day Kindergarten at all Chicago elementary schools, allocating $15 million dollars

to fund the program.[327]  In 2014, the Emanuel administration expanded a program to provide

free pre-kindergarten education to all Chicago residents, and expanded the STAR Scholarship

program, offering tuition-free education at several Chicago-area colleges for all students

graduating from Chicago Public Schools with a 3.0 or better GPA.  The Daley and Emanuel

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[322] Other development programs in this framework include the Chicago Treasurer's 77 Proud Initiative, providing small businesses and entrepreneurs access to capital, and the Retail Thrive Zone, Neighborhood Opportunity Fund, and Small Business Improvement Fund programs, discussed in the section The Neoliberal Regime and Race.
[323] Parker, 2013.
[324] Hayes and Francisco, 2013.
[325] The CNN program was also rolled out in parts of Englewood, Rogers Park, Uptown, Little Village, Pullman, and the Eisenhower Corridor.
[326] Bennett, 2006; Weber, 2015.
[327] Vevea, 2013.

administrations also made public investments in particular community colleges, for example

allocating several million dollars

## Constructing a neoliberal racial politics

As in other cities, politicians and activists in Chicago have articulated minority interests

in ways compatible with, and in some cases actively supportive of, neoliberalization.  Racial

interests have been constructed as:  community control, defined as representation by authentic

representatives and sometimes as devolution and grassroots participation in governance; a

share of particularistic benefits, whether through formal affirmative action policies, or informal

targeting of jobs and contracts; opportunities to participate in and profit from rent-intensifying

real estate development; and attacks on racial discrimination.  These definitions are continually

reproduced by a set of politicians and civic elites, with political, financial, and other ties to the

neoliberal regime.  The regime has also organized grassroots constituencies around streams of

particularistic benefits and real estate redevelopment programs

*Machine politics and the definition of racial interest*

Chicago's history of machine politics, in which the city government distributed public

jobs, contracts, and city services to supporters, and along ethnic lines, has had lasting effects on

understandings of racial interest.  Through the early 1970s, Chicago's machine exchanged

particularistic benefits for political support, organizing vast patronage networks in Chicago's

neighborhoods.  The government's capacity to distribute patronage was greatly weakened, first

with the city's fiscal problems in the late 1960s and 1970s, and then by a series of federal court

rulings, known as the "Shakman decrees," which banned the distribution of public jobs to

political supporters.[328]  But the distribution of particularistic benefits, including municipal jobs and contracts, has remained an important function of city government.

While the machine distributed benefits highly unequally along racial lines, Blacks and Latinx populations were nevertheless incorporated into the machine on similar terms as other groups.  U.S. Congressman William Dawson organized a "black submachine"—patronage networks throughout Chicago's Black Belt "under the aegis of the white-controlled Cook County Democratic Party organization."[329]  In this arrangement, Blacks received "the types of rewards— the opportunity to seek prominent public office, control of patronage jobs, and privileged access to city services—that had long defined the aspirations of the city's immigrant and ethnic politicians."[330]  As national Civil Rights mobilizations generated pressures to address systemic issues, including racial segregation and discriminatory allocation of city services in the 1960s, the submachine attempted to keep civil rights demands off the agenda.[331]  Latinx populations were incorporated in to the machine on a similar basis.[332]

### Black and Latinx Nationalist mobilizations in the 1960s and 1970s

As Cedric Johnson observes of the Black Nationalist movement in general, Chicago's nationalist movement was characterized by ideological and strategic diversity.  But, as in other cities, many nationalists in Chicago emphasized political empowerment, economic solidarity and autonomy, cultural authenticity, and community control of neighborhood development.

Several scholars note that actors with varied ideological perspectives converged on a vision of "black political power independent of the existing machine, inspired by racial pride and

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[328] Hegelson, 2014; Squires et al, 1987.  The ward organizations which had organized neighborhood residents on behalf of the machine rapidly declined ("with the possible exception of [Illinois House of Representatives Speaker Michael] Madigen's home ward") (Interview with Carl Rosen, 3/15/17).
[329] Smith, 2012:  12.
[330] Bennett, 2006:  45.
[331] Helgeson, 2014.
[332] Torres, 1991:  168-9.   Richard J. Daley appointed Latinx people to a few relatively prestigious city jobs.  There were three Latinos on Board of Education and one on the Regional Transit Authority in the 1960s.

solidarity," and on the view that racial unity was the key to attaining political power.[333]  For

some, these political goals were part of a broader separatist project.  For example, the Nation of

Islam and Universal Negro Improvement Association (which had large presences in Chicago

through at least the 1980s), coupled this vision of independent political power with the pursuit

of collective economic self-reliance through entrepreneurship and solidaristic economic

behavior, seeing them as pillars of Black autonomy within an irredeemably racist society.[334]  A

group of locally influential scholars at a Black Studies Program at Northeastern Illinois University

and the Institute of Positive Education linked this political project with a program of cultural

autonomy.[335]  Others, including the League of Independent Negro Voters, based their vision of

political independence on a critique of the racist practices of Chicago's machine, but were open

to pragmatic interracial alliances and integration.[336]

These actors, like their counterpart in other cities and nationally, may have been

informed by early, influential formulations of Black Power, which were based on a pluralist

model ethnic succession.  In these formulations, Blacks needed to maximize their ability their

ability to compete for benefits in the pluralist system, as other ethnic groups had done in U.S.

history.  Larry Bennett (1993) observes that this vision may also reflect the socializing effects of

the machine:  "[f]or many African-American political activists, most of whom 'trained' in politics

either within the Richard J. Daley Democratic organization or by fighting that same organization,

the rightful consequence of black Chicagoans coming to power was their dictating the allocation

of municipal resources."[337]

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[333] Helgeson, 2014:  217, 207.
[334] On Nation of Islam's projects and relationship to other Black Nationalist formations in the 1960s and 1970s, see Helgeson, 2015: On the United Negro Improvement Association's enduring presence in Chicago, see McDuffie, 2015:  140-1.  On their participation in Black Nationalist mobilizations in the 1970s and 1980s, see Alkalilmat and Gillis, 1989.
[335] Alkalimat and Gillis, 1989. Todd-Breland, 2013.
[336] Helgeson, 2015:
[337] Bennett, 1993:  436.

Gillis (1991) and Boyd (2007) have described another Black and Latinx Nationalist

tendency in Chicago focused on controlling economic development in Black and Latinx

neighborhoods.  This vision was espoused by neighborhood-based organizations, many of which

grew out of Civil Rights mobilizations in the 1960s.[338]  Groups applied the nationalist ideas of

empowerment and self-help in a vision of local influence over public decisions on planning,

investment.[339]  Many of these groups engaged in militant political action to protest public and

private disinvestment and municipal spending priorities, and demanding control of development

funds and decision-making.[340]

*The Harold Washington mayoralty and the definition of racial interest*

The Harold Washington mayoralty (1983-1988), and the mass movement supporting his

candidacy, represented both a nationalistic pursuit of minority political power and particularistic

benefits, and a progressive vision of redistribution of power and resources.  Due to the

constraints on Washington's mayoralty, only the former agendas were durably institutionalized

in lasting policy changes and political practices.

The Black nationalist tendencies referenced in the previous section were one pillar of

the mass movement around Washington's candidacy.  Alkalimat and Gillis (1989) recount the

"nationalist oriented, community-based, middle-class leadership" of the movement, based in

various political organizations, academic institutions and civic groups with a "Black

nationalist/Pan Africanist ideological orientation."[341]  This tendency dominated the Task Force

for Black Political Empowerment, an umbrella organization which helped launch the Washington

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[338] Boyd, 2007:  Chapter 2.
[339] Ibid, Chapter 2. Gillis, 1991.
[340] Gillis, 1991.
[341] Alkalimat and Gillis, 1989:  Chapter 7.

campaign, and was the campaign's primary vehicle for popular mobilization.[342]  Members of this

tendency saw Washington's mayoralty as a project of realizing Black political power,

independent of the machine, and rooted in a mobilized and united Black community.[343]  Bennett

(1993) argues that this tendency also viewed the mayoralty as an opportunity to obtain spoils of

office.[344]

The Washington campaign also mobilized the network of progressive neighborhood-

based development organizations.  Although financially dependent on foundations and federal

grants, these organizations had exploited the instability and diminished power of Chicago's

machine since the early 1970s to maintain relatively militant and assertive political activity

through the 1980s.[345]  These groups sought in Washington's mayoralty substantive devolution of

control over planning and economic development.[346]

The Washington administration realized some of the first tendency's goals for the racial

redistribution particularistic benefits.  While the administration rationalized the distribution of

city jobs and contracts through civil service reform, it instituted Affirmative Action and "first

source" hiring programs, which channeled benefits to Black (and to a lesser extent Latinx)

communities.[347]  Bennett (1993) summarizes that "[a]s do most African-American big-city

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[342] Ibid: 63-4.

[343] Gillis, 1991; Alkalimat and Gills, 1989.

[344] Washington's electoral coalition combined machine veterans, "comfortable with spoils politics as traditionally practiced in Chicago," and Nationalists who "could think of no reason for the black community not to use its city government to meet its specific needs, African-Americans at long last having come to power" (Bennett, 1993: 433)

[345] Immergluck, 2005: 217-19.  After the death of Richard J. Daley, and amidst the regime's financial troubles, Mayors Balandic and Byrne were not been able to obtain the same level of control over neighborhood-level politics as Daley had.

[346] Gillis, 1991.  Clavel and Giloth, 2014:  "the principle that services and capital projects should be decided and delivered not only through City Hall but also through neighborhood organizations as well" (22).

[347] Clavel and Giloth, 2014: 23.  The administration enacted affirmative action in city purchasing and contracting and created a "first source" hiring program (requiring corporations receiving city contracts or benefits to hire workers from the neighborhoods in which they or their projects were located).

governments, the Washington administration placed considerable emphasis on affirmative action in city hiring and contracting."[348]

The administration also helped realize the nationalist vision of independent political power in at least two ways. First, the administration launched and won a lawsuit to force the redrawing of Chicago's wards, creating four new majority-minority wards, which elected racially descriptive representatives in the subsequent special elections.[349] Second, the Washington mayoralty realized Black political empowerment symbolically. For many observers, the Washington administration embodied Black empowerment. The intensely, and at times explicitly, racialized political conflicts, especially in Washington's first term, encouraged the perception that the Washington mayoralty entailed "racial succession" in the control of city government. Some of Washington's campaign rhetoric evoked this idea (although he took pains to play down this theme in office).[350]

The administration attempted to realize progressive economic policy agendas, informed by the demands of neighborhood-based groups. The administration enacted several programs to prevent the departure of manufacturing firms from Chicago.[351] It also devolved substantial control of planning and economic development to politically independent, progressive neighborhood organizations, and transferred economic development funds from downtown projects to distressed neighborhood.[352] It was unclear if either program had the potential to substantially alter patterns of economic development or redistribute resources in the city.[353] In

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[348] Bennett, 1993: 435.

[349] Fremon, 1988: 9.

[350] Alkalimat and Gillis, 1991; Bennett, 1993

[351] Industrial retention initiatives included task forces on keeping key industries; "planned manufacturing districts" (which were zoned to support manufacturing); and the Local Industrial Retention Initiative, which provided a range of planning and support services to industrial firms in designated areas (Clavel and Giloth, 2014).

[352] Gillis, 1991.

[353] Clavel and Giloth (2014) cite the retrospective comments of proponents of industrial retention from the Washington administration that the policy could not succeed in the absence of a federal industrial policy.

any case, both innovations were undone early in the Richard M. Daley mayoralty: Daley

reprioritized rent-intensifying commercial and residential development, centralized control of

planning and development decisions in the planning department, and instructed this

department to collaborate closely with the private development industry, rather than

neighborhood-based non-profits.[354] Daley also had ended most of Washington's industrial

retention initiatives by the late 1990s.[355]

*The neoliberal regime and the definition of racial interest*

The Daley and Emanuel administrations have produced and propagated neoliberal

constructions of racial interest and justice through three main strategies. First, they used the

institutional powers of the mayoralty to incorporate Black and Latinx politicians and civic leaders

into the regime. Operating within the regime's policy frameworks, these leaders continue to

present their work and tenure in office in discourses on racial empowerment and uplift, helping

to generate a neoliberal-compatible construction of racial justice. Second, by organizing

patronage relationships with minority constituencies, and by talking about minority interests in

terms of particularistic benefits, the regime reinforces the tendency for minority populations to

think about political interest in terms of particularistic benefits, rather than transformative

policy demands. Third, the regime's programs and practices have helped mostly middle-class

homeowners and businesses in minority neighborhoods participate in market-oriented

redevelopment. In so doing, the regime cultivated a strata of economic and civic actors who can

articulate market-based development as racial interest.

**Incorporation minority political and civic leadership**

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[354] Clavel and Giloth, 2014: 23-4.
[355] Ibid, 27-8.

The Daley and Emanuel administrations have incorporated minority political and civic leaders into the regime. These leaders articulate widely resonant conceptions of racial empowerment and authenticity, drawn from Nationalist mobilizations, in ways that are compatible with mayoral dominance and the regime's policy frameworks. In this way, they help produce and propagate neoliberal constructions of racial interest and justice.

The Daley and Emanuel administrations have used the institutional powers of the mayoralty to build a layer of loyal political allies in minority communities. Both administrations used the mayoral ability to appoint aldermen to create political allies in minority communities, appointing a civic or political leader with a following in the community, and securing their political loyalty through this appointment.[356] The administrations wielded the mayor's other institutional powers, such as the ability to facilitate or impede local economic development projects, to secure existing minority leaders political support.[357]

These practices have produced a layer of regime-allied minority politicians with prominent institutional positions, including in city, county, state, and national governments.[358] For the regime, these relationships have several political functions.[359] They have a crucial effect on the definition of racial interest and justice, similar to that of the "Black urban regime," described in Chapter 1. These prominent institutional politicians pursue relatively narrow agendas, within the regime's policy frameworks. But they present these agendas, and their own

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[356] In Chicago, when an incumbent alderman is removed from office during their term, the mayor can appoint an interim alderman, who serves until a special election is held. Often, the appointed alderman is able to secure political advantages of incumbency during their interim service. Rahm Emanuel appointed Silvana Tabares in the primarily Latinx 23rd Ward in 2018, and Sophia King in primarily Black 4th Ward in 2016, and Natashia Holmes in the primarily Black 7th Ward in 2013. Richard M. Daley appointed 19 aldermen over his 22 years in office. Strategic appointments in minority communities included Emma Mitts in the primarily Black 37th Ward in 2000, Carrie Austin in the predominantly Black 34th Ward in 1994, and Roberto Maldonado in the largely Latinx 26th Ward in 2009.

[357] Interview with Alex Han, 3/17/17. As Han said, "people have to, it's a one party town; if you want to have any impact, particularly on behalf of a marginalized community, then you have to play the game."

[358] Prominent examples of close Daley allies, with large followings in minority communities, included alderman and later U.S. Representative Luis Gutierrez, and alderman and the first Black president of the Cook County Board of Commissioners, John Stroger.

[359] In addition to maintaining City Council majorities, these allies bolster their patrons' credibility and popularity in minority communities, and can provide resources amidst any charges of racism.

tenure in office, as the fulfillment of a racial empowerment agenda, drawing on the discourses

of the Black Power and Harold Washington movements, in which many served.  In the words of

one commentator, "Chicago has many politicians who come out of those movements, and who

very vocally carry that torch, but who've spent twenty years selling out to Daley and the Chicago

machine."[360]  These politicians are a thus a crucial mechanism fixing the meaning of racial

empowerment, authentic representation, and other nodal concepts of racial justice discourses,

in ways that are compatible with, or supportive of, neoliberalism.

**Particularistic benefits**

The Daley and Emanuel administrations have built constituencies in minority

communities by distributing particularistic benefits.  Though civil service reform has greatly

reduced politicians' ability to distribute municipal jobs to political supporters, they still control

the distribution of some contracts, grants, and jobs.  Bennett (2006) observes that

"opportunities for politically connected African Americans and Latinos to participate in

residential development consortiums, or to bid on city contracts for various public works

improvements, are legion."[361]  Emanuel emphasized the delivery of jobs to minority

communities in his 2015 and (prior to his decision not to run for reelection) 2019 mayoral

campaigns.[362]  In several cases, these benefits are distributed via prominent churches in minority

neighborhoods, who receive city contracts to provide services in exchange for endorsements

and political support.[363]

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[360] Interview with Alex Han, 3/17/17.
[361] Bennett, 2006:  54.
[362] In mayoral debates and candidate fora in 2015, Emanuel emphasized the number of minority jobs and contracts in the building trades, the Chicago Transit Authority, and his own administration. Chicago Mayoral Debate Forum March 25, 2015
In 2018, when launching his ultimately aborted reelection campaign, Emanuel trumpeted his proposal for "incentive programs aimed at boosting minority contracting and employment" (Spielman, 2018.  https://chicago.suntimes.com/chicago-politics/lightfoot-calls-emanuels-95-million-police-academy-plan-ill-conceived/)
[363] Interview with Jason Lee, 3/1/17.

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The Daley administration built larger grassroots networks of political supporters in minority communities.  Most notably, in 1993, Daley helped organize the Hispanic Democratic Organization, a network of Latinx activists, many of whom held city jobs, which mobilized campaign workers and financial contributions for regime-backed candidates.  Before HDO's indictment for exchanging municipal jobs for political support and subsequent disbanding in 2008, it could "flood campaign workers into electoral districts with substantial Latino populations" and was a powerful source of grassroots support for the regime.[364]

By organizing political support around particularistic benefits, the Daley and Emanuel administrations have reinforced the tendency for minority communities to think about politics in terms of particularistic benefits, distributed along ethnic and territorial lines.  Three commentators noted that this way of thinking about politics is deeply engrained in Chicago's minority communities, impeding the task of organizing around transformative policy demands.[365]

**Cultivating minority constituencies for market-based development**

The regime has also built constituencies in distressed minority neighborhoods by facilitating participation in market-oriented development, organizing homeowners, business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs.  The Department of Planning and Development has provided discrete benefits to targeted neighborhood residents, for instance selling city-owned properties at a discount rate to nearby property owners.[366]  The Daley and Emanuel administration also created vehicles for constituencies to participate in local redevelopment planning.  The Daley administration created Community Conservation Councils in several

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[364] Bennett, 2006: 52.
[365] Interview with Jason Lee, 3/1/17.  Interview with Jackson Potter, 3/7/17.  Interview with Carl Rosen, 3/15/17.
[366] Johnson, 2015: 192. Johnson describes the low-cost auction of city-owned properties on South Side of Chicago, in which only people who already owned land on the block were eligible.

neighborhoods, participatory organizations which convened local residents, developers, and

elected officials.[367] Observing one South Side CCC, Pattillo (2007) observes that the alderman-

appointed members were overwhelming middle-class homeowners and that the CCC was

primarily concerned with rising property values.[368]

In his second term, the Emanuel administration launched two programs which support

small business development in targeted minority communities on the South and West Sides.

The Neighborhood Opportunity Fund distributes grants to small businesses and non-profits in

eligible South and West Side neighborhoods. Businesses in select neighborhoods can apply for

grants of up to $250,000, for new construction or rehabilitation of buildings, with additional

bonuses if business is owned by or hires neighborhood residents. The program had 800

applicants and 57 grantees in 2017 and 2018.[369] The Retail Thrive Zone program distributes tax

revenues to business in 8 designated retail corridors in 6 West and South neighborhoods. In

2017 and 2018, 108 small businesses (mostly restaurants, retailers, or arts and culture venues)

received grants of up to $250,000. The city also created a streamlined process for obtaining tax

abatements for businesses in these corridors. In addition to these programs targeted to

minority communities, at least two other citywide small business programs deliver benefits to

minority communities.[370]

These programs have absorbed many of the racial justice activists who had pursued

entrepreneurship and community control of development as racial empowerment strategies.

Michelle Boyd (2007) recounts how non-profit neighborhood development groups, rooted in

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[367] Another such participatory body is the Tax Increment Financing Advisory Boards, designed to enable community input into the use of funds in special Tax Increment Financing accounts.

[368] Pattillo, 2003: 66-8.

[369] The Fund was created in 2017. Revenue is supplied by a fee which developers pay if they exceed zoning restrictions on building size and density.

[370] These are the Small Business Improvement Fund, which allocates local tax revenues to business construction or expansion projects, and the Small Business Improvement Fund Bridge Loan Program, which connects small businesses to secure small loans from non-profit financial institutions.

Black Nationalist struggles, formed relationships with the Daley administration's Department of

Planning and Development and private developers in the 1990s.[371]  Chapter 4 of this dissertation

shows that Black Nationalist activists in the Austin neighborhood arranged the inclusion of a

local corridor in the Retail Thrive Zone and Neighborhood Opportunity Fund programs, and

reoriented their civic organizations toward market-based development.

As these programs organize business and property-owners around opportunities to

profit from redevelopment, they create a layer of civic and economic actors who can articulate

market-oriented development as racial interest.  Boyd describes community development

organizations, enmeshed in relationships with the Daley administration and private developers,

presenting redevelopment as the expression of an authentic racial culture.  Chapter 4 shows

that activists in Austin also constructed redevelopment in Black Nationalist discourses.  Finally,

the Emanuel administration presented its business programs in this way, valorizing minority

business development, and referencing racial groups or immigrants when describing his

administration's business development programs.[372]

## Bases of political support

Actors from the segments of the economy supported by the neoliberal regime are, not

surprisingly, the core of the regime's political coalition.  Political scientists Larry Bennet observes

that elites in the aforementioned sectors "offer various forms of political assistance to the

mayor—tactical advice, access to campaign contributors, support from one or another civic

organization.[373]  The bulk of financial contributions to Daley's and Emanuel's election campaigns

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[371] Boyd, 2007:  Chapter 3.
[372] For example, in an interview launching his ultimately aborted 2019 reelection campaign, Emanuel noted "almost half the new businesses started in this city are started by immigrants.  They keep a vibrancy to a city…" (WGN interview, 4/23/18)
[373] Bennett, 2006:  52.

come from actors in the FIRE industries and real estate developers.[374]  At the ward level,

developers are often the largest contributors to their aldermen's reelection campaigns (except

for allies of the mayor, who receive large contributions from the mayor's SuperPAC) and

aldermen often have investments in real estate concerns after (or even during) their time in

office.

Aldermen themselves are also well-integrated into the regime.  Alignment with (or

acquiescence to) the regime is reflected in consistent support for mayor's proposals (including

proposed budgets, and legislation the mayor introduces or endorses).  Former alderman turned

political scientist Dick Simpson (and colleagues) measured the rate at which aldermen vote with

and against the mayor's proposals.  Through the 2000's, most aldermen voted with Mayor Daley

at least 90% of the time.[375]  City Council mostly continued to function as a "rubber stamp" for

Mayor Emanuel's proposals, except for "a small handful of regularly dissenting Aldermen."[376]

The integration of aldermen into the regime is also reflected in the active participation

of many aldermen in the regime's economic projects:  As noted, aldermen are central players in

rent-intensifying redevelopment in their neighborhoods.  Many aldermen actively support

corporate growth through the regime's supply-side mechanisms, for example, allocating public

funds to firms as subsidies.  Most aldermen pursue race and class based redistribution through

the regime-assimilated frameworks of affirmative action in city contracting and hiring.[377]

The alignment of the aldermen with the regime is secured by the mayor's ability to fund

aldermen's reelection campaigns (or those of challengers).  They mayor's institutional powers

also create many opportunities to reward or punish aldermen by supporting or impeding

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[374] https://www.opensecrets.org/members-of-congress/summary?cid=N00024813&cycle=CAREER.  Accessed 2/10/18.
[375] Simpson et al, 2004.
[376] Zmuda and Simpson, 2013; Simpson et al, 2015.
[377] Interview with Larry Bennett, 3/13/17.

economic development in their wards (as discussed more in Chapter 5).  As Bennett (2006)

points out, the deterioration of the old ward-based patronage organizations left aldermen

without a strong source of electoral support in the ward, leaving them more dependent on the

mayor.[378]

A set of civic organizations, in fields such as women's rights, poverty alleviation, and

public health, help formulate and implement equity- and inclusion-oriented policies, within the

regime's larger economic framework of corporate-led growth.  While these organizations

sometimes act independently of the regime, their implicit support for its policy frameworks and

frequent collaboration with it on policy development suggest they are best seen as its left wing,

or "loyal opposition."  The boards and leaderships of these organizations are often drawn from

the upper echelons of corporate Chicago.[379]

## Discussion

This chapter is intended to set the stage for the case studies of neighborhood-level

organizing in subsequent chapters.  Like Chapter 3, this chapter enables a fuller understanding

of the identity and significance of key actors, programs, and institutions described in subsequent

chapters.  Most simply, the referent will be clear when subsequent chapters mention the

neoliberal regime, or its constituent programs, actors, or practices.  Also, along with Chapter 3,

this chapter situates neighborhood-level developments and outcomes in a broader political

context.  It will be possible to see how particular neighborhood projects or movements are

aligned with the neoliberal or left formations.   For example, we can see that neighborhood-

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[378] Bennett, 2006:  52.
[379] One exemplary group is Women Employed, an advocacy group for interests of "working women," articulated within the regime's economic framework.  The group advocates modest increases in state provision (e.g., for education and job training) and modest regulations (e.g., a minimum wage and paid sick live law).  Women Employed collaborated with the regime to develop and pass policies on paid sick leave and workplace gender discrimination.

level racial justice activism focused on market-oriented real estate development can be easily incorporated into the neoliberal regime, given the regime's constitutive commitments to rent-intensifying development.  In this way, it will be possible to see how outcomes at the neighborhood-level have concrete implications for the conflict between the left formation and the neoliberal regime.

This chapter helps ground the dissertation's claim to speak to a particular class of cases. This chapter showed that Chicago resembles other contemporary cities in important ways. First, Chicago's regime is typical of the neoliberal regimes proliferating in U.S. cities since the 1970s, with similar policy commitments and modes of governance, and similar underlying visions.  Along with the description of Chicago's left formation in Chapter 3, this chapter thus shows that the contemporary political conflict in Chicago is similar to that recently occurring in other U.S. cities.  Second, the primary explanatory factors of this study—the post-1960s institutional developments hypothesized to shape the terrain for neighborhood organizing— have occurred in Chicago, in line with national trends.  Any findings about the effects of these institutional developments may generalize to the other cities where these developments have occurred.

This chapter also makes two points about Chicago's neoliberal regime which do not directly relate to the dissertation's main questions about the terrain for neighborhood organizing.  I argue that the current regime should be seen both as a phase in the continuous control of the city government by economic elites with investments in local markets and property, and as an articulation of upper-class interests, specific to the political economic conditions emerging as a result of federal neoliberalization and economic restructuring since the late 1960s.

Chicago has long been governed by economic elites who use policy to facilitate profit-making.  Though not examined in this dissertation, scholars have described similar coalitions of corporate elites dominating city government and orienting policy toward maximizing accumulation since the 1830s.   Below, I show that a coalition of real estate, commercial, financial, and industrial interests dominated policy-making in several key areas including planning, economic development and taxation from the end of World War II through the early 1970s.  The contemporary regime, and its pursuit of corporate- and real estate-led growth, should be seen as a moment in this long chain of elite-dominated governments oriented toward maximizing profit.

On the other hand, these elite-dominated formations respond to and reflect the particular economic, political, and institutional conditions of their historical moments.  For example, in any era, the composition of the governing coalition reflects the city's industrial base—with relatively more industrialists in the Post-War era, and relatively more actors from the financial and corporate service sectors in the contemporary regime.  Elite economic and governance visions also reflect the era's federal urban policies, macro-economic trends, dominant intellectual currents, and evolution of public institutions.  Below, I show that the neoliberal regime should be seen as a product of historically specific economic, political, cultural, and institutional forces and conditions.

# CHAPTER 4: The United Working Families Coalition and Chicago's Resurgent Left

There is a growing political formation in Chicago, comprised of progressive labor unions, neighborhood-based non-profits, racial justice organizations, political action groups, and assorted other actors. Intensely critical of the neoliberal regime and its policies, this formation seeks economic redistribution along class lines, a racial justice program focused on eliminating racially discriminatory policing practices and developing a public safety program oriented toward restorative justice, protection of undocumented immigrants, and enhanced democratic control of public institutions.

In the last 10 years, this formation has become "a secure node in local politics:" it has built "a popular constituent base dependable and potent enough to challenge [the neoliberal regime] other than episodically and symbolically."[380] The formation regularly mobilizes large amounts of personnel and financial resources on well-planned and successful electoral and issue campaigns. Through an increasingly sophisticated electoral apparatus, the formation has recruited, trained, and supported candidates for city, county, and state government, winning several races against regime-backed incumbents. The formation has also led, or participated in, successful lobbying campaigns at the city and state level, and appears to have secured close relationships with several state and municipal legislators. Since 2015, the formation has launched or supported new efforts to organize grassroots support for its agendas in several of Chicago's high-poverty neighborhoods.

This chapter has two purposes. First, it attempts a more comprehensive description of this evolving, amorphous formation than is currently available in the secondary literature. I

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[380] Reed, 2016b: 268.

reviewed coalition documents (including published texts, statements of leaders, and internal communications), public financial records, and media coverage of coalition activities, and conducted interviews with 11 leaders and staff members of coalition organizations. I describe the coalition's composition and structure, and its policy agenda, key ideological tensions, and its political activities.

Second, this chapter sets the stage for the case studies on neighborhood organizing in subsequent chapters, in two ways. Along with the preceding review of Chicago's neoliberal regime, this study describes the current political conjuncture in Chicago, clarifying the axes of political contention, key political formations and political opportunity structures. This description clarifies the identity of many of the key actors involved in those neighborhood organizing projects, and allows a fuller understanding of the political stakes of those projects. This chapter also reviews a set of historical developments which could be expected to shape the terrain for neighborhood organizing: the growth of the left in Chicago may have produced left activists and diffused left discourses on issues, identities, or political possibilities. These developments could transform the context for neighborhood organizing, just as I expect neoliberalization has.

*Outline of Chapter*

This chapter presents the following findings:

- I first review the history of the formation, noting its origins in a relatively small progressive coalition, active in the 1990s and 2000s. I recount how a series of reactions to neoliberalization and associated problems expanded the coalition, widened its agenda, and produced a set of shared analyses and vision.

- I next discuss the current composition and structure of the coalition, recounting its members, the members' links to a broader left milieu in the city, and the coalition's key institutional nodes.

- I next discuss the coalition's ideologies and agenda, reviewing their social and political analysis, and their broad policies agendas for economic redistribution, transformation of the criminal justice system, racial justice, democratization, and protection of immigrants.  I also describe their vision of a political movement based in the working- and lower-classes, capable of taking power and enacting desired policy changes.

- I discuss key ideological tensions in the coalition, noting divergent definitions of racial justice, and different views about the amount and kinds of neighborhood economic development that are desirable.  I argue that the coalition's vision and agenda around economic development are not yet well developed or coherent.

- I will briefly review the coalition's political work, noting their electoral projects and legislative lobbying.

- Finally, I will describe the coalition's attempts to continue to expand, focusing on their leadership and activist training programs, and grassroots base-building initiatives.

**Table 4.1:  Abbreviations in this chapter**

| | |
|---|---|
| UWF | United Working Families |
| CTU | Chicago Teachers Union |
| SEIU HCII | Service Employees International Union Healthcare, Illinois Indiana Missouri Kansas |
| AFSCME | American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees |
| GC | Grassroots Collaborative |
| GIA | Grassroots Illinois Action |
| LSNA | Logan Square Neighborhood Association |
| KOCO | Kenwood Oakland Community Organization |
| BRA | Black Roots Alliance |
| CODE | Communities Organized for Democracy in Education |
| MBL | Movement for Black Lives |
| BYP100 | Black Youth Project 100 |

| BLM | Black Lives Matter |
|-----|-------------------|

## 1. Development of the UWF Coalition

This section reviews the historical development of Chicago's left milieu and community-labor coalition. It traces the origins of the coalition to progressive issue and electoral campaigns in the 1990s and 2000s. It then recounts the growth of the coalition and broader milieu during a series of grassroots movements and organizational transformations in the late 2000s and early 2010s, catalyzed by the Great Recession and neoliberal austerity programs. These movements mobilized new people and groups into politics, many of whom developed some affiliation with the coalition. The movements, and emerging relationships among groups and activist networks, helped to diffuse a left analysis and agenda. This section highlights three key developments: the radicalization of the Chicago Teachers Union in 2010, the struggles against neoliberal school reform in the late 2000s and early 2010s, and grassroots movements responding to Chicago's housing crises in the same years.[381]

## The Grassroots Collaborative and progressive coalitional activity in the 1990s and 2000s

The United Working Families coalition can be traced to collaborations among progressive labor unions and NGOs on issue and electoral projects in the 1990s and 2000s. While there were several such recurring collaborations, past scholarship and my own

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[381] Commentators and my interviewees noted that other grassroots movements had the same effects, mobilizing new groups and people into left activism, and generating some ideas which informed the Chicago's progressive-left forces' analysis and agenda. These include the Occupy Chicago mobilization (which, like the original Occupy Wall Street event, convened protestors for a sustained occupation of public spaces in the Central Business District, with a broad focus on economic inequality), a grassroots movement to protest the closure of six public mental health clinics beginning in 2012, a movement to undermine Chicago's bid to host the 2012 Winter Olympics (called No Games Chicago), and a dramatic and successful sit-down strike at the Republic Windows factory. The mental health movement helped establish the left's focus on neoliberal disinvestment from public services (Burt, 2018; Interview with Natalie Crary, 2017). Occupy Chicago, No Games Chicago, and the Republic Windows Strike helped inspire an assertive and militant political posture generally, and a focus on class inequality (Interview with Matt Luskin, 2017).

interviewees identify the umbrella organization the Grassroots Collaborative and its campaigns as especially important precursors to United Working Families.[382]  These coalitions and campaigns fostered relationships among key actors comprising Chicago's contemporary left, and helped actors refine political strategies.

The key pillar of the Collaborative, providing most of its financial and personnel resources, was the Service Employees International Union's large healthcare local, SEIU Local 880 (which later affiliated with the multi-state union SEIU Health Care Illinois and Indiana). Most of the remaining members were neo-Alinskyite neighborhood-based organizations, focused on grassroots organizing and advocacy campaigns.  These groups were formed by personnel trained in Alinsky's mode of community organizing, and were financially supported (at least in their early years) by the National Center for Training and Information, the Industrial Areas Foundation, and other national entities supporting this form of community practice.  The roots in Alinskyite ideology and support from NCTI help explain these CBOs' divergence from national trends described in Chapter 2 of political incorporation into dominant regimes and focus on service provision and/or development.  Interviewees also cited an absence of other effective service-provider or advocacy organizations in the neighborhood (and thus the opportunity to obtain foundation funding for service work despite engaging in contentious politics) and a local grassroots constituency supportive or demanding of contentious political work as additional factors explaining these groups' orientations.[383]  Among these groups,

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[382] Others sustained progressive coalitions in the 1990s and 2000s in Chicago include the Chicago chapter of Jobs with Justice and the Industrial Area's Foundation's United Power.  The former has convened a wide array of progressive groups, but only shallowly and episodically, and thus has not forged relationships (Dobbie, 2010: 55).  The latter "has been unable to build deep relationships among members or launch substantial campaigns" (Moberg, 2006).  Forming in 2011, a slightly later coalition was Stand Up Chicago, part of the SEIU's national Fight for a Fair Economy (mentioned in Chapter 1).  This coalition convened the same actors as the Grassroots Collaborative, in addition to the then newly radicalized Chicago Teachers Union.  The coalition focused on a living wage ordinance for box stores, and the receipt of tax breaks and other public subsidies by banks and other large corporations (Bradbury et al, 2014: 93).
[383] Interview with Alex Han, 3/17/17; Interview with Carl Rosen, 3/15/17.

scholars cite the Chicago chapter of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform

Now (ACORN; renamed Action Now in January 2008, after its formal exit from ACORN, due to

disagreements with national ACORN leadership over strategy) as the most influential member of

the collaborative (in addition to SEIU 880).[384]  Other NGO members of the collaborative included

Blocks Together in Humboldt Park, Albany Park Neighborhood Council (which later developed a

close political relationship with the neoliberal regime and attenuated its militant advocacy),

Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, and the citywide NGO Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.
[385]

The Grassroots Collaborative helped lead a series of issue campaigns in the 1990s and

2000s, mostly focused on the rights of undocumented immigrants and wages and working

conditions of lower-class workers.  The coalition led or participated in "inside-outside"

campaigns (i.e., campaigns combining direct lobbying of legislators via close personal

relationships and grassroots mobilizations to demonstrate popular support) related to amnesty

for undocumented immigrants, the right for undocumented people to obtain a driver's license,

city funding for affordable housing in rapidly development neighborhoods, and raising the state

minimum wage.[386]  It also led a series of more sustained policy campaigns focused at the city

level, successfully pursuing a living wage from 1995 to 1998, and unsuccessfully seeking an

ordinance to ban "big box stores" (such as Wal-Mart) tin 1999, and an ordinance requiring big

box stores to pay a living wage from 2004-2006. [387]

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[384] Dobbie, 2010; Tattersall, 2011.
[385] On Blocks Together's sponsorship by the National Training and Information Center (an Alinskyite organization, as described in Chapter 1):  Heathcott; Scully, 1999:  99; Chaskin et al, 2001:  105.  On Albany Park Neighborhood Council's sponsorship by the National Training and Information Center:  Noden, 2002.  On Brighton Park Neighborhood Council's sponsorship by the Industrial Areas Foundation, and its Chicago affiliate, United Power for Action and Justice:  Block, 2009.
[386] Tatersall, 2011.
[387] Tattersall, 2011:  69.  The anti-Wal Mart campaign co-led by the United Food and Commercial Workers of Chicago.

Grassroots Collaborative, and especially ACORN and the SEIU 880, were also active in

the electoral sphere.  ACORN led two efforts to build a political party to the left of the

Democratic Party in the 1990s It attempted to affiliate with the national Working Families Party,

and later started the New Party, which ran slates of candidates for City Council and in the late

1990s (and elected an alderman in the 15th Ward).  In 2004 and 2007, the Grassroots

Collaborative, and especially the SEIU 880 deployed an unprecedented level of money and

personnel on aldermanic campaigns, targeting aldermen who had not voted for the coalition-

backed Living Wage and "big box store" ordinances.[388]

Contemporary observers credited the Grassroots Collaborative with building the

organizational and personal relationships which underpin the United Working Families coalition.

As SEIU HCII staffer and UWF board member Alex Han mentioned that Grassroots Collaborative

has been a space

> to intentionally build relationships between organizers and activists and leaders
> of different organizations, and those relationships have been the basis for
> ongoing collaboration…[It's] not just executive directors and presidents of
> unions [who] can sit down and talk with each other, but there's been a lot of
> membership leader training together. [389]

Dobbie (2010) argues that living wage campaigns were "widely credited [i.e., by Dobbie's

interviewees] with opening up local unions to the benefits of working with community groups

and laying the groundwork for tighter collaboration" subsequently.[390]

Informants emphasized working through issues related to "turf"—i.e., building trust that

collaboration wouldn't infringe on each organization's own interests.  Quoting the director of an

NGO participating in the GC, Dobbie (2010) argues that this trust developed gradually:  "I don't

lose my identity being part of the Grassroots Collaborative…it's about building relationships and

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[388] Sites, 2013:  2580-1.
[389] Interview with Alex Han, 3/17/17.
[390] Dobbie, 2010:  32

building trust, and realizing that nobody's self-interest is going to be stomped out, but whenever we can come together and have a collective interest, that's when we all gain.[391]  Han echoed this sentiment, noting that collaboration has "allowed us to work through some of those thorny issues."[392]

According to past scholarship and my interviewees, the living wage campaigns helped to develop coalition leaders' strategic vision of using issue campaigns as a tool for movement-building.  Tattersall reports interview data that Grassroots Collaborative members were impressed by their successes with grassroots outreach and leadership development in the 2004-2006 living wage campaign.[393]  Terry Davis, a retired union organizer, recalled that the living wage campaign, and the follow-up challenges to opposed aldermen, "was one of the first times you saw a policy campaign tied directly to an electoral mobilization."[394]

## Reorientation of the Chicago Teachers Union

In 2010, a left-leaning caucus, the Caucus of Rank-and-File Educators (CORE) won control of the Chicago Teachers Union.  Prior to CORE's election, the CTU had a typical "business unionist" orientation, pursuing its goals through insider negotiations with district policymakers, and restricting its focus to wages and working conditions, narrowly defined.[395]  CORE committed the union to a set of goals and strategies which scholars have labeled "social movement unionism," building coalitions beyond the union, investing in grassroots organizing, and pursuing a broad policy agenda.

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[391] Dobbie, 2010:  54
[392] Interview with Alex Han, 3/17/17.
[393] Tattersall, 2011:  82.
[394] Interview with Terry Davis, 3/6/17.
[395] Bradbury et al, 2014.  Bruno and Ashby, 2016.  MacAlevey, 2016.

Under CORE, the union has invested in organizing and mobilizing rank-and-file workers for workplace militancy and political action.  It has attempted to build close relationships with parents of public school students, with students, and with community-based activists.  The union has committed to a broad education policy agenda, opposing neoliberal education reforms (including charterization, reliance on standardized testing, and cuts in public education funding), and articulating a vision of comprehensive reinvestment.  And it has pursued a wider progressive policy agenda, including public reinvestment in social services, public support for affordable housing, and progressive revenue policies.  The CTU has consistently tried to advance these agendas in its contract negotiations with the city, and in electoral and issue campaigns at the city and state levels.  After it's reorientation, the CTU quickly joined the Grassroots Collaborative, Stand Up Chicago, and other left-leaning citywide advocacy coalitions.

CORE was comprised of "long-time socialists" (some of them members of the International Socialist Organization), and progressive Democrats alienated from the union's conservative leadership.[396]  The organization was galvanized by decades of neoliberal reforms and frustrated by the union's failure to contest them.  As several biographers recount, CORE members developed an analysis of neoliberalization as a class project through a series of reading groups and informal study sessions prior to winning control of the union.  Their analysis appealed widely to rank-and-file teachers who had observed the pattern of disinvestment and school closures in the district.[397]

The reorientation of the CTU was a pivotal moment in the development of Chicago's left.  Several of my informants cited the CTU's 2012 strike as a key moment inspiring a more assertive left politics and activism in the city.  More importantly, the CTU greatly increased the

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[396] Uetricht, 2014.  Bradbury et al, 2014.
[397] Bradbury et al, 2014. Bruno and Ashby, 2016.

resource base of Chicago's left.  With 32,000 members, the CTU is the city's largest labor union.

The CTU's personnel and financial resources enabled Chicago's progressive coalition to quickly

expand its issue, electoral, and organizing campaigns.  Along with the SEIU HCII, CTU contributes

the vast majority of funding to the electoral campaigns of UWF, and (according to multiple

commentators) accounts for most of the coalition's lobbying clout at the state level.[398]

## Opposition to neoliberal education reform

Struggles against neoliberal education reform deepened relationships between the

Chicago Teachers Union, progressive neighborhood organizations, and left-leaning academic

institutions and helped produce a common analysis of neoliberalization as an upper-class

project and as a moment in a long history of racial apartheid in Chicago.  They also diffused an

analysis of neoliberal education reform and gentrification as inseparably linked programs.

Several of Chicago's progressive neighborhood organizations had been protesting school

closures and charterization since the launch of those reforms by the Richard M. Daley

administration in 1995.  Even prior to winning control of the CTU, CORE (the aforementioned

left-leaning caucus in the CTU) began working with these neighborhood groups to develop a

vision of resistance to neoliberal education reform.[399]  Past scholarship, as well as my interviews,

recount collaborations between CORE, Kenwood Oakland Community Organization, the Pilsen

Alliance, Blocks Together, ACORN/Action Now, the Grassroots Collaborative, and other

progressive groups.[400]  While I have not been able to obtain enough data to unpack the

processes of ideological synthesis, data suggest that these conversations helped produce a

common analysis:  community groups (especially KOCO and the Pilsen Alliance) and scholars

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[398] Interview with William Sites, 3/16/17.
[399] Bradbury et al, 2014:  14.  Interview with Matt Luskin, 3/7/17.  Interview with Jackson Potter, 3/7/17.
[400] Bradbury et al, 2014:  14-15, 23.

contributed an analysis of neoliberal education reform as a deliberate attempt to expedite the displacement of working-class and low-income residents of color from neighborhoods with potential for redevelopment.[401] CORE's members contributed an emerging critique of neoliberalization and disinvestment as a class project, siphoning resources to economic elites.[402] Mathew Luskin, CTU organizer and UWF board member, recalls that community activists also impressed on CORE a racial justice perspective, constructing neoliberalization as a moment in a long history of racialized disinvestment and educational apartheid, and the importance of democratic control of schools.[403]

These meetings gave rise to the Grassroots Education Movement, which drew in progressive organizations of parents of public school students, members of Local School Councils, and others, in addition to the aforementioned collaborators. The GEM was later institutionalized as the CTU's Community Board, which met on a monthly basis to help determine the policy agenda of the CTU. As CORE took over the CTU, it greatly scaled up grassroots organizing against neoliberal reforms, mobilizing this coalition numerous times for citywide or neighborhood-based actions, including direct actions, grassroots lobbying campaigns, and GOTV efforts.[404] When the CTU relaunched its charitable foundation in 2014, these collaborators were among the groups receiving grants.[405]

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[401] In the 2000s, activists at the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization articulated this framework, refining it in a series of projects with researchers at University of Illinois at Chicago's Collaborative for Equity and Justice in Education (see, e.g., Brown, Gutstein and Lipman 2010: "Arne Duncan and the Chicago Success Story: Myth or Reality?"). Activists at Pilsen Alliance, a left-leaning organization which formed in 1997 to contest redevelopment-induced displacement in the Pilsen neighborhood, also worked with scholars at UIC's CEJE during these years, producing a similar critique.

[402] Bradbury et al, 2014: 18. CORE members had been reading Naomi Klein's *The Shock Doctrine*, and deconstructed the fiscal crisis used by Chicago's policymakers to defund education.

[403] Interview with Matt Luskin, 3/7/17.

[404] For example, the coalition mobilized in the 2012 CTU strike, with community and parent groups organizing parents and students to support teachers and providing a valuable imprimatur (Bradbury et al 2014; MacAleavey; interview with Luskin, 2017; interview with Potter, 2017). The coalition held direct actions and outreach in response to many school closings, particularly after the wave of 53 closings in 2013.

[405] The Foundation had existed since 1969. The Foundation's endowment was increased dramatically in 2014 with the sale of a 224-unit apartment building owned by the CTU.

## Mobilizations around foreclosures and evictions

The 2008 financial crisis caused hundreds of thousands of home foreclosures and court-ordered evictions of tenants in Chicago, precipitating a wave of grassroots resistance. Key grassroots groups understood the crisis through an anti-capitalist framework, and articulated demands for non-capitalist allocation of housing.[406] These groups included the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign (CAEC), founded in 2009 by veterans of struggles to preserve public housing, and Occupy Our Homes, and Communities United Against Foreclosure and Eviction, which grew out of the Occupy Movement and included many Occupy activists.[407]

These groups attempted to organize vulnerable homeowners and renters and led militant direct actions, such as "eviction blockades" to disrupt court-ordered evictions (usually resulting in the arrest of protestors).[408] They also led illegal occupations of vacant properties—i.e., "squatting"—helping evicted or homeless people move in, or converting vacant properties into community centers and offering classes and services.[409] The groups also conducted more conventional forms of policy advocacy, pursuing stop-gap measures (e.g., for moratoria on foreclosures) and systemic reforms, such as large-scale support for land trusts or housing coops.[410]

CAEC, CUAFE, and Occupy Our Homes usually framed their work in progressive and anti-capitalist and socialist visions. CAEC asserted that housing is a human right, and justified their

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[406] Austen, 2013. By 2013, there were 62,000 vacant properties in the city, many of them recently foreclosures. Two-thirds of these were in predominantly Black neighborhoods on the South and West Sides. Another 82,000 foreclosure cases were in the Cook County's Circuit Court as of January 2013. At that time, about 40% of homeowners in low-income West and South Side neighborhoods held mortgages that were currently "underwater" (i.e., the homeowners owed more on their mortgages than their homes were worth). Between 2008 and 2013, hundreds of thousands of affordable rental housing units were lost when buildings were foreclosed.

[407] Right to the City Alliance (2015): Unpublished draft of Alternative Housing Model Report.

[408] See news bulletins on Chicago Anti-Eviction Website: http://chicagoantieviction.org/. Accessed 1/11/19. On Communities United Against Foreclosure and Eviction see Anyonomous: "Stories of Struggle. Foreclosure and Eviction in Chicago" (http://www.areachicago.org/1499/; accessed 1/11/19); and Mata, 2012.

[409] Chicago Anti-Eviction Website: http://chicagoantieviction.org/. Accessed 1/11/19.

[410] Right to the City Alliance: Unpublished draft of "Alternative Homes Report." Available from author upon request.

occupations and resistance actions in these terms.[411]  CAUFE alternately traced the housing

crisis to corporate greed—indicting banks' predatory lending practices and speculators' reckless

investing—and to the fundamentally exploitative and anti-social nature of capitalist housing

markets.[412]

　　　While I was not able to determine the size and reach of these groups (or the size of the

larger wave of grassroots resistance catalyzed by the foreclosure crisis), CAEC and CUAFE appear

to have had large chapters in neighborhoods with high foreclosure rates.  As of 2012, CUAFE had

chapters in five neighborhoods in the West, Near West, and North Sides.[413]  CAUFE also

developed close relationships with other neighborhood-based non-profits in those

neighborhoods, forming coalitions with the capacity to mobilize significant numbers of

neighborhood residents.[414]  According to one participant, CAEC had a large following on the

South and West Sides, and built chapters in several neighborhoods.[415]

　　By 2012, these groups were collaborating with Grassroots Collaborative, SEIU HCII, the

CTU, and other of Chicago's left coalition on a range of causes, suggesting the absorption of

these activists into a larger anti-neoliberal struggle.  CUAFE, CAEC, OOH and other grassroots

housing groups joined protests against school closings and other aspects of neoliberalization.

For example, in 2012, CUAFE joined protests against Chicago's hosting of a NATO meeting,

whose official messages were about the city's spending priorities; in 2013, CAEC joined a rally

and press conference held by the CTU (and also attended by representatives of SEIU HCII and

Action Now).[416]  As the foreclosure crisis subsided, CAEC and CUAFE co-led efforts around

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[411] Crawford, 2013.  Austen, 2013.
[412] E.g., Kampf-Lasin and Burt, 2012:  "This bitter reality, that there are nearly two empty homes for every homeless Chicagoan, illustrates the deep injustice of a housing system rooted in profit drive and built on a house of cards."
[413] Mata, 2012.
[414] Anyonomous: "Stories of Struggle. Foreclosure and Eviction in Chicago" (http://www.areachicago.org/1499/; accessed 1/11/19).
[415] Interview with Chris Poulos, 5/23/19.
[416] Tadalan, 2012.

evictions associated with gentrification. Meanwhile the CTU and Grassroots Collaborative joined actions around foreclosures and vacant houses.[417]

## 2. Composition and structure of the UWF coalition

## Composition of the UWF coalition

Table 4.2 lists the members of the coalition, the type of organization, their geographic focus, and two characteristics of the organization's activities: what they do as a member of the coalition and what other activities they perform which aren't directly related to the coalition. The activities referenced (such as "advocacy," "mobilization," or "grassroots organizing") are defined below.

**Table 4.2: Member organizations of the UWF Coalition**

| Organization | Type of Organization | Geographic Focus | Activities in Coalition | Non-coalition activities |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| United Working Families | Political Action | Citywide | Electoral, leadership dev., deliberation | None |
| Grassroots Collaborative | Non-profit | Citywide | Advocacy, deliberation, mobilization | None |
| Chicago Teachers Union | Labor | Citywide | Electoral, advocacy, organizing, mobilization, policy analysis | Other educational policy analysis, advocacy; other member services |
| SEIU Healthcare Illinois Indiana | Labor | Citywide | Electoral, advocacy, organizing | Other member services |
| Amalgamated Transit Union | Labor | Citywide | Electoral, advocacy | Other member services |
| Cook County College Teachers Union | Labor | Citywide | Electoral, advocacy | Other member services |
| Warehouse Workers Organizing Committee | Labor | Citywide | Electoral | Other member services |

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[417] CTU Blog Post, 10/11/2011. https://www.ctulocal1.org/posts/ten-thousand-protest-bank-and-corporate-greed-video/. Accessed, 9/28/16.

| Arise Chicago | Labor/Relig. | Citywide | Advocacy, mobilization | Consensus-building |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communities United | Comm-based non-profit | Albany Park, Belmont-Craigin, North Park, etc. | Advocacy, mobilization | Service provision, community development; engaging local stakeholders; other policy advocacy |
| Blocks Together | Comm-based non-profit | West Garfield Park | Advocacy, mobilization, policy analysis | Unknown |
| Brighton Park Neighborhood Council | Comm-based non-profit | Brighton Park | Advocacy at state and local levels; mobilization; grassroots organizing, leadership development | Service provision, community development; engaging local stakeholders |
| Enlace Chicago | Comm-based non-profit | Little Village | Advocacy at state and local levels; mobilization; grassroots organizing | Service provision, community development; engaging local stakeholders |
| Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization | Comm-based non-profit | Kenwood, Oakland, Hyde Park | Advocacy, grassroots organizing, leadership development, mobilization, | Affordable housing development |
| Logan Square Neighborhood Association | Comm-based non-profit | Logan Square, Avondale, Hermosa | Advocacy, grassroots organizing, leadership development | Service provision, affordable housing development |
| ONE Northside | Comm-based non-profit | Rogers Park, Edgewater, Upton, Ravenswood, North Center, Lake View, Lincoln Park | Advocacy, leadership development | Service provision, affordable housing development, senior citizens |
| Pilsen Alliance | Comm-based non-profit | Pilsen | Advocacy, grassroots organizing, mobilization | Other member services |
| Southsiders Together Organizing for Power | Comm-based non-profit | South Side Neighborhoods | Advocacy, grassroots organizing, | Other member services |
| Southwest Organizing Project | Comm-based non-profit | Chicago Lawn, Gage Park, West Elsdon, West | Advocacy, leadership development, grassroots organizing | Service provision, community development |

| | | Lawn, Ashburn | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grassroots Illinois Action | Comm-Based Political Action | Humboldt Park (and surrounding areas) | Electoral campaigns, grassroots organizing | None |
| People United for Action | Comm-Based Political Action | Unknown | Electoral campaigns, grassroots organizing | Unknown |
| Action Now | Comm-based Political Action | North Lawndale, Little Village, Englewood, West Englewood, South Suburbs | Advocacy, electoral campaigns, grassroots organizing, leadership development | Other advocacy, organizing |
| American Friends Service Committee | Citywide Advocacy/ Religious | Citywide | Advocacy | Other advocacy, consensus-building |
| Chicago Coalition for the Homeless | Citywide Advocacy | Citywide | Advocacy | Other advocacy, consensus-building |

*Multi-Member Institutions*

The coalition has two multi-member institutions, United Working Families (UWF) and the Grassroots Collaborative (GC). UWF and GC have several important functions: they convene the leading intellectuals members of the coalition for collective discussion and decision-making about the coalition's agenda, strategy, and principles; UWF run the coalition's electoral campaigns, and GC coordinates some of the largest grassroots lobbying campaigns; and UWF programs recruit and train progressive and leftist activists.

**United Working Families**

UWF is a non-profit political organization, preforming several functions. It recruits, trains, funds, and mobilizes support for electoral candidates; it recruits and trains community organizers, and coordinates grassroots organizing campaigns; it recruits and convenes affiliated member organizations and unaffiliated activists and groups to participate in discussions and

debates about goals and strategy; and it fosters new neighborhood-based electoral organizations.  UWF is attempting to scale up all four of these functions.  According to interviewees, UWF also is the site at which coalition members convene to determine strategy and goals.

UWF was founded by a set of labor unions and community-based organizations in 2013.  Although UWF has an independent staff, its Board of Directors is comprised by two representatives from each of its 11 member organizations, and 6 at-large members (which include 2 elected officials and 2 activists from currently unaffiliated neighborhood-based racial justice organizations).  UWF member organizations include 5 labor unions (Chicago Teachers Union, Service Employees International Union Healthcare Illinois and Indiana, Chicago Cook County College Teachers Union, Amalgamated Transit Union, and Warehouse Workers Organizing Committee), and 6 neighborhood-based political action groups (Action Now Institute, People United for Action, Grassroots Illinois Action, 22nd Ward Independent Political Organization, 25th Ward Independent Political Organization, and 33rd Ward Working Families).  UWF continues to grow, with a board member predicting in the Spring of 2018 that "[i]n 6 months, we may have affiliated to UWF every type of non-labor organization that exists …From a neighborhood club…to Political Action Committees, to the Chicago Democratic Socialists of America."[418]

The United Working Families Organization is also emerging as a center of the coalition for some purposes.  Without question, UWF is the center of the coalition's electoral activities, having assumed some of the electoral functions formerly performed by the CTU, SEIU HCII, and Grassroots Illinois Action.  In addition, UWF appears to be emerging as the center of coalition-

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[418] Interview with Alex Han, 3/17/17.

wide deliberation and decision-making, with interviewees reporting it as the key site of development of shared strategies, agendas, and larger visions.  UWF also appears to be the center for the development of a cadre capable of leading the entire coalition.  They recruit leading members of coalition organizations to participate in leadership training programs.  This appears to create a two-tier structure, in which individual organizations train cadres at the neighborhood-level, and UWF trains a city- or coalition-wide cadre.

**Grassroots Collaborative**

Grassroots Collaborative has been an important vehicle for collaborative issue campaigns since the late 1990s.  My interviewees, and those of previous studies, credit GC as an important site for the development of relationships and of a common political and strategic vision.  In these relationship-building and deliberative functions, GC helped pave the way for UWF, and has now been supplanted by it.

GC continues to formulate and implement issue-campaigns and grassroots lobbying campaigns.  Most recently, GC has led campaigns for transparency and accountability around Chicago's bid to host the new Amazon headquarters and for elimination of corporate tax loopholes and has lobbied alongside several other organizations for a comprehensive state legislative agenda.  In these campaigns, Grassroots Collaborative helps to formulate goals, mobilize the memberships of its 11 member organizations, and serves as a media spokesperson, often receiving access to mainstream media outlets.  In 2011, members from GC formed Grassroots Illinois Action (GIA).  GIA was set up as 501©4 organization, legally allowed to engage in partisan electoral activity.

As mentioned, SEIU HCII (formerly SEIU Local 880) was the most powerful supporter of progressive issue and electoral campaigns in Chicago through the late 2000s.  They remain, along with the CTU, the source of the vast majority of the coalition's financial resources and rank-and-file members.  For instance, SEIU HCII is the largest donor to UWF's Political Action Committee, contributing $162,480.20 since 2015.  With 91,000 members in four states SEIU HCII's membership provides a large portion of the personnel for UWF's GOTV operations (such as phone-banking, canvassing, etc.).

In addition to supporting UWF and GC, SEIU HCII participates in issue and electoral campaigns aligned with UWF, GC, and other members discussed below.  Most recently, SEIU HCII has turned out hundreds of members to participate in direct actions associated with the national Poor People's Campaign.  Earlier in 2018, SEIU HCII helped fund and staff the Lift the Ban Coalition, working to end the state ban on rent control.  Historically, SEIU HCII has participated in campaigns against school closings, in favor of TIF reform and elimination of corporate tax loopholes, in favor of police accountability, and in favor of immigration reform.[419]

*Chicago Teachers Union*

CTU is the other major provider of financial support and personnel for the coalition.  For example, the CTU is the second largest financial contributor to UWF's PAC, contributing $105,000.00 since 2015.  It also furnishes campaign workers from among its 25,000 members.

The CTU also does a lot of political work in its capacity as a union (i.e., not through the vehicle of UWF or GC).  The CTU conducts direct lobbying, cultivating relationships with legislators, and often meeting legislators to advocate legislation.  It also conducts grassroots

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[419] SEIU HCII Website, accessed 3/27/18.

lobbying, directing its large membership to contact representatives about legislation, attend

public hearings, or take other political action, several times a year.

The CTU may be the coalition's most prominent media spokesperson, regularly quoted

in mainstream outlets about political issues (and especially those related to education).  In

particular, the CTU's former president, Karen Lewis, was the coalition's most famous

personality—brilliant, charismatic, and media savvy, she appeared frequently in local news

media.[420]

The CTU also functions as the primary conduit through which many community-based

organizations connect to the coalition.  Leaders of the CTU have long-standing relationships with

leaders of these organizations, and the CTU has collaborated closely with these organizations in

issue campaigns, primarily around education and financial issues.  Many of the community-

based groups associated with the coalition continue to work regularly with the CTU in

formulating agendas for education policy through the CTU's Community Board (a 15-member

body tasked with hold the CTU accountable to its community-based allies).  Finally, the CTU's

philanthropic foundation also funds many of the community-based non-profits and citywide

advocacy groups which politically support the coalition's agenda.

*Community-Based Non-Profits*

The coalition includes an array of neighborhood-based non-profit organizations

committed to varying combinations of service-provision, policy advocacy, local economic

development, affordable housing development, and grassroots organizing.  These organizations

are all 501c3 organizations, legally prohibited from partisan electoral work.

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[420] MacAleavy, 2016.  In a poll, Lewis was voted the third most popular black figure in Chicago.

The degree of independence and willingness to engage in political contention varied

across these organizations.  Kenwood Oakland Community Organization and Pilsen Alliance, for

example, have weak ties with the Emanuel administration and eagerly participate in contentious

campaigns against that administration.  By contrast, Communities United works closely with Ald.

Deborah Mell, an appointee and close ally of Emanuel.  Communities United attempts to

support progressive causes without publicly breaking from the regime and its agenda.

A complete list of community-based 501©3 non-profits affiliated with the coalition is

included in Table 4.2, above.  This includes groups and with roots in the civil rights movement

(KOCO), Latinx empowerment movement (ENLACE), anti-gentrification struggles (Pilsen

Alliance), or the Alinskyite tradition of community organizing (Brighton Park Neighborhood

Council).

## Structure of the UWF coalition

Among these organizations, there are varied levels of involvement in coalition projects.

I define two levels of coalition members.  First, I define "core members" as organizations who 1)

participate most frequently on coalition events; 2) contribute relatively large amounts of

financial, personnel, and other resources; 3)initiate and lead campaigns and projects; and

4)have strong institutional ties to other groups in the coalition.  Core members are United

Working Families, Grassroots Collaborative, Grassroots Illinois Action, Chicago Teachers Union,

Service Employees International Union Healthcare Illinois Indiana, Action Now Institute,

Kenwood Oakland Community Organization, and the Pilsen Alliance.  I define "other members"

as organizations who 1) collaborated with Core Members on at least 3 issue, electoral, or

organizing campaigns in the last year; 2) have some institutional ties to other groups in the

coalition. This includes all other coalition members. Organizations at these levels are

distinguished from the coalition's extended network, and form a set of other progressive and

leftist formations with whom the coalition has complicated relationships, as discussed below.

I consider the following types of institutional linkage: 1)whether the organization

receives funding from the Chicago Teachers Union and/or Service Employees International

Union Healthcare Illinois Indiana; 2)whether the organization is a member of the coalition's key

multi-member institutions: United Working Families, Grassroots Collaborative and the Chicago

Teachers Union Community Board  Institutional linkages are listed in Table 4.3 (along with

whether an organization is defined as a "core" or "other" member).

**Table 4.3:  Degree of participation and institutional connections of UWF coalition member organizations**

| Organization | UWF member? | GC Member? | CTU Comm. Board Member? | Funded by CTU or SEIUHCII? | Core Member |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| United Working Families | NA | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Grassroots Collaborative | No | NA | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Chicago Teachers Union | Yes | Yes | NA | NA | Yes |
| SEIU Healthcare Illinois Indiana | Yes | Yes | Yes | NA | Yes |
| Amalgamated Transit Union | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Cook County College Teachers Union | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Warehouse Workers Organizing Committee | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Arise Chicago | No | No | No | Yes | No |
| Communities United | No | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| Blocks Together | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Brighton Park | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Neighborhood Council | | | | | |
| Enlace Chicago | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Logan Square Neighborhood Association | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| ONE Northside | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Pilsen Alliance | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Southsiders Together Organizing for Power | No | No | No | Yes | No |
| Southwest Organizing Project | No | No | No | Yes | No |
| Grassroots Illinois Action | Yes | NA | No | No | Yes |
| People United for Action | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Action Now | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| American Friends Service Committee | No | Yes | No | No | No |
| Chicago Coalition for the Homeless | No | Yes | No | No | No |

## Ongoing expansion and development

Coalition members envision two main kinds of growth:  First, they envision an expanding popular base through grassroots organizing, described in Section 6 of this chapter.  Second, they hope to turn UWF into an independent political party, united around a political and social vision, and with the institutional power to discipline affiliated elected officials.

Informants mentioned efforts to develop a shared, coherent, vision which transcends the disparate demands of the "social movements that we all come out of."[421]  In Han's words,

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[421] Interview with Mathew Luskin, 3/10/17.

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"[a] political party should be a vehicle for imagining a different vision of society."[422]  Coalition

members observed that this process was already well underway, and that the UWF board

functioned as the site of ideological development, through regular and intensive conversations

about the coalition's core values and social vision.

UWF is implementing multiple strategies to increase its capacity to discipline candidates

and elected officials.  In the words of Amisha Patel, executive director of the Grassroots

Collaborative, coalition members have been asking, UWF is attempting to "build our own

infrastructure, separate from the candidates…[to] hold these people accountable."[423]  Their

efforts to recruit and train candidates from progressive and leftist movements and

organizations, rather than choosing from among existing candidates, is intended to give UWF

more control over the vision and agenda of electoral campaigns.  UWF's leadership

development programs, which cultivate a cadre with UWF's (increasingly coherent) ideology,

may also enhance UWF's ability to run ideological coherent campaigns.

Coalition members see multiple benefits of these party-building measures.  First, insofar

as UWF has a determinate agenda and ideology of its own, it could use campaigns to draw

voters to these positions, instead of running candidate-centric elections.  Each electoral

campaign would become an opportunity to recruit voters to the party's platform and ideas.

Second, coalition members believe that having a more established partisan brand would give

UWF more leverage over its candidates and elected officials, which in turn allows UWF to run

more ideologically disciplined electoral campaigns.  Finally, interviewees suggest that creating a

political pole of this sort could attract other progressive and leftist movements and

organizations who previously had not found an adequate electoral vehicle. As Luskin observes,

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[422] Interview with Alex Han, 3/17/17.
[423] Uetricht, 2015.

there needs to be "a political home for progressive movements that doesn't exist in either party." UWF's project is a matter of building that home or "building space for movement politics—politics to the left of the Democrats."[424]

In the 2015 and 2018 election cycles, UWF recruited and trained some of their own candidates.  In 2015, UWF held a "candidate training" program, and included "several dozen candidates" for City Council.[425]  UWF eventually choose candidates to endorse and support from these program participants.  In 2018, all 4 candidates endorsed by UWF had been active in groups associated with the coalition and/or received training from UWF's training and leadership development programs.

- Brandon Johnson was an organizer with the Chicago Teachers Union, active in mobilizations against school closings and other campaigns for education policy reform.  Johnson was also field director for a UWF-backed aldermanic candidate in 2015.

- Delia Ramirez was president of the board of directors of Logan Square Neighborhood Association (a neighborhood-based non-profit who is a member of the GC and CTU Community Board, and participates in the Coalition's issue campaigns).  Ramirez was recruited to run for State Rep by a former organizer at Grassroots Illinois Action.[426]

- In 2015, Aaron Ortiz participated in UWF's internship Program, in which UWF organizers train participants in basic organizing skills and electoral strategies and worked on a campaign.

More recently, UWF offers an annual Movement Leadership Camp, a weekend-long intensive political training program.  75 Chicago-area activists attended in 2018.  11 of these

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[424] Ibid.
[425] Uetricht, 2015.  The 40-hour training program included skills like canvassing, campaign management, media strategies (Interview with Emma Tai, 3/5/17).
[426] Tai and Patel, 2018.

attendees went on to participate in UWF's year-long training program, the Movement Leader

Fellowship. This program provided further education and placed participants on UWF's

electoral campaigns "with support from experienced UWF members and staff."[427] At least one

of Movement Leader Fellow is running for a city council seat in 2019.[428] UWF proactively

recruits "young people of color from the rank and file of our movements" to these programs.[429]

The CTU has also been training its delegates and rank-and-file members, and recruiting

parents, students, and community members to its training programs, since 2011. Since 2012,

the CTU has held an annual Summer Organizing Institute, with instruction in organizing, running

issue and electoral campaigns, and other political skills. The CTU also has programs to conduct

educate members of Local School Councils about policy issues and city and state politics, and

has held numerous workshops on voter registration, canvassing, and other skills.

As of the Spring of 2018, individuals involved with UWF continued to discuss exactly

what this political pole would look like and how to build it. In the words of one UWF board

member, "a lot of questions are getting posed that frankly none of us have any experience with.

When have we been this relevant?"[430] Another added, of the conversations about UWF's

development and trajectory, "one of my big takeaways from it is a realization of just how little

experience we have with this."[431] A third observed that Chicago has had "no left party, no labor

party, no social democratic party... we don't even have a language of what a party would look

like, or how to relate to it."[432]

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[427] Ibid.
[428] Rosana Rodriguez is running in the 33rd ward—this is discussed at greater length in Chapters 5 and 6.
[429] UWF Blog Post, 5/2018.
[430] Interview with Mathew Luskin, 3/17/17.
[431] Interview with Alex Han, 3/17/17.
[432] Interview with Marc Meinster, 3/17/17.

## The UWF coalition within a broader left milieu in Chicago

*The UWF Coalition's Relationship to Other Large Progressive and Radical Formations in Chicago*

The coalition has a loose relationships with other progressive and radical political formations in Chicago, including the Chicago chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America, Reclaim Chicago (a member-based political organization formed by personnel from Bernie Sanders' 2016 presidential campaign in Illinois), organizations associated with the Movement for Black Lives, and a network of elected officials and activists centered around presumptive State Senator Jesus "Chuy" Garcia.  The coalition does not have institutional connections with these formations, but has collaborated with them on particular campaigns and is exploring the possibility of deeper relationships.  The coalition also appears to have ideological and/or strategic disagreements with each of these formations.

**The Movement for Black Lives**

The Coalition has collaborated with groups and activists associated with the Movement for Black Lives, the upsurge in racial justice mobilizations since 2014, colloquially known as Black Lives Matter.  Nodes of the Coalition have participated in MBL-led actions and vice versa.  UWF and the CTU are actively trying to deepen these relationships.  There are both ideological commonalities and tensions between MBL activists and components of The Coalition.

Since 2015, these formations have supported each other's actions and collaborated on joint campaigns around immigration and the district attorney's election.  During contentious contract negotiations in the fall of 2016, Chicago's local Chapter of the Black Lives Matter Network pledged support for teachers in the event of a strike, and set up an alternative school to which picketing teachers could send their children.  BLM also supported the CTU in their one-

160

day strike in April of 2016.  As noted, Action Now (via Blackroots Network), as well as the CTU,

supported direct actions organized by Black Lives Matter and Black Youth Project 100 to protest

the city's coverup of Laquan Macdonald's shooting by police.  In 2014, the CTU sent busses of

members to join protests in Ferguson, Missouri over police violence and accountability.[433]

The CTU, UWF, and SEIU HCII have also collaborated with BLM (and other groups) on

work for immigrant rights and Muslim rights.  For example, UWF members led one section of a

protest against President Trump's executive order suspending travel and immigration from

certain Muslim-majority countries.   One UWF board member referenced a longer history of

collaboration on immigrant and Muslim rights issues.[434]  SEIU HCII, CTU, and the GC also worked

alongside Black Lives Matter and the Black Youth Project 100 in events supporting the Fight for

$15 campaign.  UWF and SEUI HCII worked with Black Youth Project 100, Assata's Daughters,

and other organizations to hold candidate fora and GOTV work in the 2016 elections.

The CTU and UWF have intentionally tried to build deeper relationships with

organizations and activists from the Movement for Black Lives.  The CTU intentionally included

activists affiliated with MBL in their organizer training programs in 2015 and 2016, and UWF

included activists from Black Youth Project 100 in their "movement leader school" in 2018.  A

desire to deepen ties with MBL may inform UWF's attempts to cultivate a cadre of activists

attentive to racial and economic justice, discussed in the next section.

There appear to be both ideological commonalities and tensions between the coalition

and MBL activists.  The Coalition, and the CTU in particular, has intentionally framed conflicts

over public investment in education and social services as matters of racial justice (as discussed

at greater length in the next section).  Their public statements routinely describe the

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[433] Moser, 2016.
[434] Interview with Alex Han, 3/17/17.

underfunding of public schools as "educational apartheid."  The Coalition also shares the MBL's

notion of a "school to prison pipeline," in which the lack of educational opportunities combined

with the deployment of criminal justice actors and carceral-style techniques in schools, push

students toward crime and ultimately incarceration.  An SEIU HCII staffer, and other

commentators, argue that MBL activists have been attracted to The Coalition by these

positions.[435]

There have also been tensions between these formations around criminal justice

rhetoric and policy.  The CTU and UWF support many of the same reform measures as MBL

activists, but do not support full abolition of the police and carceral institutions.  The CTU

leadership tends to use conciliatory rhetoric about the Chicago Police Department and police

officers.  The CTU and UWF do not endorse, but also avoid having to publicly repudiate, the

more radical proposals and antagonistic rhetoric of MBL activists.

Occasionally, events highlight this latent tension between The Coalition and MBL

activists.  At a CTU-led rally in April of 2016, a leader of the MBL-associated Assata's Daughters

said, during a speech, "[expletive] the police, [expletive] the CPD, and [expletive] anyone who

rolls with them."  The Chicago Police Department and Fraternal Order of Police called on the

CTU to repudiate the comments.  CTU President Karen Lewis made a twitter statement implicitly

disavowing the comments, but otherwise the CTU was silent about the issue.  The leader from

Assatta's Daughters, perhaps prompted by Lewis' disavowal, publicly questioned the

commitment of CTU, and organized labor more generally, to racial justice:

> The CTU keeps acting like they are on our side, but then Karen Lewis refuses to say cops
> need to get out of schools…I went [to the rally] knowing I would say exactly what I said,
> especially after seeing the ways labor has been so slow to support the [Black Lives Matter]

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[435] Interview with anonymous SEIU HCII staff member, 3/17/17.

movement and asks the cops to come to rallies and events. Until they come out explicitly opposed to cops in schools, I don't think we are fighting on the same side.[436]

This ideological disagreement between The Coalition and the Movement for Black Lives mirrors tensions within the CTU membership, as discussed in the following section.

**Reclaim Chicago**

As of 20178, the coalition was exploring how best to relate to a formation called Reclaim Chicago. Reclaim Chicago is the local political action committee of the People's Lobby, a national grassroots membership-based organization (with a structure similar to ACORN).[437] Reclaim Chicago also receives financial and personal backing from the labor union National Nurses United, and thus has a significant popular base.

UWF and Reclaim Chicago have overlapping, but sometimes conflicting, electoral agendas. In 2015, both supported Jesus Garcia for mayor and Kim Foxx for District Attorney, and both supported Will Guzzardi for state representative in 2014. However, they differed on another state representative race, with Reclaim Chicago backing Christian Mitchell over the UWF-backed Jay Travis. The two formations do have common allies among elected officials, including UWF's closest ally in Chicago's city council and the Illinois state legislature, respectively, Alderman Carlos Rarmirez-Rosa and Representative Guzzardi.

Two interviewees associated with UWF suggested the formations have an underlying ideological difference. They observed that Reclaim is informed by Alinskyite notion in which substantive issues are subordinate to the primary goal of winning popular power. Both interviewees suggested that Reclaim's willingness to back Christian Mitchell over Jay Travis,

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[436] Moore, 2016.
[437] Interview with Mathew Luskin and Marc Meinster, 3/17/17.

despite the former's significantly less progressive policy agenda, reflected this insufficient attention to issues.

*The Coalition's Extended Network*

Individual members of the Coalition have their own networks of allies and collaborators, many of whom are not otherwise affiliated with the Coalition.  The CTU, SEIU HCII and Action Now have deep relationships with a large number of organizations and activists.  Many of the neighborhood-based non-profits associated with the coalition have networks of allies among organizations and political officials in the neighborhood.  Through these networks, the coalition has indirect connections to dozens, if not hundreds, of additional political groups and actors in Chicago, including single-issue advocacy groups, organizations of parents of public school students, racial justice groups, and many others.

**Individual Groups' Relationships to Racial Justice Organizations**

Action Now is part of a coalition called the Black Roots Alliance (BRA), with two racial justice organizations, Southsiders Organized for Unity and Liberation, and the Workers Center for Racial Justice.  The BRA is explicitly dedicated to representing Chicago's African American population.  It frames its goals and campaigns (which include police accountability, full employment, increased investment in public schools, and single-payer health care) as part of a project of black liberation and racial justice.  BRA conducts grassroots organizing in Chicago's black neighborhoods (most often in the context of election campaigns), and lobbies at the local and state level.

BRA's network extends among Chicago's newer and progressive racial justice groups, particularly those associated with the Movement for Black Lives.  In direct actions, particularly

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on issues of police violence and accountability, and in a voter engagement campaign for the

2016 district attorney's election, BRA worked alongside Black Lives Matter, Black Youth Project

100, and others.

BRA collaborates enthusiastically with the coalition on some of its more explicitly race-

conscious campaigns. They backed UWF-trained and -endorsed candidate for Cook County

Commissioner, Brandon Johnson in 2018. They did not take positions on the other UWF

candidates in 2018. Action Now, on the other hand, backed all of UWF's candidates in 2018,

while continuing to help steer UWF.

The CTU and SEIU HCII also maintain some relationship with other racial justice

organizations. I have found several examples in which CTU or SEIU HCII officials often speak at

events held by racial justice organizations, such as conferences, conventions, and direct actions.

In one recent example, CTU Recording Secretary Michael Brunson spoke on behalf of the CTU at

a weekend conference hosted by the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, a

racial justice group based on the South Side, dating back to the 1960s.[438]

**The CTU's Relationships with Educational Advocacy Groups**

The CTU works closely with a range of groups focused on education policy. The CTU

intentionally cultivated these groups as allies in struggles over city and state education policy,

particularly on issues of funding (and the related questions of curricula, facilities, and social

services), school closures, and standardized testing.[439]  For example, on standardized testing,

the CTU joined the "More Than a Score Coalition" with two organizations of public school

parents, Parents 4 Teachers and Parents United for Responsible Education, and the grassroots

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[438] Salas, 2018: "Survivors of police torture share stage with Angela Davis"
[439] Bradbury et al, 2014; Nunes et al, 2015; Bruno and Ashby, 2017.

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group Raise Your Hand.[440]  The CTU also works with associations of professional educators,

including Teachers for Social Justice.

**The Coalition's Relationships with Public Sector Unions**

In electoral campaigns, the UWF coalition usually works with a set of other labor unions. Looking at the coalition's campaign contributions, the candidates it supports were usually also supported by SEIU HCII's and CTU's respective state-level affiliates, SEIU Illinois Council and the Illinois Federation of Teachers.  The UWF Coalition's candidates are also supported by the state-level and local AFSCME councils, and to a lesser extent by the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150 and the Chicago Federation of Labor.

The CTU also works closely with the city and state public sector unions on contract disputes and pension reform policy, and with other teachers unions on state educational policy.[441]  The CTU conducts joint lobbying efforts with AFSCME Council 31, the largest main state-wide public employees union, to combat efforts at pension reform.  They have also backed the city's police and firefighters, and Chicago Transit Authority workers in their contract negotiations.

**Geographically-Based Groups' Local Alliances**

The neighborhood-based groups affiliated with the Coalition have geographically-based alliances with other actors in the neighborhood.  It appears that these alliances are most often issue-specific alliances, dedicated to one of the salient concerns in the neighborhood.  In some cases, these alliances bring the neighborhood-based organization into a relationship with a local

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[440] E.g., state lobbying on rules for special education class size, CTU worked with disability advocacy groups, including Access Living, Equip for Equality, as well as Illinois Education Association and Illinois Federation of Teachers.
[441] The coalition's labor allies are AFSCME Council 31, the main state-wide public employees union, and Amalgamated Transit Union.

alderman whom the Coalition does not support, creating a potentially conflicting set of loyalties.

Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA), Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, and

Communities United each have multiple local alliances of this sort. Communities United has

entered into a particularly close working relationship with Ald. Deborah Mell (of the 33rd ward),

a close ally of Emanuel.

**Other Infrequent and Issue-Specific Collaborations**

UWF, the Grassroots Collaborative, the CTU, and SEIU HCII are working with an array of

other progressive groups on two grassroots lobbying campaigns at the state level, the Illinois

People's Agenda (a comprehensive legislative agenda encompassing many of the policies listed

in the next section of this chapter on the coalition's agenda) and Tuition Free Illinois (a campaign

to make public universities free for Illinois residents). Both campaigns includes several of the

individual groups involved in the Grassroots Collaborative and the CTU community board, and

many groups otherwise unaffiliated with The Coalition. For example, the People's Agenda is

backed by a coalition called Fair Economy Illinois, which includes GC member organizations ONE

Northside and Jane Addams Senior Caucus, and two state-wide groups unaffiliated with UWF,

GC, CTU, or SEIU HCII.

## 3. Ideology and agenda

This section presents an analysis of the coalition's ideology, based on a qualitative

discourse analysis. I analyzed texts including: public statements by leading coalition staff and

electoral candidates, to media outlets, at public events, and at private coalition events (which I

attended, or for which I obtained transcripts); official documents, including official platforms,

mission statements, and annual reports of coalition organizations; published documents, such as

press releases, published studies, policy advocacy documents in-depth interviews with high-level staff or officers of coalition organizations. In sum, I performed in-depth discourse analysis of 20 documents, written or spoken by coalition actors.[442]

I found a series of ideas which organized the coalition's social and political vision. These ideas were very consistent across the coalition, and especially across the most powerful institutions of the coalition (UWF, the CTU, SEIU HCII, and Grassroots Collaborative); they were consistent over time, and across different types of text and venue (such as public statements of candidates, speeches of coalition officers to internal audiences, and research and policy briefs). In brief, the coalition has three master ideas, which organize most of its discourse:

- Large numbers of Chicagoans, and disproportionately racial minorities, are afflicted by poverty, defined as multi-fold deprivation, and associated psychological and material effects.

- Society's resources are distributed unjustly, allocated to "economic elites" instead of to lower-income and working-class people, causing this poverty. This misallocation of resources is sustained by the political dominance of the affluent and can be corrected by a political movement by the lower classes.

- The coalition articulates an alternative vision focused primarily on expanded provision of public goods and social services through, funded by progressive taxation, public employment, and public support for unionization.

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[442] Scholars place many caveats on interpreting public discourse. Public statements of political actors are assumed to be strategic communications, designed to achieve objectives with certain audiences, and thus cannot be taken as a reliable indication of actors' actual beliefs. This problem is not relevant here, given my interest in the coalition's political positions. The publicly articulated positions themselves are what I am trying to document, not actors' "actual" beliefs. I selected texts so as to maximize the likelihood to find different discourses. I chose texts that were produced in different conditions, by different types of actors, for different audiences—all factors found in past political discourse analyses to shape the content of texts. For example, I included texts created by teams of researchers, intended for an audience of policymakers, and texts created by coalition leaders, intended for a mass audience. Given this method of text selection, I can more confidently interpret findings as representing the range of ideas within the coalition. I could also more confidently interpret the aforementioned finding of consistency across the coalition as not an artifact of my text selection.

I also found one slightly less consistent theme:  The coalition is committed to
democratic participation by members of the lower classes, particularly those in marginalized
races, both within the coalition itself, and in government.  They call for measures to foster this
participation within the Coalition, and for public policies to expand the enhance democratic
participation.

## 1.  The Condition of the Working and Lower Classes

One of the coalition's most important discourses is an elaborate description of the
levels, forms, and effects of poverty in Chicago.  Coalition actors describe in great detail the
many forms of material deprivation experienced by poor Chicagoans, and of the effects of this
deprivation on cognitive and emotional development, and on opportunities for professional and
educational attainment.  In one important instance of this discourse, coalition members argue
that such poverty is the root of Chicago's high rates of violent crime.  This discourse is important
for the high proportion of coalition texts which include it, and because it often functions as a
justification for the coalition's demands and proposals, and as the source of the coalition's
moral urgency.

*The Incidence and Form of Poverty*

Coalition actors recount in detail the level and forms of deprivation in Chicago.  They
describe poverty as entailing multiple forms of deprivation—a lack of basic necessities, including
stable, secure, and adequate housing; adequate and nutritious food; and physical and mental
health care; and relatedly, a diminished ability to obtain employment sufficient to cover the cost
of living.  In a typical statement, a CTU report describes poverty as a condition entailing

"multiple or late-night jobs, cramped and unhealthy housing, lack of heat, and insufficient

food."[443]  A spokesperson for the CTU described poverty similarly in a public statement in 2017:

> These students come from some of the most disinvested neighborhoods on Chicago's West
> and South Sides where communities have long suffered…high levels of poverty,
> unemployment, lack of affordable housing and community violence. For families and
> children within these communities, access to basic resources like healthy food options and
> trauma centers is limited.[444]

Coalition texts also frequently observe that poverty entails residence in communities

which lack adequate educational, medical, and other services and resources.  UWF texts often

refer to the inadequate educational and health care facilities in low-income communities.

Actors working on health care issues, including the CTU, community-based non-profits such as

KOCO, recite examples of poorly resourced schools, such as the lack of important curricula

(including arts programming, foreign languages, sports, and recess), staff (such as counselors,

nurses, librarians, and special education staff), basic facilities (heating and air conditioning), and

resources (such as computers).  They also point to large class sizes, and dilapidated and rodent-

infested classrooms.[445]

References to the high rates of these forms of deprivation pervade coalition texts.  The

Chicago Teachers Union frequently refers to poverty rate among CPS students (77.8% in 2018),

the number of homeless students (about 15,000 in 2012),[446] the number of students exposed to

violent crime in their neighborhoods,[447] the high proportion of black and Latino students who go

to schools with at least 90% poverty rates, and other similar metrics.  Speeches by UWF officials

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[443] CTU, A Just Chicago (2012):  12.
[444] Rodriguez, 2017:  1.
[445] CTU, A Tale of Two Chicagos (2015)
[446] CTU Press Release, 3/10/12.
[447] Lewis, 2017.

and candidates frequently reference "massive unemployment...endemic in black communities," high rates of housing insecurity, and other forms of deprivation.[448]

*Effects of Poverty*

Coalition members also have an elaborate account of the effects of poverty on health, human development, and educational and professional attainment.  In one important variant of this discourse, coalition actors argue that poverty is the root cause of high rates of violent crime, and that alleviating poverty (as well as other forms of racial oppression and discrimination) is the only way to effectively reduce violence.

Coalition members argue that the experiences of deprivation, exposure to problems related to poverty, and associated stresses and traumas, adversely affect personal development. The CTU often references published studies on the effects of poverty (and associated experiences) on cognitive and emotional development.[449]  A typical statement, from 2017, referenced data "that childhood experiences of abuse, neglect, family dysfunction, experiences of poverty, housing instability, extreme discrimination and community violence all had the capacity to impair development on the brain and body."[450]

Coalition members argue that poverty also interferes with educational and professional development, either via the aforementioned effects on cognitive and emotional development, or by creating material impediments.  A 2015 CTU report details the "intimate connection of health, housing, jobs, segregation, and funding to education," citing data that exposure to trauma, malnourishment, housing instability, parental unemployment can undermine

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[448] Speech by Emma Tai at 2017 UWF Convention.
[449] E.g., the CTU's Quest Center (their in-house research organization) publishes studies and references many others in their website. https://www.ctunet.com/quest-center/research/topical-bibliographies/impact-of-poverty-on-education
[450] Rodriguez, 2017:  1.

education, through a variety of mechanisms.[451]  More colloquial expressions of the same point—

for instance that "children cannot come to school ready to learn until their basic needs have

been met"—pervade coalition discussions of education.[452]

This connection between poverty (and its impacts on health) and human development

frames many coalition policy proposals.  Anti-poverty measures are simultaneously

interventions to improve health and educational outcomes.  For example, a 2015 CTU document

argues that, to most effectively improve education outcomes, "Chicago should take concrete

steps to address serious inequities in access to good-paying jobs, housing, and health care, as

well as inequitable arrest and incarceration rates."[453]  The CTU also frames the neoliberal

regime's decisions to cut counseling services and nursing from schools in low-income

neighborhoods in terms of this connection between poverty, mental health, and education:  the

removal of counseling and mental health resources is especially egregious given the extremely

high need for such services in high poverty neighborhoods.

The coalition argues that poverty, and its associated traumas, cause Chicago's most

pressing issue—the high rates of violent crime in lower-income neighborhoods.[454]  Some

coalition texts explicate the connection between poverty and violence, arguing that a

desperation for resources drives property crime, that a lack of educational and employment

opportunities make youth gangs attractive, or that the aforementioned effects of trauma (and

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[451] Chicago Teachers Union, 2015.

[452] The example taken from a sign of a CTU member at a demonstration; posted on CTU's website.  These points resembles an element of the "culture of poverty" argument, in asserting effects of poverty on individual and collective development and behavior.  However, coalition members do not seem to accept the notion that behavioral and cultural effects would persist independently of changes in material circumstances, and do not see behavior and culture as the proper sites of intervention.  Rather, the argument is that crime and violence need to be seen as inseparable from poverty:  the divestment and exploitation which create poverty also create crime and violence.  And only by addressing poverty, and the divestment and exploitation in which it is rooted, can the city address crime and violence.

[453] CTU A Just Chicago

[454] As noted in Chapter 3, Chicago has had extraordinarily high rates of violent crime since 2014, highly concentrated in the predominantly black and Latinx neighborhoods on the city's South and West Sides.  Coalition members consistently trace the violence to the aforementioned conditions in the neighborhoods (in addition to other forms of racial and class oppression, reviewed below).

particularly the effects of exposure to violence) make violent behavior more likely.  In a typical

example of the latter, CTU President Karen Lewis writes: "Every shooting of a child brings confusion,

sorrow and fear for their classmates. Left untreated, these emotions cast a dark cloud, affecting young

people's ability to learn and focus — and, in the worst scenarios, leading them down the path to

violence."  Most often, coalition members assert in more general terms that the conditions of

poverty reproduce violent crime, and that effectively addressing violent crime requires

alleviating poverty.  In these arguments, the coalition attempts to define the choice as between

thoroughgoing social reinvestment on one hand and continued violent crime and a massive

criminal punishment system on the other.

The belief that poverty causes violent crime is also expressed in the concept of the

"school to prison pipeline," invoked almost every time UWF or the CTU discusses education

policy.  In this, a society which does not address the multi-fold problems of students merely

transmits them from criminogenic social environments to lives of crime, and in many cases the

criminal punishment (aka criminal justice) system.  This transmission is accelerated by harshly

punitive forms of discipline and behavioral control at schools.

*Inequality*

In other moments, coalition texts' emphasis shifts from the absolute harms of poverty, to

inequalities between lower- and upper-classes.  Most often, discussions of inequality refer to

the unequal opportunity for educational and professional advancement, following from

resource disparities in all aspects of life.  In a typical example, the CTU writes,

> Education in the U.S. is subject to huge disparities in opportunity (the "opportunity gap"):
> some groups of students have incredible experiences while a much larger group is subject
> to extremely limited in-school and life experiences. These educational opportunities are
> directly linked to students' socioeconomic status, and what happens outside schools is
> more influential than what happens inside.[455]

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[455] CTU, 2015:  7.

## 2. Class Conflict Over the Distribution of Resources Via State and Local Policy

In a second consistent and important discourse, coalition actors describe politics and policy through a master narrative about political conflict between low-income and working-class people and "economic elites" (larger corporations, investors, and affluent people). This narrative has the following elements:

- State and local governments enact public policies which allocate society's resources away from low-income and working-class communities and people, toward economic elites. These policies include cuts to public services and resources, regressive revenue policies, and tax-breaks, subsidies, and other "giveaways" to economic elites.

- This pattern of public policies is produced by the political power of economic elites, sustained through campaign finance, personal relationships with politicians, and more corrupt dealings.

Some texts connect this narrative to the aforementioned narrative about poverty by implicitly or explicitly arguing that the elites' regressive policy agenda causes or exacerbates poverty, or that the coalition's redistributive agenda is necessary to address poverty.[456] Coalition members articulate the same class conflict in the context of workplace relations, but this articulation is significantly less prominent than their narrative about distribution of resources through revenue and social policy.

*The Current Regressive Polices*

The narrative of class conflict over resources pervades the public statements of coalition actors, including key organizations like the UWF and the CTU, and most individual politicians.

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[456] Other commentators also see allocation of resources via public policy is the center of the coalition's project. Local journalist Micah Uetricht calls the conflict over neoliberal austerity policies "the heart of the CTU's organizing in recent years" (Patel and Uetricht, 2016). See also Bradbury et al, 2014.

Statements typically juxtapose policies which allocate resources to economic elites with policies cutting services needed by lower classes. They also reference the agency of economic elites in causing these policy outcomes. The following comments from CTU's A Just Chicago and UWF's Official Platform exemplify this structure:

- "For decades the wealthy and their corporations have used their political influence to slash their tax obligations and drain profit from public programs and assets, then call for us to 'live within our means.'"[457]

- "…city leaders continue to privilege a small select group, while ignoring community voice and needs. The results are aggressive downsizing of city assets and services, major giveaways to connected bankers and corporate leaders, and implementation of destructive school policies."[458]

Many other coalition texts have a very similar narrative.[459]

Coalition candidates voice the same narrative. The coalition-backed candidate in the 2015 election, Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, exemplified this when asked how he would finance an expansion of public services: "It's a question of priorities…I will stop the use of taxpayer dollars to fund the cronies and connected, the wealthy individuals and we will redivert that money to the neighborhoods."[460]

When coalition actors speak on specific issues related to revenue and public services, they most often construct those issues in terms of this narrative. Coalition actors usually construct the city's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program—one of the most frequent subjects

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[457] UWF Platform: 6.
[458] CTU, 2015.
[459] See, for instance, a 2016 interview with Amish Patel, executive director of Grassroots Collaborative: "it's a constant fight to get money back from corporate hands that don't need that money and to make sure that that money does go back into the neighborhoods across the city." Patel and Uetricht, 2016.
[460] Chicago Mayoral Debate Forum March 25, 2015, Chicago State University, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rd7kl7Kbthk

in coalition direct actions, lobbying, and electoral campaigns—as a vehicle through which "[b]ig

business is taking resources away from schools and working families."[461]  Coalition direct actions

targeted particularly egregious instances of receipt of TIF funds by wealthy developers,

businesses, and institutions.  For example, protests targeted the billionaire Penny Prtizker after

she received TIF funds for a new hotel in The Loop.  Protests also targeted owners of a new

luxury car dealership, Bank of America, United Airlines, and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange,

who received $6 million in TIF funds to renovate their bathrooms, in the infamous case of the

"golden toilet."

Coalition actors construct policies related to public employment in terms of this same

class conflict over the distribution of resources.  They criticize city decisions to privatize public

services as increasing the profits of economic elites at the expense of public workers.  Similarly,

they construct the shrinkage of the public sector as keeping economic elites' tax burden low, at

the expense of public workers.  For example, Executive Director of the Grassroots Collaborative,

Amisha Patel describes a private educational service contractor thusly:  "[t]he contractor was

trying to make as much money as possible off of schools, and it did that by not paying workers,

not giving them the equipment they needed, and not having enough workers to do the work."[462]

The replacement of public schools with privately-operated charter schools; use of private

contractors to provide public services; and cuts to the workforce of public schools, the transit

authority, and the parks department, have all been described in these terms.

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[461] Tax Increment Financing program is explained in detail in Chapter 2. Apparent in series of protests, public statements about particular allocations of TIF funds to firms or projects, such as the funds given to billionaire Penny Pritzker for the construction of a new luxury hotel in the Central Business District, to DePaul University for the construction of a new basketball arena, and most infamously to the Chicago Mercantile Exchange to renovate their bathrooms, in the case of the "golden toilet."
[462] Patel and Uetricht, 2016.

*Political Dominance by Economic Elites*

State and local governments enact these regressive policies because the political system is "dominated by the wealthy and their corporations."[463] Texts frequently allege "crony capitalism" (i.e., government decisions which reward well-connected private firms or actors), driven by the influence of money in the electoral process, personal ties between policymakers and elites, or more blatant forms of bribery.

The aforementioned revenue, privatization, and subsidy policies are often described in these terms. Amish Patel, Executive Director of the Grassroots Collaborative, suggests that cronyism undergirds the city's privatization policies, describing charter schools as CPS' attempts to "move [the money] to the private sector, move it to their banking buddies."[464] Similarly, Brandon Johnson, a prominent voice in the CTU, and successful UWF-backed candidate for Cook County Commissioner, publicly describes Emanuel's opposition to progressive taxes as reluctance to "actually tax his friends."[465]

Even when not alleging malfeasance, coalition texts depict undue political influence of economic elites. Many texts decry influence through financial means, for example referencing "the explosion in political spending by just a handful of ultra-rich individuals" or "huge sums of lobbying and campaign cash directed at Congress by hedge funds and private equity firms."[466]

Other texts describe cultural biases of policymakers. For example, when asked to elaborate on politicians' relationship with economic elites, Patel argued that the two groups share an upper-class cultural and social background, and thus biases toward certain kinds of

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[463] UWF Platform.

[464] Patel and Uetricht, 2016.

[465] Brandon Johnson, on the radio show What's Left with Brandon Johnson, on WVON 1690AM Talk of Chicago radio. Segment originally aired May 13, 2017 at 11:00 AM.

[466] First quotation from Tai, 2018; second from CTU Blog, 3/18/2016. https://www.ctulocal1.org/posts/ctu-supported-progressive-revenue-legislation/. Accessed 9/24/16.

policies.  This, Patel suggested, helps explain city policies, such as the refusal of Mayor Emanuel

and Board of Education president David Vitale to pressure Bank of America to renegotiate

financial agreements harmful to the city: "There's also the fact that the decision-makers are of

the world of the folks who are profiting off of those decisions. So when you have an appointed

board of education appointed by a mayor who is a former investment banker himself, whose

side do you expect [them] to be on?"[467]

*Connecting Class Conflict Over Policy with Poverty*

Coalition actors link this conflict over policy to poverty (the multifold deprivation and its

consequences for people and neighborhoods described above).  Many texts argue or imply that

the current policies exacerbate or cause the current levels of poverty—and especially the city's

violent crime problem—and that the coalition's redistributive agenda is required to fix it.

Brandon Johnson, at the time a Chicago Teachers Union organizer and radio host (and now the

Democratic nominee for Cook County Commissioner), exemplified the coalition's linkage of

these issues, in a pair of comments in his radio program:

> "what is most troubling about the financial state of Illinois, is that we are the 5th largest
> economy in the United States, one of the wealthiest places in the world is right here in Illinois,
> and somehow the wealth and the resources and the people that need it are not getting it,
> they're being ignored…We're seeing it play out in the streets of Chicago, with the
> overwhelming levels of violence…Here in Chicago you don't see that kind of boldness.  You
> have a city that's bleeding…schools, the violence, we're talking 30 % unemployment in black
> Chicago, we're talking Great Depression level numbers.  Absent something bold and
> substantial, you're not going to be able to fix it."[468]

As local commentator Lee Sustar writes, the coalition's agenda can be read as an

"alternative vision of handling the city's violence problem."[469]  CTU President, Karen Lewis,

presented a similar view in a 2017 Op-Ed: "We must eradicate the conditions that create

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[467] Patel and Uetricht, 2016.
[468] Both quotations from Brandon Johnson, on the radio show What's Left with Brandon Johnson, on WVON 1690AM Talk of Chicago
radio.  Segment originally aired May 13, 2017 at 11:00 AM.
[469] Sustar, 2016.

violence. That means policy change and resources: fully funded schools and thousands of new jobs that pay a fair wage."[470]

## 3. Alternative Vision: Political Mobilization and Economic Redistribution

The coalition's alternative vision and agenda is also constructed in terms of this class conflict, the trade-off between elites' profits and wealth and the needs of lower-income and working-classes. The coalition's agenda is presented as the inverse of the economic elites': it would allocate resources away from the wealthy, toward the working- and lower-classes, in the forms of progressive revenue policies and greatly enhanced public services. Implementing this policy vision requires the lower- and working classes building political power through organizing and formation of an independent political party.

Statements of this redistributive policy vision pervade coalition texts. For example, the UWF Official Platform pledges to "call for public services that meet real human and social needs. We will demand that our economy and tax system must be reorganized to meet those needs."[471] Elsewhere it advocates "a tax system that redistributes wealth, challenges those profiting from human suffering, works against growing income inequality and expands democratic voice on the economy."[472] More generally, coalition actors regularly talk about greater investment in public schools, in the provision of health and child care in neighborhoods, in affordable housing, and in employment programs in these terms.[473]

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[470] Lewis, 2017.
[471] UWF Platform: 6-7.
[472] UWF Platform.
[473] For example, the UWF Platform continues: "Privatization takes from communities that are hurting the most…We not only must stop cuts to vital programs, but fight for dramatic expansions of services like mental health, childcare, and other programs necessary to meet pressing and growing needs." Or Brandon Johnson's radio program, What's Left: "Those places where there is a strong taxing base…Even if they complain—the fact that their schools are funded…the fact that they have librarians and libraries, the fact that there's actually low unemployment or 'help wanted' signs"

One frequently stated coalition policy goal is a large expansion of public employment. The WUF Platform affirmed that "[w]e believe that our communities deserve and need full employment – and that the public sector needs to be an engine for creating the jobs necessary to rebuild communities that have been devastated by decades of neoliberal experiments in austerity."  A largescale public employment program was also on UWF's list of "strategic priorities" in 2017.

Although less frequently than expanded public provision of jobs and services, the coalition also advocates laws and policies to bolster labor rights and benefits.  They call for a $15 minimum wage, a right to unionize, and legislation requiring paid sick and family leave.  They also advocate the preservation of public workers' pensions.

## Constructing an Antagonism

Finally, it should be noted that, in these discourses, the coalition constructs a political subject, defined by class and race, and its nemesis, "economic elites."   When they speak directly about identity, coalition members tend not rigidly specify boundaries:  Notwithstanding ubiquitous mentions of "working-class people, and especially working-class people of color" or "working-class and lower-income people," it is not clear exactly who can belong.  For example, the collective subject can include small business and property owners.

The coalition tends to define the out-group more concretely.  Patel, for example, argues "[w]e have to actually name the people who are causing this crisis and go after them...the administration, the banks, the wealthy, and large corporations."[474]  A CTU document, for

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[474] Patel and Uetricht, 2016.

example refers to "the affluent" and "those on the other end of the economic scale."[475] More general references to "elites," "the 1%," or "big business" are ubiquitous.

Coalition actors often supplement this narrative of class conflict with affirmations of public employees' dedication, and particularly their dedication to serving populations who rely on public services.  In the process, the coalition supplants the narrative of conflict between taxpayers and public employees, arguing that "[f]or both groups, the real enemy is the 1%."[476]

## 4. Views on Racial Justice

*Leaders' understandings of racial justice*

Using interview data and analysis of leaders' public statements and other texts, I attempted to reconstruct coalition leaders' understandings of the relationship between race and class, at the levels of social analysis and political strategy.  All support a program of economic redistribution along class lines, recognizing that this would benefit racial minorities.  All support additional measures to combat racial discrimination.  And all see Chicago's large working- and lower-class Black and Latinx populations as essential constituencies for the left.  But beyond this consensus, there appeared to be two tendencies:

- The first sees the program of economic redistribution, supplemented with anti-discrimination measures as sufficient to achieve racial justice.  Proponents of this tendency see racial subjugation as functioning primarily to concentrate racial minorities in lower classes—an economic effect best redressed through economic programs.  Proponents of this tendency recognize that poor and working-class Black and Latinx populations understand the world through a framework emphasizing racial injustice as such.

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[475] CTU, 2012.
[476] Bradbury et al, 2014.

Proponents of this tendency thus see a critical political work as articulating a class justice program within widely resonant discourses on race.

- The second tendency sees an additional set of race-conscious programs and practices as necessary to achieve real emancipation. These programs and practices could be defined as self-determination for racial minorities. These include policies of democratic control of schools and other institutions and political leadership of racial minority populations within the UWF coalition. Some members seemed to suggest that the coalition must articulate its project within a racial justice framework not simply for political expediency, but so as to realize the goal of self-determination of historically oppressed racial minorities. Underpinning these views seems to be the view that a subjective dimension of politics is intrinsically important. Most proponents of this tendency recognize the challenges of building a racial justice movement which pursues economic redistribution as well as self-determination, given the historical development of racial justice ideologies.

It should be noted that the vast majority of coalition texts speak about race and class in a way that is compatible with both tendencies. These texts simply to refer to both class and racial groups when discussing the coalition's agenda, identity, and analysis. For example, almost every coalition text about the regime's policies notes the harms to both lower classes and to racial minorities. Texts reference the economic dimension of neoliberal policies and social problems, then note that they hit lower-class racial minorities especially hard. In a typical example, the UWF Platform observes that "[a]ttacks on public resources through austerity, defunding and privatization...reduce the influence *of working people, especially people of color*,

over social decisions."[477]  The CTU's *Schools Chicago Students Deserve* similarly argues that

neoliberal school reforms put "disproportionate harm on students of color."

**Class justice as racial justice**

Some coalition leaders seem to see economic redistribution along class lines as the one

indispensable core of any social justice project.  They do not have an elaborate racial justice

vision beyond this class justice vision (though they do support anti-discrimination measures,

such as eliminating discriminatory policing practices).

This perspective on the relationship of race and class was articulated by Carl Rosen,

president of United Electrical Workers, Western Region (which is affiliated with United Working

Families).  Asked about the coalition's agenda for predominantly Black neighborhoods on the

West Side, Rosen outlined by a class-focused social analysis and a program of economic

investment:

> The problem is capitalism.  That's the fundamental problem, because these are the
> communities that are providing the reserve army of the unemployed, basically.  They're
> concentrated.  The solution that could exist, theoretically, within the current framework
> is basically a Marshall plan for those neighborhoods, where you bring in tremendous
> resources, including a jobs program...but you're also having to accept that you've got a
> whole generation or two generations who have been deprived of education and due to
> poverty have been deprived of their brains developing properly...[478]

Rosen first states that the key factor determining the conditions of this population was capitalist

relations—the population's function within capitalism as a "reserve army of labor."  Though he

didn't specify, this statement can be interpreted as implying that the salient effects of racial

subjugation were positioning Blacks within the class structure.  Rosen suggests that the salient

effects of this positioning were poverty and access to education (with second order effects on

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[477] UWF Platform:  6.
[478] Interview with Carl Rosen, 3/15/17.

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cognitive development).  And this situation can be redressed by a massive public investment, including community development and a jobs program.

Former CTU organizer and UWF Political Director Jason Lee, and other UWF staff who requested anonymity made similar arguments.  They recognize that race has been a central determining structure within the political economy.  They understand racial segregation, discrimination, other forms of racialized oppression and exclusion primarily in economic terms as confining large shares of minority populations to lower positions in the class structure, such that they were subjected to intense deprivation, exploitation, and expropriation.  An economic justice program, which addresses capitalist exploitation and deprivation in general, will address the interests of racial minorities confined to the lower classes by racial subjugation.

**Racial justice as class justice and self-determination**

A second tendency advocates a racial justice agenda extending beyond economic justice.  This agenda includes policy positions, such as democratic control of schools and other institutions, and particular modes of political practice, such as leadership by members of oppressed groups.  Most of this agenda appears to focus on political self-determination.

This vision was articulated by Mathew Luskin's (CTU organizer and CTU representative on the UWF board) comments on the coalition's education agenda.  Of course, Luskin recognized a class dimension, stating that the coalition must lead "the struggle around revenue and the private sector and wealthy have to be the ultimate targets on that."  But he went on to explain that he also embraced a program for democratic control of education, including an elected (as opposed to mayor-appointed) school board.  Luskin mentions that he was convinced that the latter issue was an important part of a racial justice project:

> I used to be skeptical about the elected school board campaign, I thought it was a
> distraction—we have an elected city council, what difference does that make?  I thought

> it was organizations picking the wrong issue.  But I did agree that the union had to build a program around anti-racism in education…It's really hard to overstate the extent to which democratic demands and confrontation of racism are deeply intertwined.  I really underestimated the degree to which an elected school board spoke on a very visceral level to that…There's a chance that an elected school board could make space for some really bad [expletive].

Luksin does not justify the position in terms of desirable policy outcomes (indeed acknowledging the possibility of unintended negative consequences), nor does he cite a strategic imperative to placate allies.  Rather, he sees democratic control as an important part of a racial justice project.  Moreover, the importance of democratic control appears to exist on a subjective plane: "democratic demands" resonate with people's need to confront racism "on a very visceral level."  Luskin seems to imply here that democratic self-assertion and empowerment are a necessary part of overcoming the particular forms of subjugation experienced by racial minorities.

SEIU organizer and UWF board member Alex Han described the political self-determination of racial minorities within the UWF coalition and movement in similar terms.  In a discussion about the coalition's relationship to Black populations of South and West Side neighborhoods, Han argued that the coalition must make space for activists with a Black Nationalist perspective.  Firstly, Han dismisses the notion of converting such activists to a different view of the world:

> If you come out of an experience where Black Nationalism is both a way to develop an analysis of the world—and it makes sense, it makes as much sense to me as [expletive] anything in the world—and that you've seen the way to take political power is this outgrowth from the civil rights movement into the Panthers, and into the Washingtonian kind of politics, then why would you let [anyone] who has a different understanding of the issue convince you otherwise?

For Han, such a conversion is not merely infeasible.  Rather, he seems to suggest that, for historically oppressed populations, determining their own political praxis is an indispensable part of emancipation:  It's important to recognize that they can articulate their own vision, and

to make space for that.  We can try to build something like a Black Nationalist socialism, a

socialist liberation movement…that would allow them to lead the struggle, to lead their fight in

a way that is authentic.

In these comments, Han seems to depict a form of self-determination, in which

historically oppressed populations construct their own emancipatory praxis.  While Han does

not specify why this is important, he may, like Luskin, valorize a form of subjective political

autonomy as a key aspect of freedom.

*Articulating class justice within racial discourses*

Proponents of both understandings of racial justice recognize the strategic necessity of

articulating a class program in widely resonant racial justice discourses, which stress themes

such as racial identity, empowerment, and unity.  I will recount three strategies through which

the coalition attempts to develop a class focused racial justice politics.

First, many coalition texts and speakers present the coalition's economic programs as a

racial justice project.  Most simply, texts recount the respective impacts of neoliberal and left

programs on racial minorities.  For example, the UWF Platform observes that "[w]hen public

jobs are lost, our neighborhoods and communities as a whole suffer the

consequences…particularly…black and brown communities."[479]   Criticism of 2013 wave of

school closings invariably mentioned the impacts on Black and Latinx populations.[480]

Some coalition leaders are especially proactive in constructing class programs in racial

justice discourses.  Bradbury et al (2014) describes the concerted efforts by Black leaders of the

CTU to diffuse CORE's racial justice framing of education issues via Black media outlets and

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[479] UWF Platform:  6.
[480] CTU, 2012.

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organizational networks in Black communities.[481]  This was certainly a consistent theme in the

radio show of former teacher and CTU organizer, and current Cook County Commissioner,

Brandon Johnson, on the historically Black radio station WVON.  Johnson's show, What's Left,

which was funded by the Chicago Teachers Union foundation, discussed social problems facing

African-Americans in Chicago, and tracing them to economic inequality, upper-class dominance,

capitalist exploitation, and neoliberal public policies.

Second, the coalition attempts to build a class-conscious racial justice politics by training

leadership.  For example, Alex Han suggested that the coalition can cultivate activists who

articulate a class justice agenda through a Black Nationalist discourse through leadership

development:  "How do we develop union leaders who are great activists in the workplace, to

get them in the mix with people who have a broader analysis… a union activist and leader who

understands the levers that control their work environment, and the levers that control their

community and neighborhood—that's the intersection that we need."[482]  Indeed, UWF's

Movement Fellowship program could have this function, as it draws participants from labor and

neighborhood-based racial justice movements, and included education about political economy.

Finally, some of the coalition's grassroots outreach work involves trying to present a

class program within the frameworks through which people currently understand politics.  Jason

Lee describes his attempts to present a redistributive program in a way that resonates with both

a Nationalist framework which elides class, and with the conservative perspectives common in

Black communities:  "how can we talk about the issue of greatest concern, violence, in way that

moves from the moralistic, individualistic, cultural pathology discourses, to show the roots of

the problem in the political economy."  Emma Tai similarly describes trying to make economic

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[481] Bradbury et al, 2014.
[482] Interview with Alex Han, 3/17/17.

issues legible to conservative residents of high-poverty neighborhoods by linking them more

familiar issues of parenting and cultural decline. The ability of organizers to make this case will

be a central theme of forthcoming chapters.

*The white working-class*

I was able to attain less data on coalition members' views on the coalition's intentions

vis a vis Chicago's working- and lower-class White populations. There appears to be a

willingness among some coalition members to accept that a portion of the white working-

classes would be alienated by race-conscious discourses and programs. In an interview, Tai

suggested that this would be acceptable, because, given Chicago's demographics, a coalition of

racial minorities and middle- or upper-class white progressives could win citywide elections and

a City Council majority. She also seemed to believe that at least a portion of the White working-

classes could be won on the basis of UWF's class program.[483] Two informants argued that the

ethical imperative to engage directly with issues of racial justice outweighed any political costs,

but also believed that the coalition could win on a racial justice program.[484]

## 5. Vision for an alternative economy

I argue that the coalition's visions of an alternative economy and neighborhood

economic development are relatively underdeveloped: coalition statements on these areas

tend to be vague, inconsistent, and not part of a coherent analysis or plan. I note that the

coalition does not have any strong linkages to actors or organizations doing research and

analysis on these issues.

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[483] Interview with Emma Tai, 3/6/17.
[484] Interview with Alex Han, 3/17/17. Interview with anonymous CTU staff member, 3/6/17.

*Economic Growth and Job Creation*

The coalition appears not to have any detailed plan for economic growth and job creation, coherently rooted in an analysis of the economy.  In my review of coalition texts and interviews with coalition staff, I found relatively little discussion of economic growth or production as such.  The coalition clearly rejects the supply-side economic growth policies of the current regime but may not have developed alternative policies.  This silence may indicate the coalition's intention to layer redistributive mechanisms onto the current corporate-service- and high-tech manufacturing-centered economy.

One frequent coalition proposal is a public jobs program.  Most discussions of this program focus on the moral and practical superiority of alleviating poverty and crime through public provision of jobs (and other goods), rather than through punitive policies.  One UWF staffer discussed the costs and potential financing of a public jobs program.  But I have been unable to find any detailed plans about a jobs program, such as the structure of the program, the types of work to be undertaken, or the relationship between the jobs program and the private sector.

*Firm and Investor Behavior*

The coalition intends major changes in economic policy, including new taxes on firms, investors, and affluent residents, and the cessation of tax breaks, subsidies, and other financial grants to firms and developers.  Many actors in Chicago repeat the argument, common among intellectuals and policymakers since the 1970s, that such policies would cause Chicago's firms to relocate to other cities with more favorable business climates, depress local real estate markets, and slow commercial and residential construction.

I found limited and inconsistent discussion of possible behavioral changes by firms, developers, and investors, of the potential effects of those changes on economic growth or city revenues, and of measures to prevent or mitigate those changes or their effects.  Discussions of this issue are far less common than moral arguments for redistribution.

All actors appear to assume that the city would not lose so much economic activity as to lose the revenue needed to finance its redistributive agenda.  The coalition's proposes to finance greatly enhanced public services by (among other things) taxing the profits and transactions of investors and firms.  Their proposals thus presume the continued existence and profitability of these activities.  For example, one coalition leader described the coalition's redistributive policies as viable because of the "great amount of wealth in Chicago that you can tax."[485]

Some actors argue, in somewhat vague terms, that redistribution can improve economic growth.  First, investment in human development (through public education, mental health provision, and other means) will produce a better-trained workforce and greatly increase the intellectual capital of Chicago's population.  This can attract firms to the city despite increased taxes and lessened corporate subsidies.  A more intellectually developed and creative population will also contribute to a vibrant economy in other ways.  Second, redistribution can enhance the purchasing power of Chicago residents, creating conditions for growth in commercial and residential markets.

While eminently plausible, I have found only one, relatively vague mention of each of these ideas in coalition texts.  They do not appear to have a detailed account of how these processes would work.  Details such as the projected benefits for firm productivity or profits, the

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[485] Interview with Emma Tai, 3/8/17.

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levels of redistribution required to produce beneficial effects, or how to control inflation, are

not discussed. Some actors reject as empirically false the common claim that higher taxes and

reduced subsides would cause capital flight. In interviews, a UWF board member and a UWF

staffer argued that affluent residents tend to choose their place of residence on factors other

than taxes. They see the upscale amenities built by the Daley and Emanuel administrations—

and particularly the relatively few top quality schools—as sufficient to attract affluent residents.

*Missing Linkages to Centers of Ideological Production*

The coalition does not appear to have linkages to actors or institutions developing ideas

about alternative economic arrangements and alternative approaches to neighborhood

development. This void may underlie their underdeveloped ideas.

In the area of economic growth and job creation, there appear to be few institutions

articulating alternatives to the neoliberal paradigm. Some organizations associated with the

Harold Washington administration's industrial retention efforts continue to articulate large-

scale and small-scale strategies for small business development. Examples include North Branch

Works, a non-profit think tank and development corporation formulating city zoning and

economic development policies to foster small businesses, and especially manufacturing;

Manufacturing Renaissance, a non-profit advocating policies to stimulate local manufacturing

and green technology; and its affiliate the Chicago Manufacturing Renaissance Council, a

partnership of firms, non-profits, labor unions and educational institutions, which drafts and

advocates similar policies. The coalition does not have any linkages with these organizations,

and several coalition leaders were not familiar with them.

There are few successful models of equity-oriented, non-market-driven neighborhood

economic development currently operating in Chicago. The vision and practices of even the

most progressive non-profits community development organizations are embedded in the market-based paradigms of the real estate industry. Most non-profit developers pursue one of three goals:

- Demonstrating to private developers and investors that projects in previously undeveloped neighborhoods can be profitable;

- Building small amounts of affordable housing in neighborhoods undergoing gentrification;

- Resisting unwanted developments through community organizing and direct action.

Even those progressive neighborhood-based organizations affiliated with the coalition, which have advocated for years for "development without displacement," have primarily engaged in defensive fights. As such, they have not had an opportunity to articulate a positive model for neighborhood development.

## 4. Political activities

### Electoral Campaigns

The UWF Coalition has built a powerful electoral apparatus. Financial and personnel resources come primarily from the SEIU HCII and the CTU. UWF supplies campaign managers and other staff, coordinates campaigns with neighborhood-based allies, and provides cadres of volunteer campaign workers. This has enabled larger and better-financed campaigns, running and/or backing larger numbers of candidates at city, county, and state levels, all of whom have run competitive races.

In 2015, the UWF coalition backed 16 candidates for City Council and a mayoral candidate—significantly larger than the coalition's previous slates of 9 and 4 city council

candidates in 2007 and 2011.[486]  The 2015 UWF slate included 7 incumbent aldermen, the

members of the City Council's Progressive Reform Caucus, and nine challengers, three of whom

won.[487]  The Coalition also backed Chuy Garcia's mayoral campaign in 2015.  In 2019, the

coalition backed fifteen candidates for City Council, including three incumbents and twelve

challengers.  Two of the incumbents and seven challenges were elected.  In total, there is a

block of 11 strongly progressive or socialist alderman on City Council, 9 of whom were

supported by UWF.

UWF supplied most of the logistical, and personnel support for these campaigns.  In

Aldermanic races, UWF helped set up campaign operations in the ward, hiring staff, and drawing

volunteers and donations from the memberships of the CTU and SEIU HCII.[488]  SEIU HCII and

CTU, and to a lesser extent the PACs associated with the Grassroots Collaborative and UWF,

supplied a large majority of the financial support for these candidates.  The campaign

contributions to Tara Stamps, UWF's candidate for alderman in the 37th ward, exemplify the role

of the UWF Coalition's, and of its unions:  of approximately $305,000 in total cash and in-kind

contributions received by the Stamps campaign, the major Coalition organizations contributed

just over $175,000, or approximately 57% of the total.  This does not include the cash and in-

kind contributions of individuals associated with the coalition.[489]  The coalition contributed

similar levels of funding to the 8 other new challengers which it supported in 2015.

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[486] Uetricht, 2015.
[487] In 2015, UWF backed the following incumbents:  Ald. Leslie Hairston (5), Ald. Roderick Sawyer (6),  Ald. Toni Foulkes (16), Ald. Ricardo Munoz (22), Ald. Scott Waguespack (32), Ald. Nick Sposato (36), Ald. John Arena (45).  These aldermen have supported a progressive policy agenda and proven themselves willing to vote against the Mayor's positions.  The UWF-backed challengers who won were Ald. Carlos Rosa (35), Ald. David Moore (17), and Ald. Sue Sadlowski Garza (10).
[488] Interview with Emma Tai, 3/6/17.
[489] Of this, the CTU accounted for $99,734 (or 32.7% of the total), SEIU HCII accounted for $42,946.25 (or 14.1% of the total), Grassroots PAC accounted for $20,000 (or 6.5%), and UWF PAC accounted for $12,505.86 (or 4%).  The latter two PACs are funded primarily by the CTU and SEIU HCII.

In 2018, the UWF Coalition provided similar levels and forms of support for four

candidates for county and state-level office: Delia Ramirez and Aaron Ortiz for state

representative in the 4th and 1st districts, respectively; and Brandon Johnson and Alma Anaya,

running for Cook County Commissioner (i.e., a member of the county legislative body, the Cook

County Commission).  UWF held weekly canvasses on behalf of these candidates.  UWF built

much of the neighborhood-level campaign apparatus for the Johnson and Ramirez campaigns

since 2015.  As two Coalition leaders wrote in a post-election article, "Johnson's campaign

manager, volunteer coordinator, and campaign chair all came from" UWF's 2015 campaign in

that neighborhood, and the political organization that was built in that neighborhood after the

campaign.[490]  Similarly, the Ramirez campaign used the electoral infrastructure built in the 4th

district by Grassroots Illinois Action since 2014.  The CTU and SEIU HCII, and to a lesser extent

the GC and UWF political action committees, supplied much of the funding for the Johnson and

Ramirez campaigns.[491]

## Legislative Work

The Coalition has sustained or scaled up lobbying campaigns, particularly in the areas of

education and fiscal policy, at the state and local levels.  CTU, SEIU HCII, GC, Action Now, and

others engage in "direct lobbying"—meeting with elected officials and their staffs to advocate

legislation, drafting legislation, and cultivating relationships with legislators.  The CTU is a

regular participant in coalitions lobbying for progressive education policy at the state level.[492]  In

2018, the CTU and GC were part of a coalition lobbying state legislators to pass a comprehensive

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[490] Tai and Patel, 2018.
[491] For example, the CTU and SEIU HCII were the first and third largest donors to Brandon Johnson's campaign, donating $125,500 (19% of the total) and $56,750 (9% of the total) respectively.  Alma Anaya and Aaron Ortiz's largest donors were PAC's associated with Chuy Garcia and Illinois State Senator Tony Munoz.  They did receive a significant amount of money from the CTU, though less from other Coalition organizations.
[492] E.g., they were regular attendee at the Illinois General Assembly's Chicago Educational Facilities Task Force.

progressive policy agenda called "the People's Agenda."  In 2017, the CTU and GC lobbied state

legislators to oppose a comprehensive education reform bill known as "the grand bargain."[493]

The Coalition also lobbies at the local level.  Since 2011, coalition members have written and/or

lobbied on behalf of ordinances related to charter school and school closing moratoriums,

official declarations of city support for state legislation creating an elected school board, and

progressive revenue ordinances.

To date, few of the city ordinances introduced at the behest of the coalition have passed

City Council. In most cases, their ordinances were introduced by allied councilmembers,

received many co-sponsors, but were killed in a City Council committee by opponents.

However, in several cases, City Council or the Emanuel administration adopted more

moderate versions of revenue and social provision legislation advocated by the Coalition.  While

Coalition-backed legislation to allocate Tax Increment Financing surpluses to public schools

failed in 2013 and 2016, Mayor Emanuel unilaterally allocated a portion of unused TIF funds to

CPS in 2016 and 2017.[494]   Similarly, three of the Emanuel administration's most progressive

proposals were preceded, within 2 years, of Coalition lobbying efforts for more expansive

versions of the same policy.[495]

Whether the UWF Coalition has influenced policy, they appear to have influenced

behavior of allied legislators.  At the state and city levels, legislations regularly introduce bills

advocated, or written, by Coalition members.  The Coalition may have also contributed to a

change in the agenda of the Progressive Reform Caucus in the City Council.

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[493] CTU Blog, 3/3/17. https://www.ctulocal1.org/posts/illinois-needs-a-peoples-agenda-not-another-bad-bargain/. Accessed 5/1/17. "Our members traveled to Springfield to tell their Senators that the Grand Bargain is a Bad Deal, they made district visits and logged nearly 3000 calls to their senators in one day!"

[494] The Tax Increment Financing program is explained in Chapter 2.

[495] The Paid Family Leave policy, endorsed by Emanuel but rejected by City Council in 2015, created less generous family leave options than a bill crafted by the Coalition.  The $13 minimum wage enacted by Emanuel in 2014, was spurred by the Coalition's years of work for a $15 minimum wage.  And the Emanuel administration's program to offer free Pre-Kindergarten education to all children in Chicago resembles a program long advocated by the CTU, GC, and others.

The coalition may have contributed to the rising public salience of some its policy

concerns, although this has not yet been systematically tested. However, content analysis of

the candidate debates in the 2015 mayoral elections shows that the issues emphasized by the

coalition in previous years—the misuse of TIFs, inadequate education funding, charter schools,

and the elected school board, were highly salient.[496] Moreover, polling data clearly shows that

the coalition (and particularly the CTU) are seen as a more credible source of education policy

reform than Mayor Emanuel, by a majority of Chicago residents.[497]

To date, the coalition's most significant impacts on public policy have come through the

CTU's collective bargaining with the city. In negotiations in 2016, the CTU won a city investment

in a pilot program to create "Community Schools," schools with greatly expanded counseling,

healthcare, and other services.[498]

## Direct Action

Coalition members also engage in direct actions, including rallies, protests, sit-ins, and

marches. Since 2011, GC, CTU, KOCO and other organizations have led or participated in direct

actions around corporate welfare and TIF abuse, school closings, and other issues. In 2013

alone, the CTU led 4 direct actions to protest school closings on the South Side of Chicago

alone.[499]

## 5. Grassroots Organizing

The coalition is currently attempting to expand popular support for a left program

among the low-income and working-class, and racial minority populations, whom it views as its

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[496] Both candidates had well-developed positions on them, and were asked about them at every debate. See debate on 3/16/15 and forum on 3/25/25.
[497] Bradabury et al, 2014. MacAleavy, 2016.
[498] Uetricht, 2014: 97.
[499] Bradabury et al, 2014. MacAleavy, 2016. CTU blog postings.

most likely supporters.  This section recounts coalition leaders vision for base-building, evaluate

coalition organizations' current capacities to implement this vision, and then review a set of new

base-building projects launched by the coalition since 2015—two of which are the focus of

subsequent dissertation chapters.[500]  To fill this void in base-building capacity, the coalition has

launched or supported the development of at least a dozen new neighborhood-level political

organizations since 2013.

## The coalition's vision of organizing

Most coalition leaders see grassroots base-building as part of the coalition's political

strategy—a means of attaining the institutional power necessary to advance the

aforementioned policy agendas—although some also see the democratic empowerment of the

populations in question as an end in itself.  Most of my interviewees assumed that the goal of

base-building was advancing a policy agenda, and that base-building contributes to that goal by

enhancing the capacity to win elections and referenda.  For example, four informants either

described the importance of organizing as related to unseating neoliberal-aligned aldermen, or

implied that subsequent electoral outcomes were a metric of success of organizing projects.[501]

While presuming the same goal of advancing a policy agenda, others saw UWF's task as

mobilizing grassroots populations for a wider range of political actions, including electoral

mobilization, but also contentious mobilizations.[502]  A few saw UWF's organizing as empowering

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[500] I define "base-building" as some combination of 1)organizing people, such that they could be mobilized at strategically important moments; and 2)propagating a message among people, such that they are inclined to mobilize on behalf of the organizing principal. "Grassroots base-building" involves direct, unmediated interactions, possibly leveraging social networks and relationships, to build relationships and/or propagate messages.
[501] Field notes, 3/6/17.
[502] Interview with Chris Polous, 5/23/18.

the populations in question to hold elected officials accountable, and as invigorating civic and

political engagement more generally.[503]

UWF leaders recognized grassroots base-building as a *necessary* component of UWF's

strategy for attaining institutional power, given the coalition's structurally rooted political

disadvantages vis a vis the neoliberal regime.  First, the coalition must rely on mobilizing a

grassroots base, because it cannot match the level of spending on elections of lobbying of the

neoliberal regime.  Rooted in the city's most lucrative industries, candidates associated with the

neoliberal regime have generally outspent UWF-backed candidates.  In 2015, for example, the

Emanuel administration raised far more money than the UWF-backed Chuy Garcia, drawing

mostly from the finance, real estate, and advanced business sectors.  As scholar William Sites

observed, the coalition's reliance on base-building "reflects in part the inevitable limits to labor's

capacities to compete on the terrain of campaign finance."[504]

Second, as long as it is out of power, the coalition needs an organized grassroots base as

a counterweight to the neoliberal regime's institutional powers.  As Chapter 2 noted, the mayor

has many mechanisms for influencing aldermen and other local and even state elected officials,

including the ability to provide campaign funds and to facilitate or impede economic

development in a neighborhood.  In the past, the mayor has successfully pressured alderman,

elected with UWF- or Grassroots Collaborative support, to defect to the neoliberal regime.  UWF

leaders see an organized grassroots constituency as one way to prevent such defections.

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[503] As Alex Han said, "neighborhood base-building is essential—you need people locally who can elect and hold accountable on local issues and the ways those local issues intersect with larger issues" (Interview with Alex Han, 3/17/17).  In Jackson Potter's words, "having a space that forces you out of your cocoon, particularly now with this electric opportunity to bring people together, because they're worried, and they want to talk, and they want some strategy and ideas for what they can do, these spaces are abnormally useful" (Interview with Jackson Potter, 3/10/17).
[504] Sites, 2013:  2582.

Interviewees shared elements of a more specific base-building vision.  First, leaders

envisioned an ongoing presence in target neighborhoods, as opposed to episodic outreach,

during a crisis or election.  Informants mentioned continually building relationships with local

residents and organizations.  Two suggested that the coalition could continuously propagate its

messages about issues and other points at the neighborhood-level, by canvassing, or by

engaging in public conversations.[505]  Several informants reported that frustrating experiences in

the 2015 citywide elections underscored the need for ongoing engagement in neighborhoods.

Two organizers who had worked in the Austin neighborhood felt the coalition's lack of any

consistent presence was a key factor in the UWF-backed candidate's loss.  Organizers lacked a

pool of volunteers in the neighborhood, access to local social networks, or grounded knowledge

needed to target canvassing—things which a more consistent organizing outreach could

provide.[506]

Relatedly, coalition leaders envision engaging in the public conversations in important

neighborhood-level civic and political venues.  As CTU Chief of Staff Jackson Potter articulated,

base-building is a matter of making connections and participating in conversations in such

venues:  Any strategy for a populist resurgence in the city of Chicago has to involve ground

troops, it has to involve that door-to-door familiarity; it has to involve local institutions—

churches, CAPS meetings, things that people naturally gravitate toward when they have a

problem.[507]  An organizer (who requested anonymity) similarly argued that "neighborhoods

matter—that is where a lot of those conversations [i.e., about issues] happen.  We can and

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[505] Anonymous organizer:  "We can and should be in those spaces, making our case.  That's how people will become familiar with our way of looking at these issues."
[506] Interview with Jason Lee, 3/1/17.  Interview with Emma Tai, 3/6/17.
[507] Interview with Jackson Potter, 3/10/17.

should be in those spaces, making our case.  That's how people will become familiar with our way of thinking, and our positions start making sense."[508]

Coalition leaders envision cultivating leadership within neighborhoods, ideologically aligned with the coalition, but capable of independent action.  Such leaders would be less vulnerable than coalition organizers to portrayal as outsides and inauthentic representatives of the neighborhood.  As Jason Lee, former CTU organizer and UWF political director explained, unions and union-backed candidates have been weakened in neighborhood-level struggles, where perceived "authenticity" is the source of legitimacy and credibility.[509]  A local leadership would be capable of articulating the coalition's positions on issues while also competing on the terrain of authenticity.  Moreover, insofar as the coalition could outsource neighborhood-level outreach to ideologically aligned activists and leaders at the neighborhood-level, they could rely less on media buys and paid outreach, greatly reducing the financial costs of elections.

## Discussion

Like several other formations in the United States, the United Working Families coalition is attempting to advance a progressive-left agenda, in a political system dominated for decades by a neoliberal regime.  This chapter recounted the growth of the coalition, from a small progressive coalition in the early 2000s to a powerful formation, articulated through independent institutions.  Mostly drawing on the personal and financial resources of its large labor union members, the coalition now wages legislative and electoral campaigns at a significant scale, and has built a block of 11 affiliated aldermen on Chicago's City Council.  This

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[508] Interview with anonymous organizer at a coalition-affiliated organization.
[509] Interview with Jason Lee, 3/3/17.

block may be more resistant to cooptation than previous progressive formation in the city, given UWF's growing capacity to discipline elected officials.

This chapter also described UWF's ongoing attempts to organize grassroots support for its agenda. Like other left formations described in Chapter 1, UWF sees grassroots base-building as a key strategy for advancing its project. This Chapter recounted the limited neighborhood base-building capacities of UWF's current member organizations, and UWF's attempts to launch of support several new grassroots organizing projects in high-poverty neighborhoods of Chicago.

The rest of this dissertation examines these emerging base-building projects. These projects are a chance to study the dynamics of organizing around a progressive-left agenda in urban neighborhoods. Chapter 2 showed that city-wide and neighborhood-level developments have shaped neighborhood level institutions, and projected neoliberal discourses about race, political possibility, and other phenomena. UWF organizers will have to operate in this terrain. And the processes and outcomes of these projects will reveal how, if at all, neighborhood-level institutions and cultures pattern ideological and material commitments, and how these shape possibilities for organizing.

This base-building projects also are an opportunity to study how the terrain for neighborhood-level organizing has been shaped by the expansion of the left. The growth of the UWF coalition was part of a wider expansion of popular interest in progressive and socialist politics in the city. This development may have generated activists in neighborhood, or diffused left ideas. The UWF coalition has also projected its discourses, via mass media, high-profile direct actions, and charismatic public figures.

To elucidate these questions, subsequent chapters will examine two UWF-backed organizing projects, in the 33rd Ward (and predominantly the sections in the Albany Park

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neighborhood) and the 37th Ward (and predominantly the majority of the ward in the Austin

neighborhood).

## Chapter 5:  Organizing in Austin and the 37th Ward

### Introduction

Since the summer of 2015, United Working Families (UWF)[510] has attempted to create a new, grassroots political organization in the Austin neighborhood on Chicago's West Side.  UWF envisions the Greater Austin Independent Political Organization (GAIPO) as a vehicle to build and mobilize a progressive base in the neighborhood.  They have attempted to recruit local residents to join the organization and participate in local outreach, networking, and other movement-building and electioneering activities.  If successful, GIAPO would cultivate and mobilize a constituency on behalf of progressive, anti-neoliberal candidates and causes in the 37th ward.

Institutions and ideological currents in the neighborhood could subvert these goals. Austin residents recruited to GAIPO rightly bring their own perspective and beliefs to the organization.  These may conflict with the intentions of UWF's organizers, and pull GAIPO to other projects, even those supportive of the neoliberal regime.  Civic and political institutions, in the neighborhood and beyond it, may also draw GAIPO to causes or projects other than those intended by UWF.

UWF's attempt to build GAIPO is an opportunity to examine the political culture and institutions of contemporary Austin and how they mediate struggles over neoliberalism.  What ideas do Austin residents bring to the nascent organization?  How do these shape their reactions to UWF's organizers, and their behavior within GAIPO?  How did other institutions and organizations in the neighborhood relate to GAIPO?  As UWF organizers attempted to recruit

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[510] UWF is the main political vehicle for the large and well-resourced community-labor coalition in Chicago.  UWF was created by, and is backed by, the Chicago Teachers Union, SEIU Healthcare Illinois and Indiana, Action Now (formerly Chicago's chapter of ACORN), and 7 other labor and community-based non-profit organizations.  UWF is described extensively in Chapter 4.

and work with local residents, there were many opportunities to witness these factors and the ways in which they created opportunities for, and impediments to, organizing around an anti-neoliberal project.

*Summary of Findings*

First, I found that the field of civic, political, and social institutions in Austin conforms to the national trends described in Chapter 1.

- Several of Austin's leading non-profits and its elected officials work on business and real estate development, in concert with city and foundation programs and private developers. Steeped in a Black Nationalist tradition, leading actors articulate their market-oriented projects as a form of racial empowerment, expression of an authentic racial culture, and defense against White racism. Particularly in their community development work, these actors produce a distinctively neoliberal rendition of Black Nationalist discourse. They also help link a more traditional program of Black Capitalism, focused on business development, to the neoliberal regime.

- Austin's other leading non-profits, many of its grassroots associations, and its political leaders focus on apolitical, voluntarist service projects. These actors also receive funding from city government and foundations. Most participants describe this work as building social fabric, and thus addressing social problems rooted in cultural and behavioral malaise. Some practitioners link this work to community development, describing self-help as a way to prepare the neighborhood for capital investment.

- Austin had no groups focused on mass mobilization for political action. While the neighborhood had several militant grassroots neighborhood organizations as of the early

1970s, these collapsed or shifted to service provision or the aforementioned projects in the 1970s and 1980s.

Most of the Austin residents who joined GAIPO were also committed to community development or to voluntarist self-help work.  Some GAIPO recruits appeared to have internalized the identifiably neoliberal discourses on real estate development as racial empowerment articulated by the local non-profits.  Other recruits espoused Black Capitalism discourses, focused on Black business development generally, without the specific attachment to neoliberal modes of real estate redevelopment.  However, some of these individuals advocated collaboration with local non-profits on real estate development projects.  Another segment of GAIPO recruits prioritized voluntarist self-help projects similar to those undertaken by local non-profits and neighborhood associations, constructing them in the same discourses about addressing social problems rooted in the declining social fabric.  Only two recruits espoused a class analysis of social problems, and supported the socialist agenda pitched by UWF's organizers.

I found suggestive evidence that GAIPO participants' commitments, and underlying perspectives on social problems, were shaped by Austin's robust field of non-profits and grassroots associations.  I will document the close similarities between GAIPO participants' discourses on social problems and racial interests and those articulated by Austin's leading non-profits.  I will also show that several GAIPO members had previous or ongoing affiliations with these non-profits, working on their development and/or self-help projects.

GAIPO recruits' ideological tendencies caused recurrent conflicts between GAIPO recruits and the UWF organizers over GAIPO's direction.  GAIPO recruits raised repeated demands to use the organization as a vehicle for apolitical self-help projects (such as block

clean-ups, distribution of free school supplies, etc.), or to collaborate with a local non-profit—

deeply enmeshed in the neoliberal regime—to fostering black-owned businesses through a

market-oriented development project.  UWF organizers tried to keep the organization focused

on electoral politics and oriented toward progressive, anti-neoliberal solutions.  Ultimately,

several GAIPO recruits, frustrated with GAIPO's direction, left the organization.

These findings suggest that the institutional developments since the 1960s, described in

Chapter 1, have created important barriers to organizing around economic issues.  Fostered by

the neoliberal regime and the real estate development industry, the neighborhood's most

prominent institutions reproduce discourses on racial interest and social problems compatible

with neoliberalism, link those discourses to neoliberal programs, and in some cases, articulate

new discourses synthesizing older racial justice traditions with neoliberal ideas.  These

institutions reproduce Austin residents' commitments to neoliberal or neoliberal-compatible

modes of activism.  UWF's organizers found a population committed to self-help and

development, and poised to pursue those commitments through foundation- and regime-

funded programs.  Austin residents recruited to GAIPO maintained these commitments even

when faced with the alternatives presented by UWF.

The findings also illustrate the barriers to UWF's strategy (described in Chapter 3) of

articulating a left racial justice politics.  The narrowing of the field of neighborhood activism

since the 1960s has ensured that moderate, neoliberal and neoliberal-compatible definitions of

racial justice are continually reproduced and diffused, while left definitions have been

eliminated from public currency in the neighborhoods.  These changes are a moment in a longer

history of the cultivation, by political and economic elites, of racial justice praxis compatible with

capitalism. At least among the mostly middle-aged and middle-class Austin residents participating in GAIPO, such understandings of racial justice appeared to be common sense.

*Methodology*

I identified Austin's civic, social, and political institutions from a list of neighborhood organizations published annually by Austin Weekly News, a local newspaper. I collected data on the institutions' programs and discourses from organizational websites, and from newspaper articles. I included all articles on Austin institutions in three local news outlets, Austin Weekly News, Austin Talks, and The Voice, and in several citywide publications. I obtained information about institutions' funding sources from publicly available financial records and annual statements.

I conducted field research on GAIPO beginning in March of 2017. During multiple site visits, I attended and observed formal and informal GAIPO events, including: neighborhood canvasses; official meetings of GAIPO's steering committee; debriefings, where members discussed recent canvasses and actions; and informal social gatherings. I conducted in-depth interviews with participants, including UWF's professional organizers, local residents on GAIPO's steering committee, and local residents who participated more sporadically. I supplemented these data with an exhaustive review of GAIPO's public documents (mostly consisting of posts on social media). I also reviewed the few published articles on GAIPO and its members in Austin Talks and the citywide weekly investigative magazine, the Chicago Reader.

## 1. Austin's Institutions and Political Culture

I found that seven of Austin's most prominent non-profits, as well as its elected officials and many churches, focus on self-help projects, intended to build social fabric, restore social norms, and improve physical spaces. Another seven of Austin's non-profits, as well as its

elected officials and churches, focus primarily on fostering black-owned businesses.  They

promote entrepreneurship, solidaristic consumer behavior, and especially, the development of

commercial real estate.  These clusters of non-profits, officials, churches, and block clubs,

comprise the bulk of Austin's civic sector.  Strikingly, I found only two organizations who allocate

much of their resources to advocacy and to grassroots mobilization of residents in political

causes.  Table 5.1 provides a list of Austin's non-profits, categorized by their primary activities.

Below, I review the programs, and relationships to the neoliberal regime, of exemplary

organizations.

This field of organizations has been systematically created by elites beyond the

neighborhood.  Austin's self-help and community development organizations are steeped in

long-standing traditions of self-help and Black economic empowerment.  But their programs

express distinctively modern and neoliberal variants of those traditions, adapting them to the

realities of chronic disinvestment, fiscal austerity, and the dominance of free-markets.  City

governments and philanthropic foundations also encourage these forms of work, quite simply,

by funding them, while refusing to support more militant and politicized grassroots organizing

and advocacy.

**Table 5.1.  Neighborhood organizations in Austin, by area of activity**

| Economic Development | Community Building | Advocacy | All of the above |
|---|---|---|---|
| Austin Chamber of Commerce | 100 Blocks 100 Churches | NAACP Westside Branch | Austin Coming Together |
| Austin African American Business Networking Association | Austin Green Team | South Austin Coalition Community Council | Bethel New Life |
| | Austin Peace Corner | | Westside Health Authority |
| Austin Weekly News West Side Business Network | Central Austin Neighborhood Association | | Office of Ald. Emma Mitts |
| Greater Austin Development Corp. | The Leaders Network | | Office of Ald. Chris Taliaferro |
| West Side Men | South Austin Neighborhood Association | | |
| West Side Women | | | |

Austin's largest non-profit organization, Westside Health Authority, exemplifies the self-help programs of many of Austin's civic, social, and political institutions.  Many of WHA's programs are designed to rebuild the neighborhood's social fabric, building social networks and relationships among neighbors.  Leaders' statements and program documents explain WHA's intentions to foster a sense of community, restore social norms, and thus improve public safety and socialize young people.  Though less frequently, some documents emphasize that such changes create an environment conducive to economic development.  For example, in its "Every Block a Village" program, WHA helped organize block clubs, recruiting neighborhood residents to participate in block clean-ups, repairs, and other self-help activities.[511]  WHA's Good Neighbors Campaign links block clubs with local churches, community groups, the police department, and other neighborhood institutions.[512]

Many of Austin's other prominent institutions conduct similar programs.  Austin Coming Together, the neighborhood's second largest non-profits, and two smaller non-profits sponsor block clubs, community-building programs, and "greening" projects.[513]  The neighborhood's political leaders, including 37th Ward Alderman Emma Mitts, and 29th ward Alderman Antonio Taliaferro, articulate similar perspectives on the neighborhood's problems, tracing crime and delinquency to the decline of social fabric and norms, and encourage residents to form block

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[511] As of 2015, EBV had attained a significant scale, with relationships with residents on 100 blocks of Austin, and outreach underway to another 200 blocks.  For information on WHA's EBV program, see a description by one of their funders, the Marguerite Casey Foundation, at https://caseygrants.org/who-we-are/inside-mcf/every-block-a-village-westside-health-authority/ (accessed 6/19/17) or a description in a biography of WHA's founder, at http://ssa.uchicago.edu/ssa_magazine/every-block-village (accessed 3/1/19). Under EBV, WHA also recruited block club members to participate in volunteer activities, chosen by residents, and coordinated by WHA, such as block clean-ups, mentoring activities, and sports leagues.

[512] This program is described in Volume 1, Issue 1 of WHA's newsletter Good Neighbor News, available http://healthauthority.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Westside-Health-Authority-Good-Neighbor-News-September-2017-.pdf (accessed 3/1/19).

[513] E.g., ACT held the Austin Block Club Challenge, called on block clubs to submit a photo of members to Facebook, which "demonstrate the theme of unity."

clubs to pursue informal social control and uplift activities.[514]  The Chicago Police Department's

15th District also encourages residents to form block clubs to practice informal social control (in

line with citywide department policy).[515]  And several local churches espouse the same

perspective and lead block-clean ups and other social-fabric themed projects.[516]

Local leaders report a widespread concern with social fabric and norms among Austin

residents.  WHA's founder Jacqueline Reed described a grassroots planning process which set

the organization's priorities during its formative years:  Austin residents called for efforts to

rebuild social fabric and restore informal social control.

> They were concerned about the decline in moral values among youth reflected in the
> open disrespect on the streets and in the classrooms. They were concerned about the
> isolation and lack of relationships among neighbors; several had 'remembered when
> everybody looked after each other,' and helped with each other's children.[517]

These institutions all receive funding from the city government and major philanthropic

foundations.  WHA is funded by the Marguerite Casey Foundation and the MacArthur

Foundation, among others, and receives contracts from the city government to administer job-

training and youth education programs.  ACT is funded by grants from the Local Initiatives

Support Corporation, United Way, and other major philanthropic foundations.  SANA received a

city grant to build a park in 2017.[518]

As Evelyn Brooks-Higginbottom, Victoria Wolcott, and other historians have shown,

philosophies of self-help and community-building, as a response to social problems ultimately

rooted in systemic racism and economic marginalization, have deep roots in African American

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[514] Mitts also features the themes of educational and employment opportunities. Mitts cultivates block clubs by offering them access, hosting meetings of block club presidents, soliciting their input on public policy, and  regularly attends block club events.
[515] The website of CPD's community policing program, Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy, lists advice for starting block clubs: https://home.chicagopolice.org/online-services/block-clubs/ (accessed 3/1/19).  The Community Liaison for the 15th District also proactively works with homeowners to encourage block clubs.
[516] Zhang, Xueer:  "Stronger relationship in 2018 priority for Austin ministers, residents and police," Austin Talks, 11/15/17.
[517] See the "Founder's Message" section of WHA's website:  http://healthauthority.org/about-wha/founders-message/ (accessed 6/19/17).  In 2016, WHA again solicited community input to determine its priorities, and again found widespread concern with social fabric and norms, and the same nostalgic vision of a more united community.
[518] Studenkov, Igor:  "Austin veteran garden clears cost hurdle," Austin Weekly Times, 4/2/18.

political culture.[519]  But, the historical prevalence of these ideas in Black communities was

caused in part by the intervention of white elites.  Consider, for example, the Urban League,

which helped to popularize "respectability politics" in Black communities.  From the 1910s to

the 1950s, the Urban League organized hundreds of block clubs—including dozens in Chicago's

Black neighborhoods—using them to promulgate "advice about health, cleanliness, deportment

in public places, care of children, overcrowding, and efficiency" among neighborhood

residents.[520]  As Amanda Seligman points out, the League choose such uplift strategies, instead

of more assertive civil rights strategies, because white benefactors threatened to withdraw

financial and political support if the League chose otherwise.[521]

More recently, city governments and philanthropic foundations have encouraged these

forms of apolitical self-help activism.  As several historians recount, since the early 1970s,

foundations and city governments have been more likely to support non-confrontational forms

of community-based activism.  Projects and organizations focused on "community-building"

(i.e., augmenting relationships among residents, and between residents and local institutions),

upgrading or restoring public spaces, and other forms of local self-help are among funders'

priorities.

### Black-Owned Business and Economic Development

Several of Austin's largest non-profits, as well as its local elected officials and prominent

churches foster entrepreneurship and work with public and private partners on real estate

development projects.  These actors describe this work as a form of racial empowerment, and

as the expression of authentic Black culture.  They also invoke the arguments long hegemonic

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[519] Higginbottom, Evelyn Brooks:  *Righteous Discontent The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church: 1880-1920* (1993); Wolcott, Victoria:  "'Bible, Bath, and Broom':  Nannie Helen Burroughs, the National Training School, and the Uplift of the Race" (1997).
[520] Seligman, 2016:  28.
[521] Ibid, 26.

among neoliberal policymakers:  that market-driven economic growth is the most (if not only) way to effectively combat poverty and associated social problems.

This work is exemplified by two of Austin's most prominent civic organizations, the Austin African American Business Network Association, and the Austin Chamber of Commerce. Both offer local businesses a variety of support services, and work on economic development projects.[522]  In recent years, AAABNA and ACOC have collaborated with Austin's other leading non-profits, Austin's aldermen, and city agencies on a series of large-scale projects to revitalize a commercial strip of Chicago Avenue.[523]  Westside Health Authority and Austin Coming Together, and several smaller non-profits, also participate in these entrepreneurship and commercial development projects.[524]

Like similar coalitions documented in other neighborhoods, these actors tend to construct their projects as opportunities for authentic expression of black culture—drawing on a strand of Black Nationalist discourse, popularized in the 1960s and 1970s.[525]  Echoing a strand of Black Power discourses from the 1960s, these organizations also talk about entrepreneurship and real estate development as a form of racial and community empowerment, creating opportunities for control over local economic processes and institutions, and buffering the

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[522] These services including networking opportunities, clerical and legal services, grant-writing help, and publicity.  Since 2016, ACOC has been working with 28th Ward Alderman Antonio Taliaferro on a multi-site development project, focused on arts and culture-related businesses, surrounding Austin Town Hall.  ACOC functions as a developer, mediating between property owners, builders, and prospective tenants (Dean, 2016).

[523] They are leveraging a combination of city programs to subsidize private investment in a long-disinvested commercial strip in Central Austin.  At the request of AAABNA and alderman, the city Department of Planning and Development created a Special Services Area in the corridor, levying additional property taxes on the area to fund enhanced city services, such as security, sanitation, and utilities (what other cities refer to as Business Improvement Districts).

[524] WHA is a major partner in the Chicago Avenue development project.  In 2017, WHA launched the Institute for Business and Social Enterprise of Austin to train Austin residents in entrepreneurship skills and connect them to business opportunities (including those in the new development projects).  The aforementioned Good Neighbor Campaign also links residents with "business and economic development opportunities."

[525] Johnson, Cedric:  *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders* (2007).  Michelle Boyd (2007), John Anderson and Carolina Sternberg (2015) and Adolph Reed (2016) each describe the use of these discourses in the context of real estate development projects.  There are several examples of the use of themes and symbols from these discourses in the Chicago Ave. corridor project.  For example, WHA's promotional materials suggest the corridor will "establish a cultural identity that is reflective of the proud people and businesses that call the corridor home."  AAABNA and ACT personnel and elected officials talked extensively about "the representation of black culture" in the new businesses and streetscape.  (Austin Village Chicago SSA Website; http://www.av72chicago.com/blog; accessed 9/11/17; Dean, Terry:  "Public artwork destined for bus turnaround at Austin and Chicago," *Austin Talks*, 12/28/16)

community from economic forms of racism.[526]  Finally, actors fuse these discourses with

neoliberal arguments, asserting that business development will create job opportunities,

addressing Austin's social problems, especially violent crime.[527]

While WHA and other groups working on self-help and community-building projects

disseminate their vision to residents via block clubs, AAABNA's vision of business development is

disseminated via public events and the group's large memberships and social networks.  Local

media suggest that AAABNA's monthly Black Economic Empowerment Rallies (highlighting one

black-owned business in Austin each month) draw large numbers of Austin residents, including

politicians, clergy members, and other community leaders.[528]  AAABNA has strong ties to

Austin's most prominent churches, with prominent pastors serving on AAABNA's board, and

participating in its public events.  AAABNA leaders also speak at services at these churches.[529]

Prominent actors have constructed Black-owned business and entrepreneurship as a

key mode of racial empowerment and cultural expression since at least the Reconstruction

era.[530]  This tradition was well-established in Chicago, and was institutionalized in Austin and

adjacent areas as they underwent demographic transition in the 1960s.  Two of the most

prominent grassroots racial justice groups in the late 1960s, both street gangs turned activists,

Conservative Vice Lords and the West Side Organization, were encouraged by federal programs

and corporate and foundation grants to prioritize entrepreneurship (before being destroyed by

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[526] E.g., the text for one of AAABNA's flyers, encouraging Austin residents to shop at local black-owned business:  "Stop the economic genocide!"

[527] ACOC and AAABNA leaders also cite developmentalist arguments linking economic growth to social improvement.  AAABNA founder and Executive Director, Malcolm Crawford frequently invokes typical arguments that Fusing developmentalist ideas with a nationalist appreciation for the redemptive promise of cultural self-determination and intra-racial solidarity, former ACOC Executive Director Lilly suggested "[b]ringing more African-American culture to Austin may be the key to cleaning up the violent behavior. More black-owned businesses and organizations in Austin can help each other survive" (Harrison, 2010).

[528] Dean, Terry:  "Local Residents Support Another Black-Owned Business," Austin Talks, 3/3/15.

[529] Since 2014, AAABNA or its leading personnel have co-hosted events with Pastor Ira Acree's St. Johns Bible Church, Pastor Steve Epting of Hope Community Church, and Marseil Jackson, pastor and radio host on WVON (the latter two of whom were or are currently on AAABNA's board of directors).

[530] Hill, Laura Warren and Julia Rabig:  *The Business of Black Power*:  *Community Development, Capitalism and Corporate Responsibility in Postwar America* (2012).  Michael Dawson, *Black Visions*.

state repression in the early 1970s).  Since at least the early 1970s, Chicago had a vibrant "buy

Black" movement, encouraging solidaristic economic behavior, within a Black Nationalist

framework.  This movement had at least one significant leader based in Chicago's West Side, Dr.

Webb Evans (known as "Mr. Buy Black") and the United American Progress Association.[531]  The

37th Ward Alderman from 1985 to 2000, Percy Giles, was also a proponent of Black-owned

business, constructing it as a means of racial empowerment.[532]  I found that one key leader of

Austin's non-profits is steeped in these lineages:  AAABNA founder and Executive Director,

Malcolm Crawford, cites as inspirations Dr. Evans, and Minister Rahim Aton, a leading

proponent of black-owned commerce as a strategy of racial empowerment, associated with the

Black Nationalist wing of 1960s and 1970s racial justice movement. [533]

The focus on market-oriented commercial real estate development appears to be a

novel expression of this long-running philosophy, one reflecting the distinctive opportunities

and pressures of the neoliberal era.  Writing about a different Chicago neighborhood, Michelle

Boyd (2007) observed that community-based organizations, rooted in racial justice struggles,

shifted to a focus on community development in the 1980s and 1990s, as a response to the

chronic disinvestment form ghetto neighborhoods, and as a way to participate in the emerging

public-private real estate development industry.  Neoliberal urban policies both exacerbated

this disinvestment (cutting remaining social services), and fostered the real estate development

industry.  By the 1990s, actors in long-marginalized neighborhoods could only attract a share of

public and private investment by getting into the real estate redevelopment game.

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[531] Mitchell, 2016.
[532] Feltag, 1990.
[533] Mitchell, 2016.

By the late 1960s, Chicago's West Side was a hot bed for radical political activism. A comprehensive study for seven community organizations committed to the strategies of grassroots organizing and confrontational advocacy of Saul Alinsky in Austin alone. These groups built large grassroots membership, mobilizing them in small- and medium-scale campaigns against banks, landlords, and city government.[534] Several street gangs turned to activism, politicized by the Black Power movement. While these groups, most notably the West Side Organization and Conservative Vice Lords, prioritized business development, they also organized tenant unions and organizations of welfare recipients.

Each of these tendencies fell apart by the late 1970s. Racial justice groups within unions disintegrated, either failing to win struggles for control within the union, or as a result of lay-offs and union decline more generally. Militant racial justice groups such as the Conservative Vice Lords disintegrated under vicious attacks by local government, predominantly through the criminal justice apparatus. More generally, changing federal and foundation policies posed a stark choice for community-based activists: organizations could shift priorities, and focus on providing social services or community development, and receive generous federal and philanthropic grants; or they continue to focus on grassroots organizing and advocacy and go bankrupt. Moreover, by the mid-1970s, ongoing deindustrialization (itself enabled and accelerated by federal policy), created acute needs for social services and community development in neighborhoods like Austin. For these push and pull factors, most groups chose to focus on service provision or community development.

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[534] The most powerful among them were considered enough of a threat to be targeted for infiltration and disruption by the Chicago Police Department.
Two of these, the Organization for a Better Austin and Northwest Community Organization founded the group National People's Action, which was instrumental in passing the Community Reinvestment Act in 1977.

## 2. Organizing GAIPO

### GAIPO's Origins

The immediate impetus for the creation of GAIPO was the disappointing results of the 2015 aldermanic elections in the 37th ward. The 37th ward was one of 16 targeted by United Working Families for extra investment in the 2015 elections.[535] UWF had perceived an opportunity to defeat a close ally of Emanuel, 17 year incumbent Emma Mitts, based on her association with a badly deteriorated neighborhood and the unpopular mayor.[536] UWF recruited and trained CPS teacher and CTU member Tara Stamps, and invested $76,000, and staff and logistical support, into the race. Stamps narrowly lost in a run-off, Mitts' first run-off in 4 elections.[537]

The Stamps campaign had brought several professional organizers, affiliated with United Working Families and its member organizations, to Austin. Emma Tai, a professional organizer who became the Executive Director of UWF in 2016, was Stamps' campaign manager; three organizers affiliated with the Chicago Teachers Union, Quinn Rawlins, Jason Lee (now UWF's Political Director) and Brandon Johnson (elected in 2018 to the Cook County Board of Commissioners), also worked on the Stamps campaign.

After the election, these four individuals and Stamps herself concluded that the Stamps campaign revealed the need to build a permanent organizing infrastructure in Austin. In Tai's words, the election outcome, despite UWF's large investment and Ald. Mitts' negative

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[535] As explained in Chapter 4, United Working Families is the primary electoral vehicle of Chicago's community-labor coalition. In the 2015 election, it trained, endorsed, and funded 9 aldermanic candidates.

[536] Interview with Emma Tai, 3/8/17.

[537] Stamps forced Mitts into the first run-off in her 18 year tenure (in 4 elections), and lost by only 400 votes.

associations, reflected "the limits of base building within a four month election cycle."[538]

Without an existing, already organized base, and an organizational vehicle for outreach, the

campaign started at a disadvantage.  Lists of CTU and SEIU HCII members in the ward produced

a small number of campaign volunteers, insufficient for an effective ground game.  Nor did

these volunteers confer access to dense social networks or already-developed constituencies in

the neighborhood.[539]   Comparatively, Ald. Mitts' ward-level networks, though small relative to

pre-Shakman Decrees days, were a significant advantage.[540]  The need to start from scratch

raised campaign costs.   And the lack of an indigenous base may have left Stamps more

vulnerable to portrayal as an outsider.

Tai, Lee, and Stamps, thus determined the need for a longer-term base-building project.

A neighborhood-level organization would provide the need foundations for future campaigns,

reduce campaign costs, and cultivate indigenous leaders, capable of localist authenticity, and

credibility on neighborhood issues.[541]  Tai and Lee also theorize that the judgment of an

organization, with visibility and credibility in the neighborhood, could sway more voters than

conventional outreach techniques.[542]

To this end, Emma Tai, Jason Lee, Tara Stamps and others personnel, with contacts

made during the campaign, began recruiting for a new, permanent political organization in

Austin in the Spring of 2015.  Partnering with a few local residents with whom organizers had

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[538] Interview with Emma Tai, 3/8/17.

[539] Interview with Jason Lee 3/3/17.

[540] As described in Chapter 2, the "Shakman Decrees" banned hiring for political considerations in Chicago's municipal government, eliminating the primary basis for political patronage networks.  The decrees are widely seen as undermine the ward organizations which underpinned the classic Chicago political machine.  On Mitts' relative advantage, Lee said "in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king."

[541] Interview with Jason Lee, 3/3/17.

[542] Tai and Lee believe that the key to influencing voting behavior at a significant scale creating an organization whose political judgement people trust.  This is based on a theory that people take cues about political choices, or about the significance of politicians, groups, other objects, from the entities they trust.  Political campaigns should intervene in this cue-taking process, rather than trying to disseminate ideas.  (in this, Tai and Lee are in line with the "heuristic" theories of political decision-making developed by leading political psychologists.

connected during the Stamps campaign, these individuals, starting canvassing and conducting

outreach at local political events.  New recruits accrued gradually, and Tai reports that a core of

regular members had solidified by the Summer of 2016.

## The Current Form and Structure of GAIPO

As of the Summer of 2018, GAIPO had approximately 16 regular members.[543]  Beyond

this regular membership, GAIPO draws a fluctuating amount of less consistent participants.

Almost all are residents of Austin, though occasionally meetings draw participants from

surrounding neighborhoods.  Meetings have add up to 40 attendees (including the regular

members), and as few as 10.  In 2017, GAIPO formally registered as a Political Action Committee

under state law.[544]

In 2017, GAIPO members, with Tai's assistance, formed a decision-making and

leadership structure.[545]  The Organizing Committee is GAIPO's central decision-making and

planning body.  The Organizing Committee's monthly meetings (and GAIPO's monthly

canvasses) are the one regular event which all official GAIPO members are expected to

attend.[546]  The Organizing Committee addresses GAIPO's formal business, such as election of

officers, and deliberates about GAIPO policy and strategy.[547]  For example, in the Spring of 2017,

the committee discussed the problem of retaining recruits, and considered tactics to facilitate

connections with potential recruits.[548]

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[543] Interview with Tai, 3/8/17.
[544] D-I Statement of Organization, filed with Illinois Board of Elections.  Accessed 4/30/17.
[545] Minutes of Organizing Committee meeting, 2/25/17.
[546] Interview with Tai, 3/8/17.
[547] For example, in February of 2017, the committee elected officers (2 Co-chairs, Secretary and Treasurer), officially adopted GAIPO's mission and vision statements.
[548] Personal communication from Ms. Nickie Abraham, 6/22/17.

There is a smaller core of leaders who take additional responsibilities, and appear to have relatively more influence in discussions. This core includes the organization's official officers: co-chairs Mr. Ben Frazier and Ms. Nickie Abraham, treasurer Ms. Rose Barrett, and secretary Mr. Francis Black.[549] Anecdotal evidence suggests officers convene to discuss decisions with each other, prior to bringing the matter to the organization's formal decision-making bodies.[550]

Organizing Committee members were among the most vocal and effective participants in the group discussions I witnessed. It appeared that these individuals had some ability to set the agenda of a group discussion, at multiple levels: the co-chairs facilitated the meeting, which entailed bringing a printed agenda of topics. They also exercised informal influence: these members were more vocal and assertive in group discussion, and shaped the course of the conversation, establishing the most important aspects of the topic.[551] On substantive debates, I observed these members state their positions more confidently than other members, and some members appeared to defer to them.

To date, the other important category of participants in GAIPO are the professional organizers associated with the community-labor coalition. In GAIPO's early days, Tai and Lee (and to a lesser extent former CTU organizer Quinn Rallins) seem to have been involved in many aspect of GAIPO's development. They led canvasses, trained members in organizing tactics and other skills, facilitated meetings, and, at least in some cases, led political education.[552] As of the Spring of 2017, Lee and Rallins no longer participated regularly, and Tai had begun to

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[549] I use pseudonyms to refer to informants, unless the informant either ran for public office, or was speaking in a professional capacity. I refer to informants by their first or last name according to what the informants themselves preferred or tended to use.
[550] Personal communication from Ms. Nickie Abraham, 6/22/17.
[551] Field Notes, 3/16/17.
[552] This political education is described in newspaper coverage of GAIPO meetings—Hutson, 2016; Kremer, 2015. Also, Interview with Lee, 3/3/17; Interview with Tai, 3/8/17.

intentionally scale back her directive role, ceding functions to the emerging membership.[553]

Still, when in attendance, Tai's natural leadership qualities, and GAIPO members' evident trust

in her, still draw her into a leadership role.[554]  Tai may also have helped the Organizing

Committee design GAIPO's organizational structure, and recruitment process.[555]

## The Regular Activities of GAIPO

### *Recruitment*

The organizers appear to have established that community organizing would be one of

GAIPO's top priorities.[556]  This priority was institutionalized in the a set of routines related to

canvassing and training.[557]  Several members have attended an "organizer training session,"

conducted by Tai, Lee, or Rallins, educating members on the importance of organizing and on

tactics.[558]  At least since the summer of 2016, GAIPO has held two canvasses per month (with a

hiatus from November, 2016 through early March, 2017).[559]  GAIPO members also distribute

flyers for their upcoming meetings at local churches, libraries, parks, and restaurants, and on the

organization's Facebook page.[560]

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[553] Interview with Jason Lee, 3/3/17.  Interview with Emma Tai, 3/8/17.  Pursuant her view that this organizing model cannot be replicable if it depends on the extraordinary contributions of outside organizers.  To this end, she has scaled back her meeting attendance, and refers questions of organizational policy to the officers—for example, deliberately not attending the March GBM, and referring the question of my participation to the officers.

[554] Field notes, 3/11/17.  For example, at a canvass and debriefing in March of 2017, Tai suggested that the organization adopt an official resolution about new canvassing procedures during an impasse, and tutored members in parliamentary procedure— members' receptivity to Tai's interventions was clear.

[555] Interview with Tai, 3/8/17.

[556] I am inferring that this was a priority for organizers based on the amount of attention devoted to canvassing and organizing training.

[557] GAIPO's organizing routines include regular neighborhood canvasses, and a series of follow-up mechanisms through which members can be integrated into the organization.

[558] On organizer training as a method of intake, and Tai's presence at some of these meetings:  Interview with Tai, 3/8/17 and Field Notes 3/11/17.  On trainings being hosted by Rallins:  I inferred this from GAIPO Facebook posts indicating the date and location of organizer training sessions, and newspaper accounts mentioning Rallins leading those events—Facebook post 7/6/16; Hutson, 2016.

[559] Facebook posts.  These canvasses use typical organizing tactics—using voting records and party affiliation data to target households, and typical conversational scripts (eliciting primary concerns, and suggesting their systemic and political roots through a series of leading questions).  All people contacted through a canvass are contacted again by GAIPO members, and invited to an upcoming meeting.  This can be one of the organization's General Body Meeting.  New attendees at these meetings are encouraged to attend an organizer training session, and then to join the team of canvassers.

[560] Field notes, 3/16/17.

These processes produced much of the current membership. [561]  Others members of the

Organizing Committee reported seeing flyers, or hearing the organization mentioned at

church.[562]  The ongoing canvassing creates a trickle of new recruits, with the usual attrition at

each stage of organizational commitment:  Tai estimates that, for 40 attendees at an intake

meeting, she would expect 7 or 8 at the training.[563]

GAIPO also has meetings designed to enhance relationships among current members.

GAIPO holds relatively informal meetings at a member's house, as a space for socializing and

conversation.  Tai has not tried to determine the agenda of these meanings.  From her

perspective, the house meetings function to deepen relationships among GAIPO members, and

foster identification with the organization.[564]

*Planning and Deliberation*

GAIPO holds monthly General Body Meetings.  In my observations, these have three

functions:  1) Participants share and debate analyses of important issues, including the nature

and causes of neighborhood problems; potential solutions; the relative importance of different

problems; and the merits of positions on particular public policy questions.  The resolution of

some conversations indicated that persuasion and consensus-building occurs over the course of

these conversations (though I do not yet have any data to show whether persuasion was

durable).  2)Participants discuss and debate GAIPO's upcoming political actions, including

strategizing about potential actions, briefing for upcoming actions, and debriefing on past

actions.  3)The meetings appeared to function as a social gathering.  Members were evidently

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[561] Field notes, 7/24/17.
[562] Field notes, 7/24/17.
[563] Interview with Emma Tai, 3/8/17.  The Organizing Committee has discussed ways to increase the effectiveness of recruitment efforts and retention, and most recently developed new recruitment materials, an "information card" to collect recruits' contact information, and deliver GAIPO's contact information and mission in an easily digestible way (Personal communication with Ms. Nickie Abraham, 6/22/17.
[564] Interview with Emma Tai, 3/8/17.

delighted to see each other, and the meeting was punctuated by many thorough laughs—

members interacted as friends.[565]  General Body Meetings usually include a presentation by

members or a guest on a designated topic.

GAIPO has engaged in several, strategic ward-based political actions.  GAIPO sends

members to attend official public events, with the goals of participating in policy discussions,

increasing the organization's local visibility, and in some cases, pressuring local officials.  In

2017, GAIPO participated in a campaign against the expansion of charter schools in Austin.  In

February, GAIPO members attended an anti-charter rally at a local high school.  Later that

month, members attempted to confront Alderman Emma Mitts about charter expansion at her

"ward night" (though she avoided the confrontation).[566]

As of Spring 2017, GAIPO members were preparing to attend the Chicago Police

Department's (CPD) precinct meetings.  In July of 2015, Tara Stamps, Tai, and others convened

outside CPD Superintendent McCarthy's "listening tour" in Austin, protesting the meeting's

closure to the public, and calling for CPD receptivity to community input.[567]

Finally, GAIPO cultivates a presence in local and city-wide media.  The former co-chair,

Ms. Bailey Donaldson, and organizing committee member Constance Daniels gave statements to

the Chicago Reader, (an investigative newspaper with a citywide readership) on gun violence,

city policy, and GAIPO's political goals.  Mrs. Darlene Frazier wrote an op-ed on GAIPO's work

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[565] Field notes, 3/11/17 and 3/16/17.
[566] Field notes, 3/16/17.
[567] "Shut Out but Not Shutting Up:  Young Voices Speak Out about Chicago Violence," on website of Westside Health Authority. Accessed 7/20/17.  http://healthauthority.org/shut-out-but-not-shutting-up-young-voices-speak-out-about-chicago-violence/

and goals for another citywide publication.[568]  Three of GAIPO's monthly meetings have been

covered by Austin newspapers.[569]

## 3.  Research Questions

Taking shape in a complex environment, GAIPO is an opportunity to observe the effects

of local ideas and institutions on neighborhood base-building for an anti-neoliberal project.  The

first section examines the characteristics of GAIPO's regular members, including their

demographic traits, their organizational affiliations, and their political backgrounds.  The second

section examines the ideas about key social and political phenomena which GAIPO members'

and participants' bring to the organization.  I will also document the degree to which ideas are

institutionalized, widely held, and disputed.

## 2.1 Member Characteristics:  Demographics, Affiliations, Political Background

### Demographics

There was a clear pattern in the demographic characteristics of GAIPO members.  In line

with findings on participation in civic and political affairs in urban neighborhoods, GAIPO's

regular members were almost all middle-class.  Of the 14 regular members for whom I obtained

information, 12 were currently employed or retired from professional or "white-collar" jobs,

primarily in education and clerical work.  All 14 had completed some form of higher education,

with a majority holding a bachelor's degree.  All 9 of the members for whom I obtained data

were current homeowners.  Tables 5.2 and 5.3 break down the occupations and educational

attainment of the 14 members on whom demographic information was available.

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[568] Personal communication with Emma Tai, 3/11/17.

[569] 1)Hutson, Wendell:  "'Powerless in their own neighborhoods, 'Austin residents vented frustrations with neighborhood's violence at July 7 meeting" in Austin Daily News, 7/13/16.
2)Kremer, T.J.:  "West Side group says new tax needed to help stop the violence."  In Austin Talks, 11/30/15.
3)Kremer, T.J.:  "As gun violence continues to surge in Austin, residents look for answers," Austin Talks, 9/21/15.

*Table 5.2.  Occupations of Regular GAIPO Members*

| Accounting, other clerical | 4 |
|---|---|
| Teaching | 4 |
| Sales | 1 |
| IT Specialist | 1 |
| Artist | 1 |
| Social work | 1 |
| Childcare provider | 1 |
| Security guard | 1 |

*Table 5.3.  Educational Attainment of Regular GAIPO Members*

| Masters or more | 2 |
|---|---|
| Bachelors | 11 |
| Associates degree | 1 |

There were also patterns with respect to age, race, and gender.  As Jason Lee observed, "[o]ur sweet spot is middle-aged African American women whose kids are out of school.  That's the base.  We have a few people with school aged children."[570]  Not surprisingly, given Austin's 87% black population, all but one regular members are African-American.  The remaining member is white.  Of the aforementioned 14 members, 4 are currently retired.  At official meetings, I observed that non-regular attendees also tended to be what Jason described as middle-aged.  For example, at the March 16th meeting, two of 7 non-regular members mentioned being retired CPS teachers, and 2 more mentioned having adult children or grandchildren.

GAIPO has struggled to involve two demographics in particular:  younger Austin residents and lower-income residents (including lower-income segments of the working-class and low-income populations).  Both the UWF organizers and GAIPO members have repeatedly stated their desire to incorporate these demographics.  In interviews and informal conversations, UWF organizers and multiple GAIPO members acknowledged that working class

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[570] Interview with Jason Lee, 3/3/17.

and lower-income people were underrepresented in the organization.  Ms. Nickie Abraham and Ms. Bailey Donaldson listed inroads in these populations as a priority for the coming year.[571]

*Organizational Affiliations*

Almost all of GAIPO's regular members have connections to other civic or political institutions in the ward or city, and/or have histories of political activism.  Four have connections (either volunteers or financial supporters) to non-profit organizations engaged in service-provision and/or community development; four are members of block clubs or neighborhood associations; four were volunteers at local churches.

Three of GAIPO's regulars are affiliated with non-profit and/or religious organizations in Austin or nearby neighborhoods.  Mr. Dawson Floyd, a teacher at a local charter school, volunteers in a capacity I was unable to determine at Austin's largest non-profit service provider, the Westside Health Authority (described at length in Chapter 5).  Mr. Floyd has posted positive comments on social media related to at least three other local non-profit organizations, specializing either in community development or service provision.[572]

Mr. Robert Davis, who works professionally as the coordinator of a church-based service provision program, also co-founded a church-based mentoring program on the West Side.  Mr. Davis also leads service-based work as an elder at New Life Community Church.[573]  Mr. Davis, for example, leads group of congregants to clean-up nearby blocks of Austin.

Mrs. Betty Simpson, an artist and entrepreneur, contributes financially to at least three mission-based non-profits in and around Austin:  CAN Chicago, an organization providing mental health care and assisted living for youth who have experienced severe trauma; Homan Square

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[571] Field notes, 3/11/17; Personal communication with Ms. Nickie Abraham, 6/22/17.
[572] The NGOs were the Resident Association of Greater Englewood, Austin Coming Together, and The Healing Corner.
[573] Johnson, 2014.

Foundation, a community development non-profit in a neighborhood just east of Austin; and Perspectives Charter Schools, a network of charters on Chicago's West and Near West Sides.

In one-on-one or group conversations, four GAIPO members mentioned belonging to block clubs or neighborhood associations. Two members specifically mentioned they had been part of these associations for many years— "for decades," and "for as long as I can remember," respectively. All four mentioned participating in some of the activities typically associated with block clubs, including patrolling the neighborhood for illicit or disorderly activity, and cleaning up trash.[574]

### *Political Background*

Mr. Ben Frazier, GAIPO's co-chair, was active in the movement for Harold Washington's election, and in ward-based organizations affiliated with Washington in the 1980s. Mr. Ben Frazier joined the 37th Ward IPO, built in 1985 to support Washington allies running for alderman and Democratic committeeperson. The IPO clashed with the ward's old alderman and his ward organization, in a ward-level theatre of the citywide fight between Washington and the old Democratic Machine.[575] Among other activities, Mr. Ben Frazier was the appellant in a lawsuit accusing the machine candidate for Democratic committeeperson, Thomas Simmons, of fraud, and seeking his removal from the ballot.[576]

Mrs. Darlene Frazier, a retired accountant, and a very prominent—and eloquent—voice in GAIPO's meetings, also participated in the Washington-era mobilizations, and maintains ties to some remnants of the Washington-era formation. Though I was unable to speak directly with

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[574] Field Notes, 3/16/17.

[575] Pervious alderman, Frank Damato, a staunch supporter of the Richard J. Daley machine and "Verdolyk block" on city council, boasted that "Mr. Washington is not going to pick the black alderman who will serve the 37th ward. My Regular Democratic Organization will. The next aldermen will be one of my 38 precinct captains who is black" (Freemon, 1988).

[576] Chicago's election laws require candidates to submit a petition with 324 in order to be added to the ballot. Frazier's suit challenged Simmons' signatures as fraudulent—a common trick in elections in Chicago.

Mrs. Frazier about her past activism, Ms. Tai described her as "very plugged in" to the cotemporary institutions with ties to the Washington movement and administration.  Ms. Tai mentioned Mrs. Frazier's close attention to political programming on WVON, an African-American oriented talk-radio station, with a long history of civil rights and black nationalist-oriented political activism.[577]

I found only one member who was involved with more recent racial justice-oriented social movements.   Mrs. Simpson, GAIPO's one regularly participating white member, mentioned her participation in Chicago's Black Lives Matter organization.

Two regular GAIPO members are also members and elected delegates in the Chicago Teachers Union. Both have been active, in their capacity as teachers and union members, in struggles against school closures.[578]  Ms. Nickie Abraham, GAIPO's current co-chair, has served as her school's elected representative in the CTU House of Delegates since 2012.  Nickie has served as an elected representative to the CTU's House of Delegates since 2011, Ms. Kent at least since 2017.

## 2.2 Members Ideologies

Field observation, interviews, and an analysis of GAIPO's documents, produced four findings about the ideas in circulation in GAIPO:

Finding 1:  At a very basic level of problem perception, GAIPO members universally agree. Members perceive the same neighborhood conditions as problematic.  They reference these problems, their extent, and urgency during conversation without debate or need for clarification

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[577] Searcy, 2012; Squires, 2000.
[578] Ms. Kent participated in CPS public hearing, criticizing CPS decision to close the elementary school at which she worked. https://soundcloud.com/wbez/4-29-13-chambers-gblat-heff.  Ms. Kent's speech begins at 38:09.
Nickie mentioned her attendance at anti-closure rallies in a personal communication, 3/11/17.

or adjudication.  Violent crime was universally recognized as the most urgent problem.

Members had similar, though not identical, lists of secondary problems.

Finding 2:  At the level of problem definition, I observed a diversity of ideas.  GAIPO does not yet

have official, codified positions, and I did not observe the conversational patterns that would

indicate degrees of informal institutionalization, or even a consensus position.  Rather, I

observed three distinct discourses on the causes and solutions to neighborhood problems, each

articulated repeatedly, across multiple contexts of the organization's activity, and with multiple

proponents among the organization's leaders and membership.

- One discourse traced Austin's crime to breakdowns in social networks, and in pro-social

  norms and behavior.  Accordingly, GAIPO's priority should be to rebuild the community's

  broken networks and culture.  At times, prominent proponents of this discourse posited a

  relationship between improved social networks and economic growth.

- The second discourse defined employment as the root of community health.  Proponents of

  this discourse did not articulate an elaborate or vivid account of this causal relationship.

  However, they offered more detailed policy analysis than proponents of other discourses.

- The third discourse described the roots of the neighborhood's conditions in a long-term

  project of debasing black neighborhoods, led by whites.  Proponents of this discourse

  emphasized the city's divestment from the neighborhood, and focused on generating black-

  owned businesses.

Finding 3:  As an organization, GAIPO managed this ideological diversity in three ways.

- I observed attempts at syntheses among these discourses.  In particular, some (though not

  all) proponents of the social networks and norms discourse eagerly embrace the element of

  racial conflict of the anti-black project discourse.

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- At times, GAIPO merely aggregated the various concerns (without acknowledging any tensions among them).

- When individual members spoke on behalf of GAIPO (for instance, when producing an organizational document or speaking to the press), they used their preferred discourse, and did not use the others.

- It is not yet clear if any discourse, or elements of them, are emerging as dominant.

Finding 4: In the one concrete public policy discussed at-length, GAIPO members had diverse views on charter schools, but universally opposed the expansion of privately run charters, framing it as against the interests of the community.

Finding 5: Lastly, I observed extensive agreement that GAIPO's primary strategy is to build electoral power through community organizing. Some members were clearly attracted to non-electoral forms of collective action (generally the same members who affirm the causal importance of social networks and norms). But the organization's most active participants are firmly committed to a strategy of winning political power through elections, by local organizing. This strategy was an explicit premise (and at times, even an implicit premise) for discussions of their upcoming activities, and a theme of most of their public texts.

*Finding 1: Common Perceptions of Neighborhood Conditions*

Perhaps not surprisingly for individuals compelled to local activism, GAIPO members are acutely aware of the conditions in Austin. Though different understandings of causes and solutions quickly obtruded into conversation, there is widespread agreement about the existence, extent, and urgency of some problems. Everyone seemed to recognize the high rates of violent crime, unemployment, and poverty, and the low rate of educational attainment, and

most saw violent crime rates as especially urgent.  Members took these points as unproblematic

facts in conversation.  And GAIPO members had similar (though not identical) lists of concerns.

I observed in informal and formal discussions a universal concern with Austin's violent

crime.  Violent crime came up frequently in informal conversation among members during two

days of field observation.[579]  People shared anecdotes about hearing gun shots at night (indeed,

"every night"), about which areas and blocks were more or less safe, and about recent incidents.

These comments usually elicited similar anecdotes or knowing assent and I did not observe any

disagreement about the existence or intensity of the violence problem.  Crime dominated

formal discussions at the March 2017 General Body Meeting as well, where nearly every

attendee mentioned reducing violent crime as one of GAIPO's *raisons d'etre*.

The shared prioritization with violent crime was reflected in the ways that members

talked about other issues.  In discussions at the March 2017 General Body Meeting, for example,

members frequently stated the importance of other concerns in terms of their implications for

violent crime.   Bailey, the former co-chair, prioritized unemployment for its implications for

crime rates.

Mr. Dawson Floyd, an organizing committee member and frequent presence on GAIPO's

Facebook page, posted a document explaining economic development and improved social

capital in terms of their effects on crime rates.[580]  In fact, when asked "one thing you would

change about Austin today," several mentioned other issues.  But those who elaborated

explained that their respective priority issue was important because it would address the violent

crime problem.[581]

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[579] Field notes, 3/11/17.
[580] Facebook post, 10/26/16.
[581] Field notes, 3/16/17.

Beyond violent crime, members had diverse, but overlapping perceptions of neighborhood problems. People clustered into two groups—one which spoke more often about social networks, culture, parenting and religion, and one who talked most about employment and schools. People in the former group also recognize unemployment and low educational attainment as problems (for instance, assenting to other members' comments about them). It was not clear to me if people in the second group recognized deteriorated social networks, flawed parenting, and other cultural and behavioral issues as problems.

*Finding 2: Three Discourses on Problems' Causes and Solutions*

Alongside shared perceptions of incidence rates and urgency, I observed a diversity of ideas about the causes of and potential solutions to neighborhood problems. I found three distinct discourses on the causes and solutions to neighborhood problems, each articulated repeatedly, across multiple contexts of the organization's activity, and with multiple proponents among the organization's leaders and membership.

**Discourse 1: Social Norms and Networks**

I observed one set of ideas about the causal importance of norms, and the social institutions that uphold and transmit them. Several members articulated this analysis at the March 16th General Body Meeting, in response to the prompt "If you could change one thing about Austin today, what would it be?" One first time attendee, a retired CPS teacher, captured the points made by multiple speakers, in a particularly long and impassioned speech. She argued at length that social disorder led a vicious cycle of social disengagement and withdrawal, diminished social control, and worsening social disorder, leading ultimately to crime. I distilled three points from her speech:

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First, the most effective solution to crime is proactive effort by the community's adults to maintain social order and socialize kids—this prevents disorder and crime, and leads to pro-social behavior by kids. She offered examples of such activity: she described her own experiences maintaining a vocal and visible presence on her bloc (asking kids not to stand on her lawn or idle cars in front of her house, offering passersby home-cooked food, etc.). She described what used to be common parenting methods (parents, particularly fathers, monitoring children's schoolwork, supervising their and neighbors' kids after school, and around the neighborhood). She contrasted this with absent and disengaged parents today, and argued that the inadequate parenting caused the neighborhood youth's behavioral problems, including, ultimately, crime.[582]

Second, she argued that residents' propensity to engage in those beneficial parenting and social control practices is inseparable from residents' connections to each other. She argued that simply getting to know one's neighbors made all parties feel invested in the block or neighborhood. This feeling of investment motivated informal social regulation. She contrasted a more connected neighborhood in a bygone era to the current, disengaged neighborhood.

Third, this speaker implied that building better social networks (and thus restoring levels of informal social control and socialization) was ultimately a matter of Austin residents' changing their own behavior. She suggested that residents simply needed to "show their face," and to communicate with their neighbors, to start a virtuous cycle. Like other speakers in this cluster, this speaker did not mention other causes of the decline of social networks beyond resident behavior.

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[582] Field notes, 3/16/17.

This speech exemplified a series of comments.  Other members had also expressed the importance of adult residents' behavior around the neighborhood and parenting, and of getting to know neighbors.  A few people referenced a bygone era when these behaviors were more common.  The aforementioned speech was met with murmurs and statements of agreement.[583]

This cluster of speakers included at least one member of GAIPO's Organizing Committee—Dawson Floyd, a young man and teacher at a local charter school.  Mr. Floyd made a similar point about social networks producing feelings of investment in the community.  He argued that "unity," "all of us coming together," would give residents a sense of collective purpose, and the spiritual and practical capacity to address the neighborhood's problems.[584]

A similar analysis was articulated in a document posted on GAIPO's Facebook wall in November of 2016, and possibly distributed at GAIPO's 11/17/16 organizer training session (Picture 5.1, below).[585]  The author of the document is unknown, but it was posted on Facebook by Mr. Floyd.  This document posits the same relationship between strong social networks and crime, and establishes the development of social networks as the most important target of collective action.  The document adds "economic development" as the mechanism linking improved networks to reduced crime.

The document makes quite explicit the priority of social networks, with the headline "Building a **Social Network** strengthens our community" (emphasis in original).  The next block of text explains "A strong social network leads to a lower crime rate or no crime at all.  The stronger the network, the closer we get to ending crime for good."

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[583] Ibid.
[584] Ibid.
[585] Facebook post 10/26/16.  It was created as part of an advertisement for that meeting, and its juxtaposition with the meeting flyer suggested it was something of an agenda for the meeting.

The document also highlights the importance of economic growth.  Specifically, the document describes a virtuous cycle in which strong social networks reduce crime, attract business, and spur economic growth, which in-turn strengthens social networks, and so on.  It states that "Economic growth in our neighborhood will lead to improvements in all facets of life."  Alongside a graph depicting the inverse relationship of economic growth and crime rates, the document reads: "A powerful social network lowers crime rates and attracts more businesses to move into our neighborhoods."

**Picture 5.1:  Document Associated with GAIPO's November 17th Community Forum**



**Discourse 2:  Jobs as the Primary Cause**

A second set of GAIPO members and meeting attendees argues that unemployment causes the community's other problems, and particularly crime, and thus should be the primary focus for interventions.  Proponents of this analysis have produced the most detailed policy proposals, but have not yet articulated the importance of employment, or its links to other neighborhood problems, in the sort of detailed and vivid fashion in which the aforementioned speakers celebrated social networks.  Two of the three prominent proponents of this analysis were younger members of GAIPO.  The UFW coalition's organizers have attempted to propagate this analysis within GAIPO.

Gaby Davidson, a recent college graduate from Austin, and then GAIPO's co-Chair, articulated this analysis in response to the same prompt ("what is one thing you would change about Austin today") at the March, 2016 General Body Meeting.  Davidson described the 25% unemployment as "a travesty," and very briefly argued that job opportunities for Austin's youth would prevent criminal enterprise.[586]

Some GAIPO members share an intense concern with community norms and social networks, but see employment as causally prior.  At the March General Body Meeting, a middle-aged woman, and first time GAIPO participant, described at length her concern with Austin's deteriorated social norms, and absent parents, in much the same terms as the speaker described in the previous section.  But she went on to argue that jobs are the cornerstone:  with more employment, "the rest would come."  She explained that jobs, and especially businesses owned by local families ("mom and pop businesses"), would make Austin residents "feel invested" and "connected" to the community.  She argued that this sense of investment and

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[586] Field Notes, 3/16/17.

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connection makes residents perform the types of informal social control and social

engagement.[587]

At a 2016 meeting, Diane Coleman, a 30 year Austin resident, also melded the jobs- and

socialization-focused analyses.  Coleman observed that people involved in crime "are young,

black men with no job or positive, male role models in their lives."  Coleman argued for

enhanced investment in "helping our youth and young adults," through employment programs,

mentoring, and other means.[588]

Interestingly, these two comments were the most elaborate articulations of the causal

importance of employment which I heard.  Even the proponents of this perspective, such as

Davidson, did not articulate the causal importance of employment in detail—and certainly not in

the level of detail as the speakers in the last section used when describing the importance of

social norms, networks, and parenting.

Davidson and other GAIPO members have, however, described in detail the gaps in

employment opportunities, and the policies needed to address them.  Constance Daniels, an

Organizing Committee member, described the inadequacy of local job training programs in the

Chicago Reporter (speaking on behalf of GAIPO): "There are some programs, but some of the

jobs that they offer require degrees, or people need transportation to get to them."  Davis

argued that "training programs aimed at unskilled workers, as well as getting jobs back into

Austin, are where the resources are needed most."[589]

The coalition organizers' limited pedagogical interventions have attempted to propagate

this jobs-centric analysis.  Jason Lee articulated an employment program in great detail at a

2015 meeting.  Lee described this employment program as an anti-violence program,

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[587] Field notes 3/16/17.
[588] This and previous sentence, Hutson, 2016.
[589] This and previous sentence, Hinton, 2017.

presupposing the causal link between unemployment and violence.  Lee described in detail the

financing of the potential program with a "1.5 percent tax on city income:"

> "If our household made $60,000 a year, we'd basically have to give up $2.50 a day to
> create this program. So we'd have to give up a medium iced latte from Dunkin Donuts
> every day.  Now I'm not saying that's not a sacrifice, but think about what we'd be able
> to get."[590]

**Discourse 3:  Racial Conflict and Racial Interest**

A third discourse traced the community's current problems to the history of inter-racial

conflict in the United States.  In this, Austin's problems are caused by a white power structure's

long-term project of degrading and marginalizing black people.  At the March 16th General Body

Meeting, and in an editorial, the primary proponents of this analysis also brought up the matter

of black-owned businesses in Austin.  They implied that reversing the decline in black-owned

businesses should be a priority for the community (implicitly defining that community in terms

of residence and race).  The overarching causal analysis proved attractive to proponents of both

previous analyses:  some (though not all) who had espoused concern with social behavior and

jobs, respectively, rearticulated their concerns within this racial conflict framework, after that

framework's elaboration.

At the March 16th General Body Meeting, this analysis was first articulated in a

conversation about the similar plight of black neighborhoods across American cities.  The

present author had noted the similar rates of violent crime, school closures, and unemployment

between Austin, and certain neighborhoods of other cities.  The first-time attendee who had

synthesized concerns with employment and social behavior (described above), responded that,

in light of these similarities, "there must be a plan" to systematically diminish black people's

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[590] This and previous sentence, Kremer, 2015b.

status.  This spontaneous reaction indicates an inclination to interpret information in terms of

an anti-black project.

Mrs. Darlene Frazier, a member of the organizing committee, responded with an

elaborate and quite eloquent analysis of a historical anti-black project.  She asserted that indeed

"there is a plan" to systematically diminish the economic and social status of blacks,

implemented over several decades.  The plan aimed ultimately to reduce blacks to their old

status of near-slavery.  She suggested that this process uplifted whites proportionally to the

degradation of blacks.  Mrs. Frazier didn't specify any particular agency behind the plan (mostly

describing it in the passive voice, or speaking of agents with pronouns with unidentified

referents).  At times she seemed to describe a self-aware and intentional conspiracy of a white

power structure.  At times, she seemed to allow that the degradation of blacks was the

emergent effect of any number of uncoordinated actions, led primarily by whites, and

motivated partly by racism, the "plan" being a metaphor.  My impression was that Mrs. Frazier

was open to conceptualizing the causes of the degradation of the black community in a range of

ways.[591]

Neither Mrs. Frazier, nor the members who agreed with her, were open to an

alternative explanation of the historical degradation of the black community which emphasized

federal policy changes, described in race neutral terms.  The present author noted changes in

federal urban and macro-economic policy, and a related economic restructuring, and the effects

on working-class neighborhoods, including black ones—this comment garnered no response

whatsoever.  The discussion instead proceeded in ways that presupposed Mrs. Frazier's

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[591] All data on this speech drawn from Field Notes, 3/16/17.

conception of an anti-black plan.[592]  Both in her initial comments, and in response to the present

author's comments on federal policy, Mrs. Frazier was emphatic—using a more assertive tone

and language than any other speaker that night—that this anti-black project defined the context

of the neighborhood.

In the immediately ensuing conversation, Mrs. Frazier and several other attendees

framed contemporary social problems in terms of inter-racial conflict, and articulated the

interests of the community in race-conscious ways.  In this conversation, they focused on the

city's divestment from the neighborhood, and on the lack of black-owned businesses.  Mrs.

Frazier interpreted the city government's uneven investment in downtown and neighborhood

development as a manifestation of this zero-sum inter-racial conflict, in which whites

systematically degraded blacks, and simultaneously uplifted themselves.  Earlier in the meeting,

both Mrs. Frazier and Mr. Frazier (the co-chair) had referenced the simultaneous investment in

the downtown and divestment from the neighborhoods as important problems, though they did

not frame the problem at any length.  In this comment Mrs. Frazier extended the anti-black plan

frame to interpret this particular problem of uneven investment.[593]

This comment did not specify actors involved in this orientation of urban development

policy, investment or specific divestment practices or policies.  Mrs. Frazier may have chosen

not to address these specificities for any number of reasons (including rhetorical effects,

practical constraints, etc.).   Or, the silence on specificities, like the slippage among types of

agency and intentionality, may indicate places where the causal analysis has not yet been

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[592] Of course, that the participants in the conversation did not respond to the author's alternative theory may be attributable to "source characteristics," including my unfamiliarity with the group and visible status as an outsider (among many other, less flattering possible characteristics).  Inasmuch, this event can't be taken definitively as evidence of the participants' non-receptivity to alternative theories, or non-race focused theories in general.
[593] Ibid.

elaborated.  Again, this may entail an openness, by the individuals in question, to a range of content.

Soon after, Mrs. Frazier, Nickie, and two other attendees discussed black-owned business in Austin.  The speakers did not explicitly connect this issue to the anti-black plan.  However, aspects of the conversation suggest that the issue was conceptualized through some elements of that "anti-black plan" discourse, if not through the full causal analysis.  First, this issue was brought up in the context of a conversation, provoked by Mrs. Frazier's speech, about how to respond to the anti-black plan.  Black-owned businesses were discussed almost immediately after, implying that this was an area in which the plan and its effects were felt, and could be addressed.  Second, multiple speakers described the issue in terms of similar narratives of decline and zero-sum racial conflict.  Mrs. Frazier, Ms. Eliason, and the two other participants, agreed about how few businesses in the community were black-owned now, whereas there had been more decades ago.  These 4 attendees also decried that most of the stores in the community were liquor stores, pay-day loan offices, and beauty parlors, with few grocery stores, or other essentials.  This was also compared to the local commerce decades ago.[594]

On the causes of this decline, participants noted facts consistent with the narratives of racism and zero-sum inter-racial conflict.  Nickie suggested that the paucity of black-owned businesses is caused in party by racial discrimination in loan-giving.  Another attendee noted the many businesses owned by White and Asian people, who do not live in the neighborhood.

More so than the other two discourses, the causal analysis appeared to attract adherents.  Mrs. Frazier's speech elicited several responses which either explicitly agreed, or spoke in ways that presupposed the validity of Mrs. Frazier's analysis.  Several attendees

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[594] Ibid.

followed up the initial description of "the plan" with comments about how to act, given the systematic degradation of blacks.  In one exchange, meeting attendees rearticulated the issues of norms and behavior of Austin residents, given the context of the anti-black plan.  Ms. Regina, an older woman and organizing committee member, referred to the same behavioral problems enumerated by other attendees earlier as precisely "what they want you do"—i.e., how the perpetrators of the plan want blacks to respond.  The first-time attendee who had expressed concern with social behaviors and jobs (described above) agreed, saying it was essential for blacks to "resist" those anti-social behaviors that "come with" systematic divestment and oppression, lest blacks play into the designs of those perpetrating the anti-black plan. These comments indicate the resonance of "the plan" argument with attendees.  They also indicate that the social norms and behavior discourse is amenable to rearticulation within the framework of this broader causal analysis.[595]

There is also a theory in circulation among GAIPO members that some actors, motivated by an anti-black agenda, conspire to deliver weapons into Austin, and other black neighborhoods.  Proponents of this theory recount rumors about "crates" of guns left on the street, and about the delivery of guns via freight trains, temporarily stopping on nearby tracks. Two of GAIPO's flyers may have referenced this theory, asking "Why do we have guns coming in [to Austin] but not jobs."[596]

### Finding 3:  Dominance of An Electoral Strategy

Members also differ about GAIPO's immediate action plan.  Several of the most active and vocal members intend to 1) build electoral power and 2) pressure public officials to change their positions on policy, through a variety of community organizing and public actions.  Others

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[595] Ibid.
[596] Facebook post, 6/29/16; 2/27/17.

are attracted to non-electoral forms of collective action, such as community service and building

block clubs.  However, more than any faction to debates over problem definition, proponents of

the electoral and pressure strategies control the organization's agenda.  This control is reflected

in GAIPO's recent activity, and their public statements in social and the local media.  It is also

apparent in the dominance of discussion about actions by proponents of these strategies.  It is

not clear if proponents of the electoral and pressure strategy have led other members to

understand or share their vision.

**Evidence from GAIPO's Actions and Meetings**

Emma Tai described diversity in members' views on GAIPO's strategy and priorities for

action.  For some, such as Mrs. and Mr. Frazier, the distinction between electoral work and

other forms of collective action is familiar, and electoral work valorized.  Others seemed not to

distinguish electoral work from community service or building networks, and tend to gravitate

toward the latter.  These members have continued to suggest, and support suggestions for,

block clean-ups, neighborhood watches, and other forms of community service and self-help.[597]

I also observed members discussing collective self-help and social capital-building activities.[598]

Withal this ideological diversity, GAIPO's actions have been consistently oriented toward

electoral power and public pressure strategies.  As of the Spring of 2017, GAIPO was taking

regular actions designed to pressure elected officials to change policies, and to build GAIPO's

electoral potential.  There were no community-service or non-electorally oriented network-

building actions on GAIPO's agenda (with the possible exception of the monthly canvasses,

which could serve electoral and social capital strategies equally well).  Recent and upcoming

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[597] Interview with Tai, 3/8/17.
[598] Field Notes, 3/16/17; Field Notes, 3/11/17..

actions included attendance at an anti-charter school rally, a confrontation with Ald. Mitts about charter expansion at her "ward night," plans to attend the Chicago Police Department's (CPD) precinct and Community Alternative Policy Strategy (CAPS) meetings, and plans to develop strategic alliances with other community organizations in Austin.

The discussion of these actions at the 3/16 General Body Meeting revealed several members who understood these actions, quite intricately, in terms of electoral and pressure strategies, and were very enthusiastic about implementing them. I observed the following comments:

- Mr. Frazier explained the importance of GAIPO representatives attending CPD precinct and CAPS meetings, armed with relevant data (and he distributed information about crime statistics). He described these actions as a way of building GAIPO's reputation locally, and to influence local policy debates.

- Ms. Bailey Donaldson discussed building a coalition with other organizations in the community in terms of the goal of building electoral power. Bailey also suggested demographic analysis of the neighboring 29th ward (which everyone agreed was very demographically complex) in order to plan strategic outreach in the ward.

- Nickie commented on GAIPO members' recent attendance at the anti-charter rally and Ald. Mitts' ward night. She described Ald. Mitts' evasion of a confrontation with GAIPO's, and recent shift in her position on charter schools as proof that pressure can influence politicians. Mrs. Frazier agreed, observing that Ald. Mitts likely took note of who had attended her ward night, and even "noted your faces." Both speakers also alluded to the actions' ability to raise GAIPO's profile locally.

For all the commentary at the March 11th debriefing and March 16th General Body Meeting about the importance of social norms and networks, neither meeting featured any discussion about concrete actions aimed at these goals.  Conversations about action were dominated by the Mr. and Mrs. Frazier, Nickie, and Bailey.  A handful of other members responded with vague but supportive comments.[599]

The extent to which other attendees understand, or agree with, the electoral and pressure strategies is not clear.  Talking informally before meetings, I observed several members—in addition to the cadre committed to the electoral and pressure strategies—echo one of the cadre's frequent points:  harsh criticism of current elected officials, especially Emma Mitts and Rahm Emanuel.  And during GAIPO's 3/16 discussion about actions, I did not observe any non-verbal expressions of discontent with the strategic agenda.  However, I also did not find any evidence contrary to Emma Tai's observation that many GAIPO members, though not hostile to electoral strategies, do not fully understand their distinction from other forms of collective action, or are open to either.

**Evidence from Official Statements**

The institutionalization of an electoral and pressure strategies is also evident in GAIPO's official statements.  GAIPO codified an electoral mission into its official mission and vision statements, which were adopted at a meeting of the Organizing Committee on February 25th, 2017.  The mission statement was adopted unanimously, and the vision statement with a vote of 10 in favor, 0 opposed, one abstaining.  The mission statement describes GAIPO explicitly as a "political organization" and describes its mission as "to organize for political power…"  The

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[599] Field Notes, 3/16/17.

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vision statement also describes a future in which "elected officials are held accountable for providing public services to all."[600]

Ms. Bailey Donaldson articulated a focus on politician accountability through electoral power and public pressure in an interview with the Chicago Reader. She argued that a lack of transparency and accountability of elected officials is implicated in the persistence of Austin's problems. She implied that political pressure, enabled by organizing and mobilization, is required to change officials' behavior.[601]

I found the same themes in 5 flyers produced by GAIPO to advertise their events to audiences in the neighborhood.[602] These flyers were handed out on canvasses, posted on GAIPO's Facebook page, and placed in event advertising spaces at community institutions, including the North Austin Library, LaFollette Park, among other locations. 4 of the 5 construct the meeting's purposes in terms of electoral political empowerment. The content of each flyers follows this sequence:

- A list community of problems (which always includes violent crime, and some combination of youth unemployment, schools, and lack of political voice)

- The assertion that the community can solve its problems by organizing to build power. In three of the four cases, the concept of "building power" is explicitly defined in electoral terms; in the fourth, organizing is simply defined as "building power"

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[600] The statements read, respectively: "The mission of the Greater Austin Independent Political Organization, an all-volunteer political organization, is to organize for political power needed to make bold, sustainable solutions possible;" "The vision of the Greater Austin IPO is to create a community in which all people can achieve their full potential. We look forward to a safe thriving community where people are accountable to each other and elected officials are held accountable for providing public services to ALL."

[601] "There's not much transparency, and it's hard to know who's in control and if things are going where they need to go...We're unimpressed with the movement of our officials. We have to organize and demand the changes that we need." (Hinton, Rachel: "Solutions for violence in Austin face slow implementation, money troubles" in Chicago Reader, 3/15/17)

[602] Of course, my interpretations of texts are limited by my lack of information about their production and reception. I take the texts as evidence of one voice within GAIPO; we don't know if this is a consensus, majority, minority, or single voice; or if it's more or less prominent among any particular segments. We can also take these as observations of discursive events—the propagation of discursive constructions to audiences. I know that the texts were publicized on GAIPO's Facebook page, and in community fora around Austin (e.g., bulletin boards at the North Austin Library).

- Most of the flyers also mention some recently proposed or enacted policy, implying that a disliked policy is the result of the community's political disempowerment.

The flyer for a November 17th GAIPO forum emphasizes both electoral empowerment and building collective capacity through strengthening social networks. The flyer lists four "agenda" items: 1) "How to build a strong community network"; 2) "Strength in numbers. We can accomplish all our goals when we work together"; 3) "Strengthening the community with voting power"; and 4) "Building a block club with your neighbors and using it to change your neighborhood." Three of these items clearly echo the themes of the social network and norms discourse (described above). Yet even this expression of the social capital focus makes a concession to the electoral strategy.

### Finding 4: Consensus Against Charter School Expansion

I witnessed a brief conversation about charter schools at the March 16th General Body Meeting. There were differing views about the nature of charter schools, but universal opposition to their expansion in Austin. Mrs. Frazier argued that charters are not inherently good or bad, but indicted "the way they have come into the neighborhood." Nickie said that charters had proven untrustworthy in her experience. Two other meeting attendees argued that charter expansion would sap resources from the already resource-starved community schools. One of these speakers also suggested that the standards used by CPS to determine school overcrowding were arbitrary, and used speciously whenever CPS wanted to create a new charter. All participants in this conversation juxtaposed charter schools to "community schools," implying that charters were not exactly of the community.[603]

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[603] Field Notes 3/16/17.

I observed three patterns in the interaction of these three discourses, in institutional

contexts. At the organizational level—i.e., when making statements or plans on behalf of the

organization as a whole—members either hewed to only one of the discourses, or aggregated

the concerns of all of them; they did not attempt to synthesize, or adjudicate among conflicting

visions. A few individual members, however, did synthesize discourses. In particular, members

who espoused the primacy of social norms and behaviors readily synthesized these foci with the

theory of a long-term, large-scale anti-black plan. Finally, coalition organizers occasionally

intervened to downplay the anti-black project discourse.

**Aggregation or Separation at the Organizational Level**

In some cases, GAIPO aggregates participants' concerns, creating a list of priorities or

goals drawn from all three discourses. For example, at a Community Forum in July of 2016,

attended by approximately 50 Austin residents and regular GAIPO members, the meeting

facilitators compiled a list of policy priorities including "job training programs, parenting

workshops, mental health and trauma resources, and better-funded schools."[604] A similar

hodgepodge was compiled at the a forum in November 2015, including "improving education

and employment opportunities, strengthening spiritual connections, better training and

increased presence for Chicago police officers, and youth mentorship programs."[605]

But when an individual or sub-group of GAIPO members has articulated the

organization's priorities, they tend hew to one or another discourse. GAIPO's flyers and

informational handouts, for instance, primarily emphasize *either* jobs and education, *or* social

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[604] Hutson, 2016.
[605] Kremer, 2015b.

networks and norms.  The flyer associated with the March 16th meeting listed high rates of gun violence, "schools under siege," youth unemployment, and the proliferation of guns.  It later repeated the invitation to discuss "issues like education, violence, jobs and much more."[606]  The flyers for a November, 2016 organizer training and the July, 2016 community forum similarly mention Austin's employment rates and schools.[607]  By contrast, a flyer for a November, 2016 community forum emphasized social networks.  The flyer called attendees to "help us to build a strong community," and to "network and create new friendships."  The flyer listed four agenda items for the meeting, including "how to build a strong community network" and "Building a block club with your neighbors and using it to change your neighborhood."[608]

Similarly, when GAIPO members speak on behalf of the organization to the press, they appear to draw from their preferred discourse, not to attempt an aggregation or synthesis.  Ms. Bailey Donaldson and Ms. Constance Daniels' remarks to the Chicago Reporter (see above) dealt primarily with employment.  And Mrs. Frazier's editorial focused primarily on black-owned businesses.[609]

**Synthesis at the Individual Level**

Some individual GAIPO members synthesized the discourses.  The most pronounced instance was the rearticulation of the argument about social norms and behavior as a strategic response to the anti-black project.  It was not clear if all proponents of the behavioralist discourse were amenable to this rearticulation.  It was also not clear if proponents of an employment focus were amenable to a similar rearticulation.

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[606] This and previous quote from Flyer, posted on Facebook, 3/11/17.
[607] Flyer posted on Facebook, 11/6/16, 7/7/16.
[608] This and previous quote:  flyer, posted on Facebook, 11/19/16.
[609] Conversation with Emma Tai, 3/11/17.

**Organizer Intervention**

Notwithstanding Tai's intention to allow the bottom-up determination of the

organizaton's orientation, coalition organizers have intervened to promote the employment

discourse, and to marginalize elements of the anti-black project discourse. For example, Jason

Lee led a discussion on parenting, in which he articulated the connections between family

break-down and employment, with the latter rooted in the city and nation's economic policies.

This intervention was intended to shift GAIPO members' focus from behaviors and norms to

structurally rooted economic phenomena.

Tai mentioned her censorship of an editorial written by one organizing committee

member. Tai omitted paragraphs in which the member espoused "hard-core black nationalism,"

prioritizing black-owned businesses in Austin. Tai excised these paragraphs due to their

ideological misalignment with the coalition. And Tai told the editorial's author the omission was

made due to the newspaper's space constraints.[610]

## 2.3 GAIPO's Recruiting Procedures

Finally, it is important to note that GAIPO's recruitment methods cannot fully explain

the findings about GAIPO's members. Recruitment methods likely contributed to the middle-

class skew in GAIPO's membership; they may have indirectly contributed to the number of

members affiliated with local civic organizations. But they cannot explain the ideological

currents among GAIPO members.

GAIPO recruited primarily through canvassing and placing literature in public places. At

least since the summer of 2016, GAIPO has held two canvasses per month (with a hiatus from

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[610] Conversation with Tai, 3/11/17.

November, 2016 through early March, 2017).[611] Any local residents contacted through canvasses are invited to an "intake meeting" to learn more about the organization and its goals. GAIPO members also distribute flyers for their upcoming meetings at local churches, libraries, parks, and restaurants, and on the organization's Facebook page.[612] To a lesser extent, GAIPO used outreach via social media (i.e., "tagging" individuals in Facebook posts about upcoming meetings), and outreach to personal contacts. But these have produced few members.[613] In the Summer of 2017, GAIPO experimented with service-based outreach, conducted block clean-ups, and attempting to leverage them as means of recruitment. GAIPO successfully launched only two such events.

These techniques are reflected in members' reports of what drew them to GAIPO: Of the 12 Organizing Committee members for whom I can account,

- 6 were recruited via canvasses

- 3 saw flyers in public places

- 2 were brought in by friends

- 1 was recruited by an announcement at church [614]

All the UWF personnel and organizing committee members reported that less regular members were mostly recruited via canvasses and flyers. The ongoing canvassing creates a

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[611] Facebook posts. These canvasses use typical organizing tactics—using voting records and party affiliation data to target households, and typical conversational scripts (eliciting primary concerns, and suggesting their systemic and political roots through a series of leading questions). All people contacted through a canvass are contacted again by GAIPO members, and invited to an upcoming meeting. This can be one of the organization's General Body Meeting. New attendees at these meetings are encouraged to attend an organizer training session, and then to join the team of canvassers.
[612] Field notes, 3/16/17.
[613] Interview with Tai, 3/10/17.
[614] Field notes, 3/16/17.

trickle of new recruits, with the usual attrition at each stage of organizational commitment: Tai estimates that, for 40 attendees at an intake meeting, she would expect 7 or 8 at the training.[615]

In this reliance on canvassing and flyering, GAIPO's organizers did not tap the organizational networks of the non-profit organizations or neighborhood associations in Austin. Tai and Lee report that they did not perceive any opportunities to organize a viable constituency through such networks. I found only two examples in which GAIPO's organizers recruited via existing organizational networks, each of which produced only one regular member: 1) during the Stamps campaign, the Chicago Teachers Union provided organizers with lists of its members in the ward; one regular member was recruited in this way. 2)A second member reported that his pastor, at a local Baptist church, had made an announcement promoting GAIPO in the announcements portion of a weekly service.

It is possible that GIAPO indirectly selected for people affiliated with local civic organizations by targeting canvasses to registered voters. This ensured that GAIPO canvassed households with the characteristics correlated with voter registration, including middle-class socioeconomic status and political attention. These characteristics are themselves correlated with participation in non-profit and civic institutions.

GAIPO's initial middle-class skew was also reinforced by their decision to canvass in the precincts where existing members lived. Given the correlation of residential geography with socioeconomic status, this targeting ensured that the initial middle-class members would reach out primarily to other residents of predominantly middle-class precincts.

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[615] Interview with Emma Tai, 3/8/17. The Organizing Committee has discussed ways to increase the effectiveness of recruitment efforts and retention, and most recently developed new recruitment materials, an "information card" to collect recruits' contact information, and deliver GAIPO's contact information and mission in an easily digestible way (Personal communication with Ms. Nickie Abraham, 6/22/17.

When recruiting, GAIPO's organizers have intentionally refrained from filtering by

ideology. They attempted to elicit resident interest in joining the organization, and to build

relationships, based on shared concerns and experiences with local problems—not by sharing

UWF's analysis of social problems. And organizers presented an open-ended and general vision

of "change" through collective action—not UWF's policy agenda. GAIPO's organizers do frame

the neighborhood's problems in one minimal sense: they encourage residents to see problems

as rooted in politics, and that building and exercising political power is necessary to solve

problems. But beyond this politicization, GAIPO's organizers intentionally refrain from

constructing problems in a particular way.

This approach was reflected in GAIPO's canvassing methods and scripts, and the

programs for GAIPO's new recruit intake meetings. Tai says that GAIPO's canvassers "engage

residents around problems, not around issues, with a definition and solution already built-in."

Canvassing with GAIPO in the Spring of 2017, I observed GAIPO members sticking closely to this

approach: canvassers tended to discuss the possibility of addressing problems in very general

terms, tended to raise the failings of existing political leadership. Organizers also followed this

approach at "intake meetings." Conversations and organizers' presentations focused on the

problems with which residents have expressed concerns, but mostly eschewed ideologically-

informed political education.

This approach to organizing was informed by well-developed theories.[616] For present

purposes, these recruitment methods matter because they ensure that GAIPO members were

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[616] Two beliefs lead Tai and Lee to deemphasize political education, or "consciousness-raising." First, pedagogical models of organizing often fail to take target populations' existing views seriously, and thus fail to generate sustained commitment. Even forms of political education which claim to elicit residents' concerns, and build a critique of larger systems from there, ignore complex and deeply rooted belief systems. Hence, as Lee recounts, the frequent experience of initial resident interest, (giving organizers a false sense of resident buy-in), followed by dissipation (Interview with Lee, 3/3/17). Tai suggested that a more thoroughgoing education process, which truly engages with residents' beliefs, is, while possible, so resource- and skill-intensive that it cannot be the focus of a replicable community organizing model. It requires consistent pedagogical interventions over a long

not filtered by ideology.   As UWF organizing director Kate Barthelme explains, "organizing by

issues tends to filter according to ideology—it draws people who share your perspective on

problems, and are interested in your proposed solutions."  By contrast, organizing around broad

problems, without defining solutions, draws a much wider swath of residents.  In effect, GAIPO's

recruitment methods ensured that the sample of Austin residents studied was not "selected on

the dependent variable."

## 2.4.  GAIPO Members' Links to Austin's Non-Profits

A majority of GAIPO members, including the most vocal proponents of those discursive

tendencies, had direct or indirect links to the neighborhood-based institutions and social

networks described in the last chapter.  I obtained data on nine regular GAIPO members'

political and civic affiliations and backgrounds.  Seven of the nine were affiliated with the

aforementioned institutions, or with similar institutions, and 4 were affiliated with multiple

institutions.

**Table 5.4. Affiliations by type of organization**

| Type of Organization | Number of GAIPO members affiliated |
|---|---|
| Community based non-profit | 4 |
| Block club | 4 |
| Church-based service program | 2 |
| Business association | 2 |

I also found evidence that seven GAIPO members had pursued projects related to black

economic empowerment or social fabric in similar institutional contexts.  Most simply, four

GAIPO members who espoused the "social fabric" discourse mentioned being members of block

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period, informed by thorough knowledge of the coalition's positions, great sensitivity to the audience's pre-existing beliefs, and
exceptional pedagogical skill.  As Tai summarizes, an organizing model isn't replicable if it depends on large investment in organizing
personnel, or requires "someone as smart as Jason" (Interview with Tai, 3/9/17).

clubs. All four reported participating in self-help activities typically associated with block clubs, including patrolling the neighborhood for illicit or disorderly activity, and cleaning up trash.[617]

Mr. Floyd, who called for GAIPO to focus on "unity," social networks, and economic development, has worked on related projects in local groups. Social media records indicate that Mr. Floyd, perhaps GAIPO's most connected member, has links with WHA, ACT, and St. John's Bible Church.[618] These links may have been fostered by Mr. Floyd's work at a local high school which regularly hosts community meetings convened by WHA, local churches, and the Chicago Police Department, among others. Mr. Floyd has also taken courses in non-profit management at a local church, and supports the Rainbow Covenant Economic Development Center, a new Austin-based development group, networked with WHA. In these contexts, Mr. Floyd has worked on network-building and economic development projects: In 2018, he helped publicize a campaign to "build a network of unity between neighbors," involving another Austin church and the 100 Blocks 100 Churches campaign (led by several local pastors and supported by WHA).[619]

Mr. Robert Davis, a proponent of the "social fabric" perspective within GAIPO, is connected to multiple religious institutions whose service-based programs embody that perspective. Mr. Davis has worked on these programs since at least 2014, co-founding a mentoring program at a local church, and leading a block clean-ups as an elder at New Life Community Church.[620]

Mr. and Mrs. Frazier, leading exponents of the anti-black plan discourse and proponents of black-owned business, have long been active in nationalist-oriented racial justice movements

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[617] Field Notes, 3/16/17.
[618] He shared ACT's job postings and other events; commented on and shared WHA's events.
[619] Social media records (fb posts on wall of 100 Blocks 100 Churches)
[620] Johnson, 2014.

and political organizations.  Mr. Frazier was an active member of the 37th Ward Independent

Political Organization, formed in 1985 to support Harold Washington and his ward-level allies.[621]

While I have not yet obtained find additional biographical information, Emma Tai mentioned

that Mr. and Mrs. Frazier have remained "very plugged in" to organizations sustaining the black

nationalist approach to racial justice.  Tai mentioned Mrs. Frazier's close attention to political

programming on WVON, an African-American oriented talk-radio station, with a long history of

civil rights and black nationalist-oriented political activism.[622]

## Discussion

UWF's attempt to organize a base for a progressive-left project in Austin were

unsuccessful.  They were undermined by Austin residents' preexisting commitments to self-help

and community development.  These commitments were based in common sense about the

causes of social problems and the nature of racial interests.  These Austin residents rejected

UWF's program, tried to street the nascent Greater Austin Independent Political Organization

toward self-help and development work.  UWF organizers found it possible to work with a few

recruits on electoral campaigns in which UWF's left agenda contingently converged with the

recruits' Black Nationalist perspective.  Most of the recruits, however, lost interest when UWF

organizers resisted the turn toward development and self-help.

There is suggestive evidence that the milieu of neighborhood institutions, forming in

Austin since the 1960s, helped diffuse these perspectives on social problems and racial interest

among Austin's residents.  Non-profits, business associations, elected officials, and other actors

reproduced neoliberal-compatible versions of long-running activist traditions focused on

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[621] Among other activities, Mr. Frazier was the appellant in a lawsuit accusing the machine candidate for Democratic committeeperson, Thomas Simmons, of fraud, and seeking his removal from the ballot.
[622] Searcy, 2012; Squires, 2000.

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business development and strengthening social fabric.  Austin's community development groups

also articulated distinctively neoliberal renditions of these discourses, synthesizing Black

Capitalist and racial uplift themes with neoliberal ideas about competing for private investment

and redeveloping local real estate.  The institutions diffuse these discourses to a wide swath of

politically active and attentive neighborhood residents, via social and organizational networks,

and high-profile projects.

I do not claim that the current milieu of neighborhood institutions was the only

important source of GAIPO members' commitments.  These are clearly long-running ideological

traditions which neighborhood residents have likely encountered in many contexts.  For

example, at least two members drew their ideas about Black empowerment from experiences in

the mass mobilizations and ward-level politicking associated with Harold Washington's

mayoralty.  However, I found suggestive evidence that neighborhood institutions shaped the

development of GAIPO in two ways.  First, I presented suggestive evidence that GAIPO members

had, if not acquired, reaffirmed their commitments to self-help and development projects in

these neighborhood institutions.  Two GAIPO members had recently enacted the same

discourses they espoused in GAIPO in multiple non-profits, and several others were members of

block clubs and neighborhood associations (although I could not determine if these were among

the block clubs affiliated with the non-profits discussed in this chapter).  This suggests

neighborhood institutions and their programs help reproduce people's social visions.

Second, even if they don't directly shape neighborhoods residents' ideologies, local

institutions and their projects function as "condensing devices," attracting people with diverse

but compatible ideologies to a set of concrete practices.  For example, the two aforementioned

veterans of the Washington campaigns appeared not to have internalized neoliberal doctrines

of economic development (as other GAIPO members had), instead espousing an older version of

Black Capitalism, seeing Black entrepreneurship as a crucial mode of racial empowerment.  They

nonetheless found Austin African American Business Network Association's neoliberal

community development work attractive, and appeared to be building a relationship between

GAIPO and AAABNA.

These organizations have themselves been shaped by the institutional developments

described in Chapter 1.  Since at least the 1980s, government and philanthropic funding streams

have supported the self-help and business development work.  More recently, the neoliberal

regime has facilitated the participation of local activists in Chicago's vibrant real estate

redevelopment industry.  And organizations focused on grassroots mobilization were

systematically eliminated from the neighborhood since the early 1970s, by state repression,

grassroots pressures to provide immediate economic relief, and lucrative opportunities to

provide social services.

Some competing explanations for GAIPO's failure can be ruled out.  GAIPO's failure

cannot be fully attributed to inadequate resources, given UWF's significant personnel and

financial investments in the organization.  I found no evidence that Austin residents recruited to

GAIPO rejected left programs on the basis of rational calculations about the viability of UWF's

project.  It's possible that GAIPO members, several of whom were homeowners, recognized

their potential material interest in rising property values, associated with redevelopment.

However, my observation and interviews suggested that GAIPO recruits made decisions on the

basis of deeply held ideologies:  at least in public, they discussed GAIPO's mission in terms of

their beliefs about the nature and causes of social problems, and the nature of collective racial

interest.

Past work argues that neoliberal ideas about individual responsibility, entrepreneurialism, and market superiority suffice public rhetoric in the political, economic, and social spheres. While I observed particular ideas about racial interest and social problems most directly affecting GAIPO recruits' decision-making, I could not rule out the possibility that these other neoliberal ideologies underpinned residents' attraction to self-help and development, and their aversion to some UWF's programs. I make the more modest claim that the discourses on social problems and racial interest reproduced by neighborhood institutions were one important influence on organizing processes and outcomes, perhaps alongside other material and ideological influences.

It's possible that commitments to self-help and development are most prevalent among middle-class neighborhood residents. GAIPO's membership was almost entirely middle-class, as indexed by educational attainment and profession. Simply put, I was not able to observe the views and commitments of working-class and lower-income residents of Austin. Their absence from GAIPO was explained partly by GAIPO's recruitment procedures, as discussed above. It may also reflect the many material and psychological barriers to participation facing low-income people.

The first case study thus suggests that the institutional developments in Chapter 1 do shape the terrain for organizing around economic issues, likely in concert with other forces. Those developments produced a set of institutions, which help reproduce a population committed to modes of practice compatible with or incorporated into the neoliberal regime. On the basis of these commitments, residents reject left programs, leaving UWF organizers with greatly restricted possibilities for organizing.

The case also illustrates one challenge to UWF's strategy of building a class-conscious, progressive-left politics of race. As explained in Chapter 3, UWF is trying to articulate state-led reinvestment, mostly via public services, as a racial justice program. This chapter suggests that UWF organizers must take seriously the extent to which decades of political practice have propagated neoliberal and neoliberal-compatible constructions of racial interest and racial justice. In Austin, developments since the 1960s have removed from public currency articulations of racial justice other than Black Capitalism and self-help (and, though not discussed in this chapter, community control and political empowerment more generally). While those concepts have historically been attached to a wide range of programs, neighborhood institutions have propagated the neoliberal or at least neoliberal-compatible definitions discussed above. These definitions are embedded in quotidian economic practices and publicly visible developments. And GAIPO recruits appeared to hold these understandings of racial interest and racial justice as common sense. UWF organizers are tasked with rearticulating concepts whose meanings are deeply engrained. The difficulty of this task raises the question of whether UWF should attempt to organize a class-focused movement in racial and ethnic terms—a question to which I will return in Chapter 7.

## Chapter 6:  Organizing in Albany Park and the 33rd Ward

### Introduction

On May 20th, 2019, Rosanna Rodriguez-Sanchez, an avowed "life-long socialist," was sworn in as the new alderman of Chicago's 33rd ward—a swath of racially and economically diverse, but rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods on Chicago's near North Side.[623]  Rodriguez-Sanchez narrowly defeated two-term incumbent Deb Mell, a close ally of Rahm Emanuel, who had supported most of the neoliberal regime's economic, immigration, and public safety policies.[624]  Rodrgiuez-Sanchez's victory incrementally advances the project of United Working Families—the coalition of left-leaning unions, NGOs, and mass membership organizations described in Chapter 4—to win control of Chicago's City Council and enact comprehensive social democratic reforms:  she joins a block of 5 members of the Democratic Socialists of America and 10 close allies of UWF on the City Council.[625]

The key actor behind Rodriguez-Sanchez's election was not United Working Families, however, but a smaller, grassroots formation:  the group of approximately 40 volunteers, all of whom live in the ward, Working Families of the 33rd Ward (WF33).  WF33 developed Rodrigeuz-Sanchez's platform, recruited and mobilized over one hundred volunteers, and deployed them in large GOTV and outreach efforts.  Over the previous four years, WF33 had launched

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[623] Smith, 2018:  "Is a Puerto Rican native running for Chicago alderman the next Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez?" (Chicago Reader).

[624] Mell voted with Mayor Emanuel on 81% of contested votes in her first term (Simpson et al, 2016:  "A More Active City Council Chicago City Council Report #8 June 17, 2015 – April 13, 2016").  She sided with Emanuel on high salience issues such as funding the construction of a new police academy, and opposing a moratorium on charter construction.  In the ward, she worked closely with real estate developers to launch several rent-intensifying real estate developments.

[625] The other five DSA members are Daniel La Spata (1st ward), Jeanette Taylor (20th ward), Dawson Vasquez (40th), Byron Sigcho Lopez (25th ward), and Carlos Ramirez-Rosa (35th).  The other alderman who were recruited, trained, and backed by UWF are Matt Martin (47th ward), Mike Rodriguez (22nd ward), Maria Hadden (49th ward), and Sue Sadlowski-Garza (10th ward).  This is in addition to six other members of the City Council's Progressive Reform Caucus who have received funding and endorsements from UWF:  Sophia King (4th ward), Leslie Hairston (5th ward), Ald. Roderick T. Sawyer (6th ward), David Moore (17th ward), Antonio Taliaferro (29th ward), Scott Waguespack (32nd ward).

organizing, advocacy, and service-provision projects, connecting with ward residents, spreading progressive and left discourses about displacement and other issues, and building a foundation for the 2019 aldermanic campaign by dramatizing Ald. Mell's unpopular positions on salient issues.

Like the Greater Austin Independent Political Organization (Chapter 6), WF33 was launched in 2015, by veterans of a failed 2015 aldermanic campaign. But WF33's development differed starkly from GAIPO's. The two organizations adopted very different goals: whereas GAIPO focused on apolitical service work and business development, WF33 has prioritized base-building and electoral work, to advance a policy agenda focused on economic redistribution and protection of undocumented people. And while GAIPO has declined since 2018 (and was a non-factor in the 37th ward's 2019 aldermanic election), WF33 has grown into a large and effective ward-level formation.

WF33's form, agenda, and modes of practice also contrast sharply with most other community-based activism, in Chicago and nationally. Ideologically, WF33's commitment to socialism contrasts with most Alinskyite groups' eschewal of ideological programs, and foundation-funded NGOs's liberal reformism. Few community-based organizations invest in persistent grassroots organizing, and even fewer integrate this base-building with partisan electoral projects.[626]

Instead, WF33 has become exactly the type of formation that UWF, and other left practitioners around the U.S., have talked about creating: a grassroots group ideologically committed to a left agenda (encompassing commitments to economic, racial, and immigrant justice, which they understand as overlapping) and capable of strategic action. Moreover, it is

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[626] I describe the ideologies common among community-based organizations in the following section. I described the national trend of community-based organizations toward liberal reformism in detail in a dissertation chapter submitted in the Summer of 2017.

embedded in a high-poverty neighborhood, where it can serve as a vehicle for grassroots organizing of lower-class populations.  Practitioners at UWF, the Occupy movement, and other left outlets have noted the importance of such organizations in their conversations about movement building strategy.

This chapter tries to account for WF33's development.  What explains the emergence of a grassroots group ideologically committed to a broad socialist agenda and possessing sophisticated power-building strategies?  Why was it possible for a handful of volunteer activists to quickly build a relatively large and effective organization?  What explains the divergent outcomes of WF33 and GAIPO?

I will argue, firstly, that WF33's outcomes were caused by the ideologies of WF33 members.  Through interviews, participant observation, and analysis of members' writings, I show that most of WF33's membership is ideologically committed to socialist agendas, and to a class conflict-centered analysis of the current political conjuncture and social problems.  They also have elaborate theories of political strategy, which emphasize building power through grassroots organizing, and winning control of governing institutions.  I present evidence that these ideas—not interventions by UWF, or WF33 members' attempts to attain influence or resources—have determined the organization's form, agenda, and strategy.

What then explains the existence of a population of activists with these ideologies?  In brief, three processes have produced a population of activists with these particular ideologies at a city-wide scale:

- First, many of WF33's members developed their ideologies during the waves of economically-focused, class-conscious mobilizations in Chicago since the early 2010s. Chapter 4 described these mobilizations, and the production and diffusion through

Chicago's progressive-left milieu of common critiques of neoliberalization, visions of

social change, and ideas about strategy.  Using interviews, news articles, and other

primary documents, I show that several WF33 members (and most of the key leaders)

gained their ideas through experiences in these mobilizations, as grassroots activists,

academics, journalists, or union members.

- Second, some WF33 members adopted their ideas as a result of UWF's leadership

    within Chicago's left.  Since its founding in 2013 (and as a result of the financial backing

    of the Chicago Teachers Union and Service Employees International Union, Healthcare

    Illinois and Indiana), UWF has launched increasingly viable electoral campaigns and

    other projects.  Activists with diverse views have embraced these projects, and the

    agendas and strategies they embody, seeing them as best available opportunity for

    advancing a progressive-left agenda.

- Third, WF33 has also benefited from the national wave of interest in social democratic

    programs since 2016.  Many WF33 members became active and interested in socialism

    at this time.  Most of these individuals joined the Chicago chapter of Democratic

    Socialists of America, where they were exposed to ideologies similar—if less radical and

    less expansive—to those of UWF and Chicago's left milieu.  Several WF33 members

    came to the organization via DSA.

These activists' presence in Albany Park also appeared to be a systematically determined

outcome.  I found that these activists sorted into the 33rd ward as consumers of residential

space, seeking the affordability, diversity, and amenities characteristic of neighborhoods in early

stages of gentrification.

These findings address the dissertation's main theoretical questions about the determinants of neighborhood-level terrain for grassroots organizing. Whereas the Austin case suggested that neoliberalization has shaped the terrain for organizing, this case suggests that the development of the left at the city and national scales, can also shape that terrain. By producing a cohort of activists, who sorted into particular neighborhoods, the expansion of the left has created possibilities for left base-building in those neighborhoods.

This chapter will first describe the current state of WF33, including its size, structure, agenda, strategy, and political alignments. I will then document the ideas of its leading members, based on in-depth interviews, participant observation, and analysis of members' writings. And I will demonstrate that these ideas caused WF33's agenda and strategy. I will then trace the key processes which produced populations of activists with these ideologies.

## 1. Reviewing Outcomes: The Size, Form, and Orientation of WF33

This section reviews the outcomes of activists' attempts to build a new formation in the Thirty-Third Ward. What has 33rd Ward Working Families become since its creation in 2015? Pursuant the central questions of the dissertation, I assess two aspects of WF33's development: 1) the extent to which it has become an effective political actor, and 2) the extent to which it has taken a particular alignment in Chicago's conflict over neoliberalization. To these ends, I analyze organizational properties associated with political effectiveness (including size, structure, and strategy) and its policy agenda and vision for social change.

In brief, I found the following:

- With 42 formal members as of January 2019, WF33 has already attained a large membership, relative to other neighborhood-level UWF satellites, and relative to other place-based, grassroots political organizations.

- WF33 has a formal leadership structure, with official decision-making processes.  This can be

  seen as an achievement, enabling organizational survival and effective action.  It can also be

  seen as a potential threat to the organization's internal democracy.

- Relatedly, WF33 has repeatedly demonstrated a capacity for effective political action,

  carrying out issue campaigns, electoral campaigns, and service work in the ward.

- WF33 has a consistent policy agenda, focused on progressive economic redistribution,

  protection of undocumented immigrants, non-punitive approaches to public safety, and

  democratization of ward- and city-level governance.   Especially on economic issues, their

  agenda is closely in line with that of the United Working Family coalition.

- WF33 has a clear strategy, emphasizing grassroots base-building and winning control of

  formal political institutions, as a member of the citywide UWF coalition.

## WF33's Membership

WF33's formal membership and broader network of informal supporters are large by

the standards of UWF's ward-level satellites.  WF33's 42 formal members (defined as members

who pay monthly dues and have attended at least two monthly meetings in the previous 6

months) is comparable in size to the largest of the ward-level political organizations in UWF's

network, Network 49 and United Neighbors of the 35th Ward, who each report 40-50

members.[627]  WF33 has grown without the benefit of a closely-allied alderman, unlike UN35.

This size contrasts sharply with the Greater Austin Independent Political Organization, whose

membership has dwindled to approximately 6 regular participants as of 2019.

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[627] Interview with Natalie Crary, 11/2017.

WF33 has built an extended network of contacts and informal supporters in the ward.

Members estimate a network of 10-20 more occasional participants in WF33 events, depending

on the issue.  Through various forms of outreach (described at length in the next chapter), WF33

has grown a contact list of approximately 100 ward residents—people who have signed a WF33

petition, expressed interest in WF33's work, or attended a WF33 event and added themselves to

a mailing list.[628]  I could not obtain comparable data for other organizations in Chicago.  WF33

has developed relationships with ideologically aligned organizations in the ward.  WF33

collaborates on issue campaigns—and has many common members with—the Northside Branch

of the Chicago Chapter of Democratic Socialists of America.  It collaborates on anti-eviction work

and has built a taskforce to protect undocumented immigrants with two grassroots

organizations rooted in working- and lower-class immigrant populations.  WF33 has friendly

relations with two progressive non-profits in the ward, and is exploring the possibility of

collaboration.[629]  Finally, WF33 has developed relationships with prominent institutional actors

in the ward, including a principal of a local public school and a local pastor.[630]

## Structure of WF33

WF33 initially had no formal structure.  Antonio reports that, after Tim Meegan's 2015

aldermanic campaign, the campaign leadership functioned as the *de facto* leadership of WF33,

and members took organizational roles on an *ad hoc* basis.  In the Spring of 2016, frustrated by

what they viewed as inefficiencies (such as "unnecessarily long, 3-hour, irrelevant meetings"),

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[628] These participants have, for example, signed one of WF33's petition or mailing list, attended at least one WF33 event, or expressed interest in WF33 and its work during a WF33 canvass or flyering.

[629] The non-profits are Centro Autonomo and Albany Park Theatre Project.  The grassroots organizations are Autonomous Tenants Union and Communities Organized Against Deportation.  These groups and their relationships with WF33 are one of the primary topics of the next chapter.

[630] These include Scott Ahlman, the principal of Hibbard Elementary School, who has spoken out about the displacement of working families from the neighborhood.  As of May 2018, Antonio was planning to invite him to speak at a WF33 meeting about displacement.  Also, Thomas Terrell, pastor of Antonio Lutheran Church.  The church has provided WF33 with meeting space at the church.

WF33 members formalized roles and procedures. They created committees on membership, organizing, media and communications—each tasked with planning, decision-making, and implementing activities—and formalized leadership in a Steering Committee.[631] WF33 also defined criteria for membership, with members required to pay monthly dues.

Two founding members observed that WF33 has functioned more effectively since the restructuring. WF33's monthly meetings have become more efficient. Antonio observed that the clarification of organizational roles has made members more productive.[632] I found no evidence of concern about the formal structures undermining democracy within WF33. One member did offer, without solicitation, that while the Steering Committee sets the agenda for monthly meetings, they do not monopolize control over the agenda: other members and attendees still frequently raise additional topics, and that these topics are given full attention.[633]

This formal structure exists alongside informal social structures. Most of WF33's core members are also close personal friends of each other's. Many are part of a larger social milieu of progressive and leftist activists in the ward, who socialize regularly.[634]

## Capacity for Effective Action

WF33 has repeatedly demonstrated its capacity to formulate, plan, and implement issue and electoral campaigns and service programs. WF33's campaigns have had an impressive scale, in terms of the number of volunteer participants, and the numbers of local residents contacted in outreach efforts. Most have accomplished their short-term goals. The campaigns and service programs are also carefully integrated with WF33's larger strategic vision.

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[631] This and previous sentence, interview with Antonio, 5/24/18. I use pseudonyms to refer to informants, unless the informant consented to being identifies and either ran for public office, or was speaking in a professional capacity.
[632] Ibid.
[633] Interview with anonymous member, 5/30/18.
[634] Interview with Dawn, 12/7/18.

WF33 has initiated or participated in issue advocacy campaigns in the areas of education, public safety, and housing since 2015.  The following are the largest campaigns:

- In 2016, WF33 conducted voter education and GOTV campaigns in support of a ballot referendum to create a moratorium on creation of charter schools.  Over 9,900 ward residents (about 60% of those voting) voted in favor of the moratorium.[635]

- in 2017, WF33 canvassed sections of the ward to raise awareness about pending zoning changes and rent-intensifying development projects.  This included 4 canvasses, reaching approximately 120 ward residents.[636]

- In 2018, WF33 conducted outreach on behalf of referendum to formally call on the state to lift its ban on municipal rent control.  WF33 solicited signatures to place the referendum on the ballot in the ward, and conducted voter education and GOTV work to support the referendum.  WF33 succeeded in getting the referendum on the ballot in all 6 precincts it attempted.  The referendum won with over 65% support in all 6.[637]

- In 2017, WF33 organized a series of protests at the alderman's office to protest her support of the use of public funds to build a new police academy.  A WF33 member estimated that each protest turned out 15-20 people.

WF33 has also joined or initiated service programs related to the protection of undocumented immigrants.  With two other grassroots organizations, WF33 formed the Albany Park Defense Network, to provide a "rapid response"—including legal defense and civil disobedience—to deportation raids or deportation proceedings in the ward.  WF33 has also provided legal and logistical support to resident aliens facing deportation.[638]

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[635] Chicago Board of Election Commissioners.
[636] Interview with Dawn, 4/23/18.
[637] Chicago Board of Election Commissioners.
[638] This work is discussed in detail in the following chapter.

From 2015 to 2019, WF33 made consistent efforts to publicly criticize alderman Deb

Mell's record.  These included WF33's "Mell Watch," an effort to track and publicize Mell's

voting on city council and relationships with real estate developers.  Members also attended the

alderman's "ward nights" (monthly meetings with ward residents) engaging the alderman about

issues—a practice which, WF33 members proudly speculate, may have caused Mell's decisions

to indefinitely suspend monthly ward meetings in the Fall of 2018.[639]

All of these actions were designed to advance WF33's larger projects of base-building

and winning institutional power through elections.  As discussed extensively in the following

chapter, WF33 designed its issue and service work on housing and immigration to build a record

of issue positions contrasting with Ald. Mell's, and to maximize contact with segments of the

ward deemed potential constituencies.

In the summer of 2018, WF33 officially launched a campaign to elect one of its

members, Rossana Rodriguez-Sanchez, as the 33rd Ward alderman.  WF33 members served as

campaign staff and base of volunteers for the election.  The campaign built on the previous

years of work, mobilizing supporters and using contact lists generated through issue and service

work, and running on the platform of issues dramatized through earlier campaigns.  Rodriguez-

Sanchez won the election in a run-off, by 13 votes.  Previously, WF33 also recruited and ran a

slate of candidates for Local School Councils (governance bodies associated with each public

school in Chicago) in 2015 and 2017.

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[639] Dawn commented in the Spring of 2018, "As badly as I want to win this election, I have to say I will miss our contentious ward nights."

## WF33's Agenda

To reconstruct WF33's agenda, I analyzed the content of WF33's official platform, the 6

issue campaigns launched since 2015, the official platforms of WF33's aldermanic candidates in

2015 and 2019, and public statements by candidates and WF33 spokespersons.  I found that

WF33 most consistently advocates progressive economic redistribution, through expansion of

public services, financed by progressive revenue policies, and use of economic regulation to limit

housing costs.  They also consistently call for policies to protect undocumented people, and to

allow non-citizen immigrants to participate in civic and political life.  They also seek

democratization of citywide and local governance, and alternatives to punitive criminal justice

polices.  These commitments were consistent from the organization's origin in 2015 through the

present, and have been consistent across different types of campaigns (although within some of

these basic issue areas, particular demands have evolved).  More specifically, WF33's has

consistently sought the following changes:[640]

- Expansion or enhancement of public services, and especially measures to provide high

  quality public services in low-income and working-class communities (such as provision

  of mental health care, social work, and other forms of counseling in in schools and after-

  school programs; reinstatement of curricular and extracurricular options cut from public

  schools; and reopening closed health care clinics).

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[640] Sources used include WF33's official platform (http://workingfamilies33.org/platform); Rodriguez-Sanchez's official platform (https://www.rossanafor33.org/issues); Uetricht and Rodriguez Sanchez, 2018:  "We Have a Right to the Resources That We Create" (Jacobin); Smith, 2018; James, 2014: "RUNNING AGAINST THE MACHINE, Interview with Tim Meegan" (Socialist Worker); Kunichoff, 2014:  "Meet the High School Social Studies Teacher Taking On Chicago's Right-Wing Democrats" (In These Times); Schmidt, 2015: "ALDERMANIC RACES: 33rd Ward race heating up..." (Substance News); Progress Illinois, 2014:  "33rd Ward Candidate Tim Meegan Talks Housing Issues"; Aldertrack, 2014:  "Tim Meegan, 33rd Ward"; "2015 Aldermanic Forum, 33rd Ward" (available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmHvxpjriNo&t=828s); Avondale Neighborhood Association, 2018:  "Rossana Rodriguez-Sanchez for 33rd Ward"; Midwest Socialist, 2019:  "LIVE with Rossana Rodriguez"; Field Notes, 5/30/18.

- Economic regulations and other programs designed to expand the stock of housing affordable to working-class and lower-income consumers. Initially, WF33 supported a range of policies to create and preserve affordable housing, such as land trusts, housing coops, and larger minimum affordable housing set-asides in new developments. More recently, WF33 has prioritized rent control.

- Progressive revenue policies, including a graduated income tax, a financial transactions tax, and elimination of public subsidies to corporations and real estate developers; along with opposition to the use of Tax Increment Financing accounts to fund real estate development and expansion of large corporations, the excessive imposition of fines (such as parking and traffic violation tickets), and decry the city's "reliance" on property taxes.

- Moratoria or bans on privatization of public services, especially the use of public funds for charter schools.

- Reorientation of the city's approach to public safety, including the reallocation of public resources from criminal justice institutions to education and social services; measures to increase police accountability (such as a civilian-controlled board to review alleged cases of police misconduct); measures to reduce racial profile (for instance by eliminating Chicago's gang database[641]); and the elimination of forms of school discipline linked to the criminal justice system.

- Policies addressing the economic interests of public sector and low-wage workers, including a $15 minimum wage, establishment or protection of workers' rights to

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[641] Chicago Police Department keeps a database of suspected gang-involved individuals. Since 2016, CPD has shared information about undocumented immigrants on the database with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Racial justice advocates in Chicago criticize the database for including many innocent people and for exacerbating racial profiling.

unionize (in any sector or industry in which these are disputed)[642], maintenance of

public funding for public sector workers' pensions.

- Protections for undocumented people against deportation, both through Sanctuary City

  legislation and through forms of legal and logistical support at the neighborhood-level.

- Measures to democratize governance in the city, such as the institution of "elected,

  representative boards of city agencies," including primary and secondary schools, city

  colleges, and the public housing authority.

- And, most recently, measures to address environmental problems, ranging from highly

  specific concerns with particular polluters in Chicago, to citywide programs to remove

  lead pipes from housing and public facilities.

A few members affirm the preceding ideas, but have a vision of deeper social

transformation.  Antonio, who describes himself as "a revolutionary socialist," envisions large-

scale redistribution of resources, the transfer of some economic functions to "worker or public

control," and increase in the government's capacity for regulation.  He did not explain this vision

in detail (and may not have a detailed vision on these counts), but did specify that he believes

these changes will ultimately "require a revolutionary break."[643]

## WF33's Strategy

I examined WF33's strategy, based on a review of the organization's activities since

2015.  I found a consistent strategy, focused on building a grassroots constituency in the ward,

and winning control of ward-level political institutions through elections.  Members see this

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[642] Currently, Rodriguez-Sanchez and WF33 have favored unionization for fast food workers and charter school teachers.
[643] Interview with Antonio, 5/24/18

ward-level work as part of the UWF coalition's citywide project. Specifically, WF33 has enacted the following strategies:

- The primary focus on WF33's work has been on winning institutional powers through elections. Much of their activity has been directly or indirectly preparing for the 2019 aldermanic election. WF33 has also recruited and ran candidates for Local School Council.

- WF33 has tried to build a grassroots base in the ward through issue campaigns (i.e., campaigns to change policies or practices of public or private entities) and service work (i.e., the provision of discrete benefits to particular recipients). As discussed in detail in the next chapter, WF33 designs every aspect of these campaigns to build relationships with target constituencies, and to embarrass former Ald. Mell.

- WF33 formally affiliated with UWF in 2016, gaining a set on UWF's executive council. The WF33-backed alderman elect, Rosanna Rodriguez-Sanchez, will likely caucus with other UWF-allied members of the City Council.

- WF33 has participated in citywide campaigns launched by the coalition. It led grassroots organizing in the ward to support a referendum calling on state legislation to place a moratorium on creating charter schools in 2017, and a referendum to lift the state ban on rent control in 2018.

WF33 faces a new set of strategic challenges since Rodriguez-Sanchez's election as alderman in April 2019. Among other questions, they must decide how to allocate limited personnel resources between governance and continued base-building; whether people who work in the aldermanic office can maintain leadership roles in WF33; how the organization should publicly and privately relate to Ald. Rodriguez-Sanchez (for example, when, if ever, it's

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wise to publicly criticize Ald. Rodriguez-Sanchez); and how exactly to use elected office as platform for building constituencies and raising consciousness.[644]  WF33's leading members have been discussing these and other questions since Spring 2018.

## Discussion

Though United Working Families was not directly involved in building WF33 (the exact nature of their relationship will be explained below), WF33 has grown into exactly the type of neighborhood-level formation UWF hoped to create—and what other left practitioners around the U.S. have talked about creating:  a formation ideologically committed to a redistributive class agenda and to racial and immigrant justice, capable of strategically sophisticated action, and embedded in a high-poverty neighborhood (such neighborhoods being seen as politically important terrain).  WF33 has quickly become an effective launch-pad for electoral and issue campaigns, and for the larger project of building a popular base among the neighborhood's working- and lower-class residents (the form and results of that base-building project is the main topic of the next chapter).

WF33's development is even more striking since its form, modes of practice, and agenda, depart from common forms of neighborhood-based activism.  Its socialist agenda and stridently class-conscious discourse resemble Occupy and other recent social movements and left-leaning labor unions.  But they differ sharply from most community-based activist organizations, which since the 1970s have mostly pursued incremental or small-scale changes, and framed problems in technical, "solution-oriented" terms, rather than as results of class

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[644] For example, one of WF33's founding members and most important leaders, Antonio, will serve as Rodriguez-Sanchez's chief-of-staff.  It is unclear if it would be logistically possible for Antonio (who is also an adjunct instructor and PhD student in sociology) to maintain a leading role in WF33.  His doing so would also compromise the independence of WF33 from Rodriguez-Sanchez's office.  I have not yet been able to learn how WF33 members view this situation.

conflicts (as described in Chapter 1).  WF33's combination of organizing, issue campaigns, and elections also departs from the common paradigms of community practice.  Most Alinskyite organizations eschew electoral politics and (usually) broad ideological programs, while most foundation-funded non-profits advocate for policy changes on behalf of local residents, but invest little in grassroots organizing.  The latter also try to change policy through consensus-oriented strategies, underpinned by close relationships with elected officials.  In their function as delivering a ward for a citywide project, WF33 resembles the classic ward-based organizations of Chicago's old machine.  But WF33 organizes around a clear class-based program, rather than more particularistic benefits.

In short, WF33's developmental outcomes are important and puzzling.  WF33 has a moderate political importance in the context of the ongoing conflict between the UWF coalition and the neoliberal regime in Chicago.  It has a broader significance insofar as many left practitioners hope to build similar formations but do not yet know how.  WF33's development is especially puzzling given its difference from common forms of community activism.  The rest of this chapter will attempt to account for WF33's developmental outcomes.

## 2. First-Order Causal Factor:  WF33 Member's Ideas

Like the members of the Greater Austin Independent Political Organization, WF33 members possess elaborate understandings of social problems and the political conjuncture, visions of social change, and beliefs about strategy.  This section documents WF33 members' ideas in three ways.  First, as a rough indicator of members' ideas, I present members' past organizational affiliations.  I show that almost all members (for whom data was available) had been affiliated with socialist and/or left-leaning progressive organizations, prior to joining WF33.  Only a few participated in centrist or apolitical volunteer organizations only.

Second, I perform an in-depth analysis of members' ideologies, based on interviews, participant observation, and analyses of members published writings.  Members had a spectrum of leftist analyses of the current political moment and visions of social change:  a few envision radical restructuring of the political economy, through revolution; most envision major policy changes to redistribute wealth and political power.  Members also share common ideas:

- They share an analysis of the current political conjuncture, highlighting the conflict between economic elites and the working- and lower-classes as the most important aspect of contemporary politics.  Some members embed this in sophisticated analyses of capitalist political economy, while others have a vaguer sense of class conflict and of upper-class domination of the economy and politics.

- Members understand social problems and policy conflicts as manifestations of this class conflict.

- Members understand themselves as fighting on behalf of the working- and lower-classes, and with organized labor.

- Several members also have elaborate theories of political strategy.  They understand power as the ability to mobilize a grassroots base, and as control of governing institutions.  They have sophisticated ideas about base-building tactics, derived partly from Alinskyite concepts of organizing through issue campaigns.

- Several members use the concepts and categories from their social analyses when thinking or talking about everyday phenomena.

Third, I found that members communicate about the aforementioned ideas through a shared set of short-hand terms.  Members regularly use terms which connote larger ideas about the current conjuncture or particular policy issues, and other members immediately grasp these

connotations, without explanation.  Speakers take for granted that their audience will understand these connotations.

I will compare WF33 members' ideas to those of other important political formations. WF33 members' ideas and discourse are quite similar to those of the mainstream of the UWF coalition, reviewed in Chapter 4.  WF33's members social analysis and vision closely resemble those in the texts of UWF and its leading member organizations.  Their theories on strategy also mirror practices of the Chicago Teachers Union and UWF.  WF33's ideas differ sharply from those espoused by the neoliberal regime (described in Chapter 2), and those common among neighborhood-based organizations affiliated with the regime.

In addition to this description, I will argue that members' ideas have *caused* WF33's distinctive agenda and strategy.  The similarity between members' ideas and WF33's actual positions and behavior suggests that members' ideas are a possible cause.  I will review an episode of decision-making within WF33 to show that these ideas have powerfully informed choices.  I will also rule out the most plausible competing explanation, intervention in WF33's decision-making by UWF or other outside actors.

## Members prior affiliations as a proxy for ideology

Antonio recounted a "running joke" during Tim Meegan's 2015 aldermanic campaign, "that everyone involved was part of a socialist organization and had been arrested once."[645]  At least the first half of this joke remains an accurate description of WF33's membership, with most members previously affiliated with a leftist movement or organization *prior* to joining WF33.

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[645] Interview with Antonio, 5/24/18.

These affiliations can be taken as a rough proxy for members' ideology. While

membership in an organization does not imply acceptance of all of its demands or principles, I

will interpret it as implying at least minimal ideological alignment of the member with that

organization.

I categorized groups as "socialist," "socialist and progressive," "progressive," and

"centrist" (there were no conservative groups in the sample). I defined organizations and

movements as "socialist" if they support decommodification of goods and services and/or

collective ownership or democratic control of the economy. I defined organizations and

movements as "progressive" if they call for downward redistribution of resources, regulation of

the economy with the goal of reducing poverty or inequality, and/or measures to limit the

political power of corporations and wealthy citizens. I made a category for organizations which

combine or vacillate between socialist and progressive goals. I defined organizations as centrist

if they espouse non-partisan or moderate policy positions. I also include in the "centrist

category" groups which focus on activities outside the realm of partisan politics and organizing,

such as culture and arts, community-building, mentoring, or other volunteer service work

without a direct link to politics or organizing. I classify all organizations of which WF33 members

are affiliated into these four categories in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1.  Ideological position of organizations with which WF33 members are affiliated**

| Socialist | Democratic Socialists of America, International Socialist Organization, Northeastern Illinois University Socialists, Occupy Chicago, Communities Organized Against Eviction and Foreclosure, Autonomous Tenants Union, Chicago Anti-Eviction Coalition, Borricua United, Chicago's movement against closure of mental health clinics, and a Puerto Rican movement against austerity |
| --- | --- |

| Socialist and progressive | United Working Families, Chicago Teachers Union, Service Workers International Union Health Care Illinois and Indiana, Midwest Academy, Raise the Floor Alliance |
|---|---|
| Progressive | Northside Democracy for America, Progressive Democrats for America, Raise Your Hand, Parents 4 Teachers, Communities Organized for Democracy in Education, Save Chicago Neighborhood News, No Games Chicago, Salud Sin Papeles |
| Centrist/civic | US Students Association, Fringe Festival, Generation Citizen, Albany Park Neighbors, Chicago Cares |

I listed members' organizational affiliations in Table 6.2.  I found that 25 members were previously involved in at least one socialist or socialist/progressive organization, 7 were involved in at least one progressive organization, and only 3 were involved exclusively in centrist organizations only.  I could not obtain information about prior activism of 7 members.  By far the most common affiliation was Democratic Socialists of America, with 14 WF33 members affiliated.

**Table 6.2:  Activist Experience of WF33 Members**
Color code:
**Red = Socialist political or advocacy organization or movement**
**Purple = Socialist/progressive organization or movement**
**Blue = progressive political or advocacy organization or movement**
**Green = centrist political or advocacy organization or movement; civic or charitable organization**

| |
|---|
| Antonio:  **Communities Organized Against Eviction and Foreclosure, Chicago Anti-Eviction League, Metropolitan Tenant's Organization**, **Communities United** |
| Ernie:  **Occupy Chicago, "Mental Health Movement," International Socialist Organization** |
| Norman:  **Communities Organized Against Eviction and Foreclosure, Democratic Socialists of America** |

| |
|---|
| Todd:  **Democratic Socialists of America**, **No Games Chicago** |
| Rosanna:  **Democratic Socialists of America, Borricua United, organizing against austerity in Puerto Rico, Albany Park Theatre Project** |
| Barret:  **International Socialist Organization, Northeastern Illinois College Socialists** |
| Dawn:  **Untied Working Families, Midwest Academy, Planned Parenthood** |
| Bill:  **Progressive Democrats for America, Democratic Socialists of America** |
| Mike:  **Pilsen Alliance** |
| Brig:  **Autonomous Tenants Union** |
| Rich:  **SEIU HCII** |
| Sean:  **Democratic Socialists of America, Illinois Single Payer Coalition, Jobs with Justice, Project Read** |
| Juliana:  **Parents 4 Teachers, Communities Organized for Democracy in Education** |
| Sophia:  **Raise the Floor Alliance**; **U.S. Students Association** |
| Denny:  **Salud Sin Papeles** |
| Ben:  **Northside Democracy for America** |
| Kelly:  **Jane Addams Senior Caucus** |
| Katheryn:  **Grey Panthers** |
| Rob:  **Save Chicago Neighborhood News** |
| Samay:  **Raise Your Hand**; **Fringe Festival** |
| Mary:  **Generation Citizen**, **Rhode Island Kids Count** |
| Laura:  **Albany Park Neighbors** |
| Jackie:  **Chicago Cares** |

| | |
|---|---|
| **3 other members:**  Chicago Teachers Union | |
| **9 other members:**  Democratic Socialists of America | |

A majority of WF33 members have participated in either socialist, or a combination of socialist and progressive causes in the past.  25 have been a part of socialist or hybrid socialist-progressive groups.  An additional 8 have participated in progressive groups (with 14 members of Democratic Socialists of America).  33 of the 35 members for whom I obtained data had previously participated in progressive or leftist causes.  Assuming that organizational affiliation indicates ideology, we can conclude the bulk of the WF33 membership is committed to left-leaning goals, and was even prior to their affiliation with WF33.

## Detailed description of members' ideology

To gain a textured analysis of WF33 members' ideas, I used in-depth interviews, participant observation and analyzed members' published writings and speeches.  Member ranged from "revolutionary socialists," intent on large-scale restructuring of the economy, to Sanders-style social democrats, looking to increase public provision through progressive taxation. However, members shared a common set of ideas about the salience of class conflict, class-focused analyses of particular issues (especially housing), identification with the lower-classes, and a commitment to grassroots base-building and elections.

WF33 members' social analysis, vision, and strategy is strikingly in line with the praxis of the UWF coalition, taking shape since the early 2010s.  These views also depart markedly from—and some members explicitly reject—the forms of practice most common among

neighborhood-based organizations.  WF33's and UWF's similarity is particularly striking given

their difference from this common paradigm.

*Strategy*

Five interviewees explained their views about strategy, discussing how WF33, and the

left generally, should pursue their goals.  I found four recurring themes:  1)they see grassroots

organizing as a crucial method of building power; 2)they engage in partisan electoral work,

linking it to their issue campaigns and base-building; 3)at a more abstract level, they see

conflicts in the workplace, neighborhood, and legislative and electoral spheres, as sites in a

larger class struggle; 4)they are concerned with maintaining organizational independence of

elected officials.

**Investment in grassroots organizing**

All interviewees see grassroots base-building as an effective way to build power, and

view this as one of WF33's reasons for existence.  Indeed, members appeared to understand

"power" as, first and foremost, the ability to deploy a mass grassroots base.  This confers power

insofar as it enables electoral success, and thus control of institutions (according to Dawn), or

more direct exercises of popular pressure (according to Antonio and Joycelyn).  When my

interviewees referred to "building power," they invariably meant grassroots organizing and

base-building.

Relatedly, members criticized the strategy of attempting to influence policy through

collaborative relationships with power-holders.  In Antonio words, this strategy is based on "the

fallacy that access [to politicians] means influence [over them]."[646]  Another member (who

preferred anonymity) agreed that such relationships "usually mean giving political support,

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[646] Interview with Antonio, 5/24/18.

while maybe getting a few small concessions.  But you're giving up your ability to apply

pressure."[647]

WF33's conception of power and corresponding investment in base-building mirror the

praxis of the UWF coalition.  As described at length in Chapter 4, the Chicago Teachers Union

revamped its grassroots organizing since 2010, creating several new institutional mechanisms

for outreach and leadership development.  Some of these mechanisms were subsequently

transferred to UWF.  As my interview data, newspaper accounts, and book-length accounts of

the CTU demonstrate, organizational leaders increasingly spoke of the need to build power

through grassroots organizing beginning in the early 2010s.[648]

Interestingly, this emphasis on grassroots base-building has been one of the most

innovative elements of UWF coalition's praxis.  Chapter 3 also describes Chicago labor unions'

lack of interest in grassroots organizing from the 1970s through the 2010s.  Nationally, as labor

retrenched since the 1970s, unions invested less in workplace organizing.[649]  For an array of

reasons (described in Chapter 1), most community-based organizations transferred resources

from organizing toward service provision, development, and advocacy since the 1970s.  A

strategic praxis of building power through grassroots base-building was one of the UWF

coalition's marked departures from contemporary trends.

**Community organizing integrated with a partisan electoral project**

WF33 integrates their grassroots base-building with a partisan electoral project.

Members explained that much of their base-building work since late 2016 was intentionally

designed to advance their electoral goals (in addition to more generally building a grassroots

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[647] Interview with anonymous member, 5/30/18.
[648] This was discussed in Chapter 4; Bradbury et al, 2015.
[649] Domhoff, 2005.

base).  And since September 2018, most of the organization's activities were devoted to running an election campaign.  Dawn, Antonio, and others explained that winning elections would incrementally increase the institutional power of the citywide left coalition (interestingly, they usually referred it to it generically as a left coalition, without mentioning UWF by name).  Ultimately, taking control of city council and other institutions would allow the coalition to implement its policy agenda.

This explicit partisanship and emphasis on elections is also a marked departure from even left-leaning community practice in Chicago.  As one UWF board member and SEIU officer observed, "the shapes that political base-building has taken in Chicago in the last few years, none of them have made that connection between mass neighborhood action around issues and political [i.e., electoral] action."[650]  In this strategic orientation, WF33 has more in common with ward-based entities associated with urban political machines than with the advocacy or Alinsky-style groups (although they do use Alinsky's ideas at the level of base-building tactics[651]).

However, WF33's use of base-building and issue campaigns to advance an electoral project does resemble a mode of practice revived by the UWF coalition in recent years.  Since the early 2010s, the CTU in particular has tried to synthesize grassroots issue-based work and partisan electoral projects, for example linking campaigns around school closings and funding for public education with large scale, grassroots voter registration and mobilization efforts.  SEIU HCII has also linked grassroots outreach around a living wage campaign with aldermanic

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[650] Interview with Alex Han, 3/17/17.

[651] WF33 members have elaborate views on base-building tactics.  In short, they view issue campaigns (grassroots organizing around issues, pressure campaigns for issues) and service work (providing discrete benefits to particular people or groups) as the most effective vehicles for outreach and organizing.  They echo classic Alinskyite theories that issue campaigns raise political consciousness, by awakening expectations and dramatizing power relationships.  Dawn also has sophisticated theories about how to use issue campaigns to build a record of contrasts with an incumbent, in preparation for an election. WF33's approach to base-building is discussed at length in the following chapter.

elections.  Once again, the only recent precedent in Chicago for WF33's modes of practice is the

recent work of UWF coalition members.

**Unity of Workplace, Neighborhood, Electoral and Legislative Spheres**

At a more abstract level, all interviewees shared the sense that neighborhood base-

building, electoral and legislative campaigns, and workplace struggles are parts of a larger class

struggle.  While Antonio made an elaborate argument for linking workplace and neighborhood

politics,[652] most members appeared to simply assume the unity of these practices, referring

variously to Chicago's class conflict in these different spheres.  Some members implied the unity

of these struggles when they argued that a series of political events, including high-profile labor

struggles, grassroots movements, and policy campaigns, had paved the way for UWF.

**Ambivalence about political Independence**

Dawn and Antonio talked at length about the need to maintain WF33's independence

from any candidates or elected officials.  They repeatedly expressed concern about candidates

winning elections with WF33's backing, only to pursue a different agenda once in office.  To

prevent this, WF33 leaders want the organization to remain independent enough of candidates

and officials it supports to break with and punish them for any such defections.

To this end, leaders have tried to build the organization such that members' primary

loyalty is to the organization, and/or to the issue positions, rather than to the candidate.  They

mentioned efforts to define WF33's own identity in terms of issue positions, and not to subsume

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[652] In a 2015 article, Antonio more explicitly called for the extension of work-place struggles into local politics. According to Antonio, Tim Meegan's 2015 aldermanic campaign "represents exactly what needs to happen in electoral politics in Chicago:  rank-and-file union activists using their organizing skills and networks to run independent campaigns.  Tim was about putting the 'social movement unionism' model of organizing to work in [electoral] politics."

its brand entirely into its candidate's during the election campaign.  Most importantly, they have attempted to recruit their core membership on the basis of issues, rather than candidates.

WF33 leaders appeared to be less concerned about their independence from the citywide coalition.  In Antonio' recounting, WF33's affiliation with UWF was not subject to much debate, and "was just seen as making sense."[653]  This seeming unconcern contrasted sharply with members' repeated, unprompted expressions of concern with independence from candidates.  WF33 members' appear to be more concerned with fidelity to issue positions than with independence per se, and may view UWF as reliably committed to left-leaning issue positions.

*Socio-political Analysis*

Members of WF33 have a similar social analysis to that of the leaders of UWF described in Chapter 3.  They have a class-focused critique of capitalism and of the contemporary political economy, and affirm the exceptional experiences under capitalism of racial minorities.  They see the situation of immigrants as ultimately rooted in global imperialism.  They also recognize concerns of immigrants and racial minorities which do not reduce to class conflicts.  While some members have elaborate understandings of these points (as shown in writings and speeches), I mostly observed these ideas expressed in colloquial, short-hand forms in everyday conversation.  Ideas about class conflict and the unity or racial and class justice struggles appeared to be shared common sense among members, reflexively employed in informal social analysis, and assumed to be widely understood.

In analyzing social, economic, and political problems, most members foreground class conflict and exploitative capitalist processes.  Some members possess sophisticated analyses,

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[653] Interview with Antonio, 5/23/18.

tracing upper-class domination and exploitation to particular, complex economic processes. For example, Antonio, whose doctoral research examines neoliberal political economy and urban finance, traces affordable housing crises to the influence of local, national, and global investors over public policy and the use of city planning powers to inflate real estate markets.[654] Other writings, closely resembling the analysis of the Chicago Teachers Union and Grassroots Collaborative examined in Chapter 3, juxtapose the city's cuts to public services and education with expanding public subsidies for corporations, developers and wealthy land-owners, framing these policies as manifestations of corporate and upper-class dominance of the government.[655] Members extend a similar analysis to other particular policy issues, including education[656] and healthcare.[657]

Race is also central to members' social analysis. First, WF33 members recognize ongoing forms of racial discrimination and oppression which do not reduce to capitalist exploitation and expropriation, particularly in the spheres of policing and criminal punishment. They are committed to combatting these forms of injustice. Secondly, they see capitalism as racialized such that people of color have been and continue to be disproportionately confined to the lowest classes, and are subjected to special forms of hyper-exploitation and expropriation, on the basis of racial discrimination and subjugation. For example, in a pair of articles analyzing the foreclosure crisis, one member observes that people of color were both disproportionately

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[654] This article traces the collaboration of global financial firms and Chicago's business elite to pressure the city to privatize particular infrastructures, and support rent-intensifying redevelopment of land adjacent to those infrastructures. This and other articles demonstrating a sophisticated class analysis will not be cited, to protect the identity of interviewees.
[655] In a 2018 article, Ernie contrasts Emanuel's support for business subsidies with his decision to close publicly funded mental health clinics in 2012.
[656] In a 2013 article, Antonio argued that the use of property taxes in low-income neighborhoods to fund selective enrollment schools in other neighborhoods—a common practice of the Daley and Emanuel administration—systematically siphoned resources from lower-income and mostly black populations to wealthier ones. A similar article from 2017 demonstrates that Chicago's charter school policies reduce resources available for classroom instruction and support services in public schools.
[657] Ernie's aforementioned 2018.

targeted by predatory lenders, and most likely to be financially ruined by foreclosure, given their historical inability to accrue wealth and resulting reliance on home equity.[658]

It is not clear what, if any, implications WF33 members intend to draw from this analysis of racialized capitalism. As noted, WF33's policy agenda focuses on redistribution along class, not racial lines—as of the time of writing, they did not advocate reparations or other race-based redistributive policies. WF33's frequent mention of race in addition to class may be an acknowledgement of the exceptional form of racialized capitalist oppression which lower-class minorities have faced—part of a symbolic politics of recognition intended to appeal to minority communities. Some texts used race or class interchangeably, switching among references to race, class, or hybrid subjects, and forms of racial or class oppression, in ways that implied continuity among these terms. For example, some texts mentioned racism as a powerful factor affecting residents' lives, only to conflate it entirely with economic injustice, with the exact same stakes and antagonists. One of Rodriguez-Sanchez's speeches referred to "vulnerable and at-risk populations… [affected by] systematic poverty, racism and exclusion...the families who are most afflicted by a system designed to benefit the rich and powerful," and went on to advocate WF33's vision of class-based redistribution of resources. She thus asserts that racism matters profoundly, but then suggests that racism is driven by the actions of economic elites, and is best addressed through an economic program.

Other texts verge on eliding non-minority lower-classes as oppressed groups. Whenever members fully elaborated their analysis, they clearly located racialized hyper-exploitation within a system exploiting on the basis of class. However, short-hand references racial capitalism sometimes substituted race for lower-class. For example, one text analyzing

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[658] Norman wrote articles in 2013 and 2015 about the causes of the foreclosure and affordable housing crises.

the foreclosure crisis labeled it as part of a "legacy of racist appropriation."[659]  While this could

be harmless device, it may reflect a tendency to slip from a recognition of minority particularity

to erasure of non-minority working-classes.  I consider this possibility further in the next

chapter, when discussing WF33's targeting of grassroots outreach in the neighborhood.

While they recognize the particularity of immigrants (discussed below), I did not observe

WF33 members distinguish among Latinx people of different nationalities, or between Latinx

people and other people of color (except for one member's references to her experiences in

Puerto Rico).  Latinx and "people of color" were often used interchangeably, suggesting that

WF33 members thought about Latinx identity as a part of a broader category of people who are

treated as a racial "other."

WF33 members view immigrants as having particular concerns and needs, beyond those

which address economic inequality and poverty.  At least some members also see immigration

through an anti-colonial framework which foregrounds U.S. economic exploitation of developing

countries.  At a forum in 2019, Rossana described immigration as driven by poverty which is

rooted in U.S. imperialism:  "I left Puerto Rico because of an economic situation...Puerto Rico

has a very similar history…with a lot of other countries that have been victims of U.S.

imperialism."[660]  It appears that Rossana and others may understand the solidarity between

immigrants and working-classes more generally on this basis.

Most often, I observed ideas about class conflict, and the interconnection of race and

class, expressed in short-hand references to WF33's identity and that of its adversaries.

Members usually defined WF33's identity in racial and class terms, and usually addend solidarity

with immigrant populations.  I heard WF33 members frequently invoke a political subject

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[659] Norman's 2015 article.
[660] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCamcVUeKAs.  Accessed 11/15/19.

defined by race and class, "working-classes and people of color," or "working families and especially people of color," followed by a reference to immigrant populations.[661]  They also frequently defined WF33's identity in populist terms (as in the Rodriguez-Sanchez's campaign slogan "Neighborhoods for the many").

While defining their own identity in hybrid terms, members almost always referred to their antagonists in economic terms.  I observed innumerable written and spoken references to "economic elites," "the 1%," "the ultra-wealthy," "billionaires," etc., and to specific economic actors, especially "developers," and "the banks."  These actors were always associated with domination of politics, or with a particular exploitative economic process.[662]  Interestingly, I observed no mention of the middle-classes as an adversary, although members recognized the strong affiliation of segments of the ward's middle-class whites with the Mell administration.  Members did occasionally reference "gentrifiers," constructing them in racial, class, and communitarian terms, for instance as "affluent white people moving into the neighborhood."[663]  Such mentions were rare, however, perhaps given the status of many WF33 members as white, middle-class newcomers to the neighborhood.

Spending time with WF33, I observed multiple instances in which class concepts functioned as a shared common sense.  Members appeared to spontaneously use these concepts to analyze social phenomena.  They could also invoke these concepts in short-hand ways, and their audience reflexively grasped the connotations, without explanation or argument.  For example, any mention of an economic entity or segment like "working families"

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[661] In a speech at her campaign launch event, for example, Rodriguez-Sanchez commented that "Our alderman represents developers and the mayor.  The mayor represents the rich and well-connected.  We represent something different.  We are working families, people of color, and it's time for us to build a political movement…" (Field Notes, 5/29/18).
[662] Ernie wrote an article in 2013 describing the exploitative labor practices and political corruption of the Hyett hotel chain, implying that they exemplify the aggressive and self-interested behavior of large corporations and the affluent.  The article depicts the Emanuel administration (and to a lesser extent, the Obama administration) as the agent of such economic elites.
[663] Field notes, 5/19/18.

or "corporate interests" was immediately understood as a party in the ongoing class conflict over resources playing out in the city's politics.  Any mention of a salient issue like "TIFs" or "school closures" was immediately understood to be a front in this class conflict.  Moreover, speakers clearly anticipated that their audience would grasp the larger meaning of these terms.

This is exemplified by a casual conversation at Rodriguez-Sanchez's candidate launch party.  One current and one perspective member (both members of DSA) analyzed a nearby neighborhood, Lincoln Square, and its residents in terms of class categories.

> Devon: "It's not even gentrification so much as aristocratization"
> Betty: "Lincoln Square was never really that hip, it never went through that arty phase.
> Just rich families."
> Devon: "It went from a regular people neighborhood to million dollar shitty new
> construction...Before you would see your average working class people."
> Betty: "It's mostly yuppies.  Families who probably work in finance or whatever."[664]

The speakers appeared to adopt this lens spontaneously—there was no identifiable prompt, by either speaker or another party, to consider the topic in these terms.  Up until this sequence, members had not been discussing gentrification or other class-related issues.  This sequence suggests that they view these class categories as relevant and important, or that they reflexively revert to them.

In another example, the Master of Ceremonies at Rodriguez-Sanchez's launch party, CTU organizer Kenzo Shibata, roused the crowd (which included most of WF33's membership, members of allied organizations, and a few people affiliated with UWF and its member organizations) with a series of leading questions about the political economy of the Thirty-Third Ward:

> Mr. Shibata: "Do you feel like right now our neighborhoods are being led in the interests of the
> many?"
> (Members of the crowd booed and answered in the negative)
> Mr. Shibata: "Whose interests are being served?"

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[664] Field notes, 5/30/18.

(Several people in the crowd yelled "the rich," "the 1%," or "developers.")

Mr. Shibata: "Anyone in particular you want to call out?"

(A smaller handful of people shouted the names of the ward's most infamous local developers, or the names of their firms, and others repeated "rich people" or "the 1%.")[665]

As telling as the content of this exchange is the reflexivity of the crowd's answers to Mr. Shibata's question. Members of the crowd knew, without reflection or explanation, to whom Mr. Shibata referred by "the many," and that the status quo was injurious to those people. They also reflexively knew which entities were opposed to "the many:" upper-class economic segments or actors. Finally, it is telling that Mr. Shibata clearly expected to receive these (or similar) answers to his question. Per standard sociological definitions, understandings of a class antagonism between "the few" and "the many" were common knowledge: not only did each party know the significance of this term, Mr. Shibata could take it for granted that his audience knew.

A conversation at a fundraiser for Carlos Rosa (the socialist alderman of the 35th ward and close UWF ally) displayed a similar common discourse. During the event, the present author wondered aloud "how this party compares to Rahm Emanuel's fundraisers." An WF33 member responded, "I think they have more expensive drinks at the Commercial Club of Chicago." Members laughed at the second comment, and assented verbally or by nodding. It is revealing that the WF33 members immediately understood the reference: that Emanuel would be holding a fundraiser at an organization strongly associated with corporate elites required no explanation, and could function as the premise for a joke. This suggests that Mayor Emanuel's association with the wealthy and corporate elites is also common sense for WF33 members, and

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[665] Field Notes, 5/30/18. Specifically, people mentioned "Abrams," referring to Ron Abrams, a local developer, or his firm, "Silver Properties." Abrams has purchased several multi-family buildings in Albany Park and evicted the long-time residents.

that a short-hand reference to this association is immediately understood, without explanation.[666]

## Class conflict playing out in particular issues

Just like UWF, WF33 members understand particular, salient social problems and policy conflicts in terms of the aforementioned class conflict. Whether in academic analyses or everyday language, members frame affordable housing shortages and displacement, inadequately resourced schools, intensified policing, in terms of the same conflict between classes.

While none of my informants said so explicitly, I developed the impression that leading WF33 members reflexively conceptualize the population of the ward in terms of issue-specific class conflicts. That is, they conceptualize the population as segments afflicted by the affordable housing crisis and benefiting from it, segments afflicted by the underfunding of public services, segments of the population afflicted by immigration law enforcement, and so on. Almost every reference to the working- and lower-class residents of the neighborhood mentioned their relationship to one of these salient issues. This may reflect the extent to which their social and political analysis, highlighting class conflict and connecting it to particular problems, shapes their basic perception of the social world.

I did find that WF33 members emphasized different issues than UWF, placing relatively more emphasis on affordable housing and protection of undocumented immigrants. These patterns of emphasis likely reflect WF33's decision to prioritize these issues in their service and advocacy work in 2017, a decision discussed below.

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[666] Field Notes, 5/19/18.

**Identification with organized labor**

Antonio shared an anecdote which illustrates WF33's members identification of WF33 as an organization aligned with organized labor. Early in 2016, as the organization began to grow, members debated WF33's political alignment. One contingent of members—whom a current WF33 leader referred to (with irritation but not malice) as "pedantic, process-obsessed liberals"—wanted WF33 to remain strictly non-partisan, eschewing alignment with "special interests," including big business and organized labor. Antonio, Ernie, Dawn, and other members countered that labor and business were not morally equivalent sectoral interests, but that labor represents the empowerment and emancipation of oppressed classes, and big business their continued exploitation. The pro-labor members prevailed in this dispute (without resorting to a violent purge): Antonio politely suggested that the liberal faction form their own group, which they proceeded to do.[667]

## Members' Ideologies Have Determined WF33's Orientation

To demonstrate the importance of members' ideologies toward the other outcomes of interest (WF33's orientation and political alignment), I examined decision-making within the group. I wanted to assess if WF33 adopted its agenda, strategy, and alliance with Chicago's left due to members' ideas; to perceived opportunities for funding, influence, or other rewards; to the interventions of UWF or other actors; or to other factors. I will present testimony of WF33 and UWF members that, while UWF supports WF33 materially, it has not exerted any direct influence on the organization's orientation.

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[667] Interview with Antonio, 5/24/18.

I found that members' foundational social analysis has been a premise in WF33's design of base-building campaigns. I will demonstrate this by reconstructing WF33's decision-making about which issues to prioritize in outreach campaigns in 2017 and 2018. Members choose issues strategically, based on grounded analysis of political conditions and opportunities in the ward; but this analysis took WF33's affinity with lower-class and immigrant populations as a premise. The strategic analysis may also have been guided, if not predetermined, by WF33 members' reflexive tendency to conceptualize the population in terms of issue-specific class conflicts.

Leading members began discussing new issue-based projects at a retreat late in 2016. Per the strategic and tactical ideas reviewed in the previous section, leading members saw issue-based work as a way to build a record for the 2019 election and build relationships with target population segments. At the retreat, "people who had taken leadership roles" in the organization discussed how to use issue-based work to these ends. In particular, they considered which issues to work on. These conversations were the organization's most deliberate attempts to choose a set of issues to prioritize to date.[668]

In these conversations, members reportedly considered which issues were most salient among working-class Latinx populations, whom they perceived as their key constituency (this

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[668] Since WF33's inception, most of its issue-based work had focused on education. Projects included canvassing for a referendum opposing charter schools, organizing high school students to protest budget cuts, pressuring Ald. Mell to support an elected school board, and running candidates for local school council. According to Dawn, this focus reflected the influence of Tim Meegan, and the network of educators and public school students and parents whom Meegan attracted to the group.[668] Meegan and his networks brought an acute concern with education-related issues, already developed positions on those issues, and mechanisms for action (such as opportunities for school-based actions) to the organization. Thus, even without a deliberate decision to prioritize education, WF33 found it easy to engage in actions related to education.

By late 2016, this relatively education-focused contingent within WF33 had diminished. As noted, Meegan moved out-of-state in 2016. Antonio also observed that participation rates for the people drawn to WF33 by their relationship to Meegan dropped off more rapidly than those of other participants, even prior to Meegan's departure. The most prominent policy question on educational governance was also settled in 2016 by the state legislature's passage of legislation creating an elected school board in Chicago. A stable cadre had also emerged by late 2016, and was ready to make more deliberate, strategic decisions about issue-based work.

perception is analyzed in the following chapter).  According to Dawn, "were very intentional

about taking on housing and immigration.  We know that housing and immigration are major

concerns.   Gentrification is pushing up from Logan Square…displacement is becoming a major

problem."  Joycelyn made a similar point about immigration:  members recognized growing fear

and anger about ICE raids and the abuse of undocumented immigrants, with the uptick in

enforcement after Trump's election.[669]  Members believed that conducting outreach on these

issues would be an opportunity to "meet people, to make our case, on the most salient

issues."[670]

     Second, members reported weighing Ald. Mell's political vulnerabilities.  Interviewees

reported that housing was seen as an issue that could be embarrassing for Mell, highlighting her

close ties to developers, and failure to push for strong affordable housing legislation as

alderman. An anonymous member noted that "it's strategic, because [Mell] doesn't really have

a strong leg to stand on there."[671]

     Members' ideology appears to have provided some basic premises for this grounded

analysis of ward conditions.  First, members appeared to take as an unquestioned premise that

lower-classes and immigrants are WF33's potential constituencies.  Certainly, this belief was not

itself a matter of analysis or debate during the retreat and conversations in late 2016 and early

2017.  When I asked members how they determined which parts of the ward to target, they

mentioned two points: measuring which census tracts had the highest number of not-yet-

mobilized working-class Latinx people, and debates about the extent to which WF33 needs to

make inroads among middle-class and working-class white residents.[672]  No one mentioned any

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[669] Interview with Joycelyn, 5/20/18.
[670] Interview with Dawn, 1/11/18.
[671] Interview with anonymous member, 5/30/18.
[672] They targeted census tracts with relatively low voter turn-out, in which most of the non-voting eligible voters were Latinx people.

debate, conversation, or analysis about whether lower-class Latinx people where WF33's main constituency.  In short, this appears to have been an unproblematic and unquestioned assumption during these conversations.

Second, WF33's choice to organize via issue campaigns, and its selection of particular issues, may also have been guided by ideology.  As noted above, members seemed to reflexively conceptualize the lower-classes in terms of issue-specific manifestations of class conflicts.  That is, they understood lower-classes not in the abstract, but as populations afflicted by particular problems rooted in class conflict, such as displacement, inadequate public services, over-policing, etc.  Thus when members considered opportunities for base-building, their social analysis would have specified not just that "the lower-classes were their likely constituency," but that "the lower classes, who are afflicted by inadequate services, displacement, and other specific issues, were their likely constituency."

This would have made it natural for WF33 members to think of issue-based work as a tool for connecting with target constituencies.   Members conceptualize their relationship to constituencies as an alignment on concrete issues.  Even if those relationships are not yet realized, they see potential relationships in terms of these issue-specific alignments.  As such, working on these issues would be an obvious way to build this relationship

We can also reinterpret WF33 members' reports that they analyzed which issues were salient to target populations.  They began with the assumption that lower-classes, and especially lower-class Latinx people, are afflicted by several issues.  Their grounded analysis of ward conditions indicated that, of the several afflicting issues, displacement and immigration enforcement, rather than inadequate public services, over-policing, or others, were currently the most salient.

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In short, members developed issue campaigns based on strategic analysis of ward

conditions.  But their ideas about class conflict provided a blue-print for base-building,

specifying their potential constituencies, and the particular issues on which WF33 could build a

relationship with them.

*Relationship with UWF*

United Working Families provided various forms of financial support and opportunities

for political influence to WF33.  However, WF33 members point out that UWF only funds

election campaigns, leaving WF33 to finance and run almost all of its work since 2015.  WF33

members assert that UWF has not influenced WF33's orientation or alignment, and UWF

personnel confirm that they decided to work with WF33 only after the latter had emerged as a

coherent group, committed to left politics.  I could find no instance in which WF33 members

made decisions out of concern for funding, or in response to threats or blandishments of UWF

or other elites beyond the neighborhood.

UWF and its member organizations provide some logistical support for WF33, and

finance its election campaigns.  Tim Meegan's 2015 aldermanic campaign (out of which WF33

grew) Committee received about $79,000 in cash and in-kind contributions, about 73% of which

came from UWF and its affiliated unions.[673]  Rossana Rodriguez-Sanchez raised $200,500 for her

2019 aldermanic campaign, about 62% came from UWF and three of its affiliated unions (Service

Employees International Union Healthcare Illinois and Indiana, Chicago Teachers Union, and

Cook County Teacher's Union).[674]  These amounts were comparable to UWF's and affiliated

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[673] Data on campaign contributions downloaded from IllinoisSunshine.org.  Summed donations to the Citizens for Tim Meegan Political Action Committee
[674] SEIU HCII contributed $56,000; Chicago Teacher's Union PAC contributed $40,000; United Working Families PAC contributed $20,000; Cook County College Teacher's Union-COPE contributed $7,500.  The Rodriguez-Sanchez campaign received more than the Meegan campaign in part because the Rodriguez-Sanchez campaign went to a run-off, requiring an additional month of high-priority campaign spending.

unions' contributions to other candidates in these respective years. UWF and its unions

"provided staffers and directed volunteers to [Meegan's] campaign."[675]

UWF has provided various other supports. In 2018, Rodriguez-Sanchez participated in

UWF's "movement fellows" training program, receiving training in building and running

grassroots campaigns. WF33 also shares UWF's subscription to Minivan, the smartphone

application used to plan canvasses and other outreach—a service for which they would

otherwise have to pay.

WF33 leaders also gained a measure of influence within the UWF coalition through their

affiliation with UWF. All formal organizational affiliates of UWF are entitled to send one

representative to UWF's Executive Board. This board has been a key site of conversations and

debates about agenda and strategy for the UWF coalition.[676] As WF33's representative, Antonio

has enjoyed the opportunity to participate in these discussions.

WF33 leaders readily acknowledge these relationships. But they are quick to point out

the limits of UWF's involvement in WF33. Both election campaigns were managed and mostly

run by WF33 volunteers, not union or UWF staff.[677] And UWF and its affiliates have had almost

no role in building the organization between elections—the planning and implementation were

entirely carried out by WF33's volunteer members.[678]

Even more pointedly, WF33 assert that they have not made decisions out of a desire to

obtain UWF backing, or influence within the organization. Antonio dismissed the notion, saying

that affiliation with UWF "just made sense. They represent the self-organization of the working

class, and we're trying to do the exact same thing." Dawn allowed that WF33's activists might

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[675] Uetricht, 2015.
[676] Interview with Matt Luskin, 3/x/17; Interview with Matt Luskin and Marc Meinster, 3/17/17; Interview with Jackson Potter, 3/10/17; interview with Alex Han, 3/17/17. The role of the board is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.
[677] Interview with Antonio, 5/24/18.
[678] Interviews with Dawn, Antonio, Joycelyn, and anonymous member.

be encouraged by the existence of "a powerful left formation" (i.e., the UWF coalition), but not that WF33 has altered its goals or positions to take advantage of opportunities.

UWF leaders have the same view of the relationship. Multiple interviewees report that, in contrast to its active participation in GAIPO, UWF has not sought to influence the development of WF33. CTU organizer and UWF Executive Board member Matt Luskin recalls that WF33 "popped up totally independent of all of us...it was a surprise to us that they became a pretty coherent group pretty quickly and became affiliated with UWF.[679]" Alex Han, a SEIU staffer and UWF executive board member, similarly commented that UWF engaged with WF33 only after the latter had emerged as a coherent formation, committed to a left agenda: "UWF shouldn't be in the business of forming and launching IPOs [i.e., ward-based, independent political groups]. Those IPOs that have a leadership that wants to participate in the kind of politics that we're interested in, such as in 33, then we can have that conversation."

These findings suggest that the key factor determining WF33's orientation and political alignment was the ideology of its members. These ideas provided a set of premises for strategic decision-making. They account for WF33's emphasis on organizing the ward's lower-class populations, their reliance on issue-based projects, and their affiliation with UWF. Desire to secure resources or influence do not appear to have driven WF33's decisions. The rest of this chapter will attempt to explain how it is that a critical mass of activists with this particular set of ideas came to join WF33.

## 3. Explaining Members Ideologies

The preceding section demonstrated that the proximate cause of key developmental outcomes (WF33's social democratic agenda; its focus on base-building and winning institutional

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[679] Interview with Matt Luskin, 3/9/17.

power; its affiliation with the UWF coalition) was the ideas of WF33 members.  These ideas, not

any intervention by UWF or other outside actors, determined WF33's agenda and strategy.  To

understand WF33's development, we must explain how a large population of activists with

those ideas about politics, social change, and strategy came to exist, and to live in the 33rd

ward.

The growth of a population of activists with these ideas can be traced to three

processes.  First, as recounted in Chapter 4, Chicago's progressive-left milieu—networks of left-

leaning and/or progressive labor unions, community organizations, academic institutions, media

outlets, social movements, and social networks—expanded in the early 2010s, through a series

of mobilizations, catalyzed by neoliberalization and related economic crises.  As this milieu grew,

key organizations and institutions produced shared discourses, including critiques of

neoliberalism and capitalism, visions of change, and concrete policy agendas.

In this chapter, I argue that these developments produced a population of activists,

possessing those synthetic discourses.  Individuals, driven to left or progressive activism by any

number of stimuli, joined the organizations or movements comprising this milieu.  Many of

these individuals helped to create the new analyses and visions emerging at this time.  And

many were exposed to the emerging discourses in the context of their activism, academic

careers, or journalism.  I will present evidence that WF33 members adopted elements of their

current ideology through their experiences in this wave of mobilizations.

A second key factor is the national wave of interest in socialism since 2016.  An

additional wave of individuals mobilized at this time, many of them joining the mass

membership organization Democratic Socialists of America, whose membership has exploded

since 2016.  I present evidence that several WF33 members, with no previous activist

experience, and with diverse and inchoate political outlooks, but proclivities to democratic socialism, joined DSA after 2016.  As members of DSA, these individuals have absorbed elements of DSA's particular discourse and agenda.   These members joined WF33 after this socialization in DSA.  DSA Chicago has shaped the outlook of more WF33 members than any other single organization.

The third factor is the ideological leadership, within Chicago's progressive-left milieu, of Chicago Teachers Union, and since 2013, the United Working Families organization.  Whereas multiple, independent formations mutually influenced each other in the early 2010s, more recently, the CTU and UWF have established viable political projects, embodying particular views on agenda and strategy, and progressives and leftists, with diverse views, have embraced those projects as the best available opportunities for change.  I will present evidence that several WF33 members embraced an electoral strategy because UWF had launched viable electoral campaigns.   Other WF33 members may similarly have joined WF33 not because of a perfect ideological alignment, but because it appeared to be the most politically viable of all existing progressive-left projects.

Finally, I will also show how these activists came to reside in the 33rd ward.  I present evidence that most WF33 members sorted into the ward recently, as consumers of residential space, seeking neighborhood features characteristic of early-stage gentrification.

## Exposure to Ideologies in the post-Great Recession Mobilizations

Using biographical data through interviews and newspaper records, I will show that several WF33 members (including many of the key leaders) came to hold the aforementioned social analysis and agenda through the experiences in political mobilizations in the early 2010s.

I recount members' experiences in these mobilizations, and present suggestive evidence that members' outlooks changed during these experiences. Specifically, they focused increasingly on economic issues; they adopted critical, class-focused analyses of capitalism; and some adopted more specific narratives about class conflicts playing out through public policy. I cannot determine the extent to which members adopted these ideas as a result of exposure to them during their activism, or as a more organic reaction to economic crises.[680] I will document ideologically formative experiences in four institutional contexts: grassroots movements and organizations, left-leaning media outlets, academic institutions with concentrations of politically active and leftist scholars, and left-leaning labor unions.

*Grassroots Political Organizations*

From around 2010, there was an increase in left and progressive, economically-focused, grassroots political activity in Chicago. This included grassroots organizing around the post-2007 foreclosure and eviction crisis, protest waves in response to neoliberal austerity programs, and broader grassroots opposition to poverty and economic inequality. Communicating, and occasionally collaborating with academics, journalists, and future members of the UWF coalition, these grassroots actors co-authored a citywide conversation about capitalism, the neoliberal regime and political economy, social and racial justice, and political strategy. This history is recounted in more detail in Chapter 4.

Through interviews and searches of newspaper archives and organizational documents, I found that 12 WF33 members participated in these grassroots movements, either directly or as journalists covering the activities. Five participated in at least two of these movements.

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[680] This seemed to be quite opaque to the participants themselves.

- At least four members participated in the wave of protest and organizing over foreclosures, evictions, and homelessness, peaking between 2010 and 2013. Antonio, Norman and Brig were organizers at groups focused on grassroots organizing, with explicitly socialist demands and analyses of the housing crisis. Bill collaborated with these organizations in his capacity as head of the Chicago chapter of Progressive Democrats for America.

- Todd founded and led a campaign to demonstrate popular opposition to Chicago's bid to host the 2016 Olympics, peaking in 2010 and 2011. This campaign targeted the class-biased spending of the Daley and Emanuel regimes, demanding the reallocation of funds from business and real estate development subsidies to public services.

- At least five members participated in Occupy Chicago in 2011, which made the same militant, if vague, critiques of economic inequality as most other Occupy chapters. Ernie was a leading contributor of Occupy Chicago's newspaper, the Occupied Chicago Tribune. Brig, Norman, and one other anonymous members also participated in Occupy events. An additional anonymous member covered Occupy Chicago extensively for multiple local media outlets.

- At least two members participated in a wave of protests against the closure of six public mental health clinics beginning in 2012. These protests also critiqued the regime's spending policies. Ernie attended multiple protests, and an anonymous member covered them for local news outlets.

- At least 7 members participated in protests over school closures, following the announcement of closure of 53 schools in 2013. Most of these protests linked school closures to a larger critique of the city's class-biased resource allocation. Tim, Johanna, and Cindy participated in protests and rallies held by the CTU. Dawn and Juliana were also

involved in actions related to school-closings.  Ernie launched an investigation into the firing

of a CPS principal who criticized the city's school funding policies.  And an anonymous

member covered the protests (and more generally the politics of education in Chicago) for

local news outlets.

This list likely undercounts WF33 members' participation in these causes.[681]

WF33 members who participated in these movements appear to have adopted new

ideas during these years.  They became more focused on economic issues (and especially on

public services and housing), having previously focused on civil liberties, foreign policy, and

other issues.  They adopted class-focused analyses of political economy and the current political

conjuncture.  And they adopted particular critiques of the Daley and Emanuel administrations,

alleging upper-class and corporate biases, and focusing on the distribution of resources.  I have

not yet determined whether it was members' participation in these movements (and resulting

exposure to new ideas), underlying economic stressors (such as increasing precarity and

economic hardship), or other factors which caused these shifts.  For now, I document that

ideological shifts occurred, coincident with this participation.  I offer this as suggestive evidence

that WF33 members adopted these ideas as part of the larger upsurge in progressive and left,

economically focused, activism in the city.  I will illustrate this pattern with two examples

(Antonio and Ernie), and briefly argue that other participants' outlooks shifted in a similar

fashion.

By the time he graduated from Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU), Antonio was

already experienced in militant activism.  From what Antonio mentioned in interviews, and from

a review of newspaper archives and NEIU documents, Antonio' collegiate activism focused on

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[681]I was not able to interview everyone.  I collected information through searches of newspaper articles covering movements and
organizational documents, which are unlikely to mention non-leading participants.

free speech, immigrant rights, and US foreign policy. Antonio was president of Students Against

War, which protested U.S. involvement in Iraq, Afghanistan, and U.S. support for the Israeli

occupation of Palestine.[682] In this capacity, Antonio also collaborated with immigrant rights

groups.[683] As a member of Student Activists for Free Speech, Antonio led protests against the

University's disciplining of students who disrupted a CIA recruitment event on campus.[684] I

could find no record of activism focused on economic issues during Antonio' college career. I

could find no evidence that Antonio participated in NEIU's Socialist Club, with links to the

International Socialist Organization (led in 2009 by Ken Barrios, another future WF33 member).

Within a year of graduating, Antonio worked as an organizer in the bourgeoning

movement around Chicago's foreclosure and eviction crisis. From 2010-11, Antonio worked

with the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign (CAEC), a group founded in 2009 to organize renters

and homeowners, and move homeless families into abandoned, bank-owned houses (with or

without the banks' consent). In 2012, Antonio was a leader of Communities United Against

Foreclosure and Eviction, a group spun off Occupy Chicago, which worked with CAEC and other

grassroots groups and advocacy-oriented NGOs on organizing, direct actions, and policy

advocacy. In 2013, Antonio was a volunteer organizer at the Metropolitan Tenants Association,

a similar group focused on tenant organizing and policy advocacy.

CAEC, CUAFE, and MTA alternately traced the housing crisis to corporate greed—

indicting banks' predatory lending practices and speculators' reckless investing—and to the

fundamentally exploitative and anti-social nature of capitalist housing markets.[685] They

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[682] Jacobson, 2009.
[683] O'Shaughnessy, 2009.
[684] NEIU Coalition United for Free Speech, 2010.
[685] This member articulated the perspective in an article in 2012.

advanced short-term demands (e.g., for moratoria on foreclosures) and presented a larger

vision of decommodified housing, such as through land trusts or coops.

Antonio' participation in these organizations marks a shift toward economically-focused

activism.  And published documents show him using the class-conscious and anti-capitalist

rhetoric of these organizations.  While I have not yet confirmed that Antonio' political analysis

was affected by these experiences, his use of these discourses at this time, and the lack of

evidence of his ever having used them previously, suggests a shift.

As a member of CAEC, Antonio articulated a Marxian critique of capitalist housing

markets as fundamentally hostile to use values and indifferent to human suffering:

> When housing is treated as something to be bought and sold, something that people
> can make money off of, you end up not caring what happens to the people actually
> living in the house…The house [isn't] a roof over your head, it doesn't keep you warm in
> the winter, it's not a dignified place to live.  It becomes an exchange value.  And that's
> how these loan companies see it, that's how the banks see it, and that's all they care
> about.[686]

By 2012, speaking as a representative of CUAEF, Antonio criticized the upper-class bias in the

city government's spending patterns—then a mainstay of Chicago's more institutionalized left

(including the Grassroots Collaborative, Stand Up Chicago!, and the newly radical Chicago

Teachers Union), with whom CUAEF collaborated:  "Chicago is spending millions and millions of

dollars on setting up and securing NATO, while people are getting kicked out of their homes and

six mental health clinics have closed.  It only costs two million to keep a health clinic open. The

funding and policy priorities are out of whack."[687]  These quotes may be taken as suggestive

evidence that, as Antonio shifted his focus to economic issues, he assimilated elements of these

movements' discourses.

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[686] The source of this interview will not be cited, to protect the member's identity.
[687] Tadalan, 2012.

A few other members appear to have adopted new foci or analyses at this time, as they engaged with the growing movements. Through 2012, Dawn's professional and volunteer activism focused on reproductive rights and gender justice. Since 2012, she worked on a wider range of issues, including economic inequality and expanded public services.[688] Norman enacted a long-standing concern with class inequality and capitalist exploitation in the movement around foreclosures and evictions in 2011.[689]

## Left-leaning Media Outlets

Ernie's outlook also appears to have shifted during these years, coinciding with his participation in and journalistic coverage of Occupy Chicago and protests against the closure of public mental health clinics and schools. I have not been able to confirm that these episodes were the beginning of Ernie's involvement with socialist activism. However, Ernie's free-lance journalism suggests a marked shift toward class-conscious, critical analyses of capitalism, neoliberalism, and current political formations.

In 2006, Ernie co-wrote an article with a very different analysis of the national political parties than that in Ernie's more recent work. The article describes the recent expansion of the party's Progressive Caucus. In marked contrast to Ernie's more recent dismissals of the Democratic party as dominated by economic elites, Ernie describes the Democrats as a viable vehicle for a progressive policy agenda. More generally, the article implies that the conflict between the major political parties has important implications for social and economic justice.

Through early 2010, Ernie's main critiques of local and federal government focused on corruption—defined narrowly as malfeasance—and on the Bush administration's homeland security and foreign policies. In a 2006 article, Ernie attacks the Bush administration's

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[688] Interview with Dawn, 12/4/18.
[689] This was articulated in a 2015 article.

"cronyism," in awarding government jobs and contracts to parties with preexisting ties to

government officials.  In a 2010 article, Ernie attacked the Cook County Prosecutor for a

retaliatory investigations of a *pro bono* legal team, and for a lack of transparency.  Another 2006

article criticizes the PATRIOT Act and the Bush administration's support for "enhanced

interrogation methods" and indefinite detention of "enemy combatants" in the War on Terror.

Notably, these articles do not attend to upper-class and corporate influence over public policy,

economic inequality, or other focal points of his more recent writing.

By 2011, writing for the *Occupied Chicago Tribune* (the official news outlet of Occupy

Chicago) Ernie had adopted a class analysis and economic focus.  Subsequent work in the

*Occupied Chicago Tribune*, *In These Times*, and *The Socialist Worker* contained scathing critiques

of upper-class domination of the urban government and demands to redistribute resources, as

described in the previous section on WF33 members' ideology.  The timing of this shift suggests

that Ernie also adopted a new set of ideas amidst the upsurge in left activism in Chicago.  One

other anonymous member, who works as a political journalist, began covering economic issues

and amplifying the voices of left actors during this time.[690]

*Academic Institutions*

Chapter 4 showed that left-leaning academic institutions in Chicago helped produce the

analyses and agendas shared by Chicago's progressive-left milieu.  Local scholars, mostly

concentrated in a handful of academic departments, developed analyses of Chicago's political

economy, and of particular neoliberal reforms.  Many worked with labor unions and community-

based activists, synthesizing practitioners' grounded knowledge with sophisticated analyses of

economic structures and long-term political and economic developments.  Others have taken

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[690] I promised not to cite this member's articles, given their desire for anonymity.

Chicago's left formation as an object of study, offering practitioners insights on strategy (and building a cottage industry of Chicago Teachers Union hagiography).

These academic institutions have had a second political function: they have produced activists committed to the particular analysis and agenda discussed above. Through interviews and analyses of newspaper archives, organizational documents, and social media, I found suggestive evidence that at least 4 WF33 members adopted important ideas during their education at academic institutions associated with the left milieu. I will illustrate this pattern by reviewing the ideological shifts of one WF33 member, Juliana, coincident with her graduate education at University of Illinois at Chicago's College of Education, and employment at UIC's Collaborative for Equity and Justice in Education. I will briefly argue that three other WF33 members experienced similar shifts during graduate work in other departments.

**Department of Education Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago**

Scholars at the College of Education at University of Illinois at Chicago—most notably Pauline Lipman and Rico Gutstein—helped develop a critical analysis of neoliberal education reform, used by leftist practitioners in Chicago (and elsewhere). Lipman and Gutstein co-founded the Collaborative for Equity and Justice in Education, whose mission is to synthesize the grounded knowledge of community-based activists with scholarly analysis. Since 2005, Lipman, Gutstein, and other academics worked with activists from the Pilsen Alliance, Kenwood Oakland Community Organization, Southsiders Together Organizing for Power, and the Chicago Teachers Union (four core members of the UWF Coalition), developing an analysis of neoliberal education reform as part of a larger project of upper-class interests to privatize public functions and

redevelop neighborhoods, and as reproducing racial apartheid.[691]  This analysis has informed the

agenda and discourse of the CTU and community-based organizations.[692]

Lipman, Gutstein, and other critical, left-leaning scholars at the College of Education,

offer graduate training in the College of Education's Social Foundations of Education Program.

The curriculum focuses on the impact of public policy and economic structure on urban

education.  Several UWF-affiliated activists received graduate degrees from this program,

including former Executive Director of the Pilsen Alliance and UWF Executive Board member,

and recently elected alderman, Byron Sigcho.

**Juliana**

Juliana had long been an activist for immigrant rights, women's rights, and anti-

colonialist causes, as a college student at University of Illinois at Champagne-Urbana in the

1990s, and as a staff member (and frequent media spokesperson) at the Illinois Coalition for

Immigrant and Refugee Rights.[693]  Her college activism focused on Asian American rights and

representation (such as pushing UICU to create an Asian American studies program and cultural

center) and on U.S. colonialism and militarism in the Philippines.  After college, Juliana was a

leading member of GABRIELA Network Chicago, part of a Philippine-US women's solidarity

network focused on human trafficking, migrant workers' rights, and the Philippine women's

movement.[694]

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[691] E.g.:  Horn, Lopez, Lipman and Sigcho, 2011; Lipman and Persons in collaboration with Kenwood Oakland Community Organization, 2007;
[692] Bradbury et al, 2015.
[693] Her college activism focused on Asian American rights and representation (such as pushing UICU to create an Asian American studies program and cultural center) and on US colonialism and militarism in the Philippines.  After college, this member was a leader of an international solidarity network focused on human trafficking, migrant workers' rights, and women's rights in Asian Pacific countries.
[694] This member was featured as a national leader at a national forum for women's rights in Asian Pacific countries in 2004.

Juliana enrolled in the Social Foundations of Education PhD program in the late 2000s, and worked closely with Pauline Lipman.[695]  Since at least 2012, Juliana has been the Program Coordinator at the Collaborative for Equity and Justice in Education.  By 2012, Juliana's activism and research reflected the analysis of Lipman and her practitioner collaborators:  presentations in 2011 and 2013 focused on race and class inequality in education, and on the political economy of education, respectively.[696]  Around this time, Juliana also became active in two grassroots organizations backing progressive education reform, and supporting the Chicago Teachers Union in its labor disputes, Parents 4 Teachers and Communities Organized for Democracy in Education.

I have not been able to confirm that Juliana's training at UIC's Department of Education caused her to adopt this orientation.  Clearly, Juliana's interest in education must have preceded her pursuit of a doctorate in education policy.  However, the close resemblance between Juliana's priorities and discourse and those of UIC's left-leaning scholars and their collaborators, after Juliana's association with UIC, suggest the program's influence.  Juliana appears to have gone from a CPS parent concerned about public education, and with history of political activism, to a scholar-activist with a particular analysis of neoliberal education reform, a particular set of progressive policy priorities, and a particular set of political alliances.

At least three other WF33 members appear to have developed their analyses in left-leaning academic institutions

- A review of Antonio' scholarship suggests his continuing exploration of leftist politics and neoliberal political economy during a Master's program in Sociology at Roosevelt University,

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[695] This member presented a conference paper on the politics of neoliberal education reform in 2013.  They also presented on a panel on social justice in education, alongside Pauline Lipman in 2011.
[696] This member articulated this perspective in a socialist news outlet in 2015.

and a PhD in Sociology at University of Illinois at Chicago.[697]  Though already working at

leftist, grassroots, housing rights organizations, these experiences may have helped refine

Antonio' analysis.

- Emily, who had previously worked at a labor center in Arkansas, was drawn to Chicago by

  UIC's doctoral program in sociology.  She may have been recruited to WF33 by her colleague

  in the doctoral program, Antonio, although I have not been able to confirm this conjecture.

- Though far from Chicago, a recent WF33 member, Mary, recently received a master's

  focused on education policy and the political economy of education from Brown University.

  While I have no data on the content of this member's studies, it is possible she was exposed

  to similar ideas there.

### Labor Unions

To varying degrees, the unions affiliated with United Working Families (the Chicago

Teachers Union, SEIU Healthcare Illinois and Indiana, Amalgamated Transit Union, and Cook

County College Teachers Union, and United Electrical Workers) have invested in political

education and mobilization of their members.  Per one element of the "social movement

unionism" paradigm, these unions intended to radicalize their members, and deploy them in

electoral and neighborhood politics.  In practice, UWF-affiliated unions have usually settled for

turning out members to volunteer in electoral campaigns.  But the Chicago Teachers Union, and

to a lesser extent SEIU HCII, have generated political activists, especially since the 2010 takeover

of the CTU by a progressive-left caucus, and their subsequent investment in political education.

Through interviews, newspaper accounts and union documents, I found evidence that

four WF33 members gained their current outlook at least partly through the political education

in their labor union.  I will recount the most important example:  Tim Meegan, a co-founder of

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[697] As a master's student, Antonio researched socialist movements in other historical periods.

WF33 and one of its leaders through 2016 (when Meegan moved out of state for work). Though Meegan likely held leftist ideas previously, his ideology was shaped during participation in intra-union politics and in the CTU's struggles over policy, beginning in 2009/2010. I will briefly describe two other WF33 members mobilized by the CTU, and one by SEIU Health Care Illinois and Indiana.

Meegan became active in the CTU in 2009, holding a series of leadership positions, and participating regularly in the CTU's political work. He was an early member of the Caucus of Rank and File Educators (CORE), the progressive and leftist caucus which began organizing support for assertive political strategies and a broad anti-neoliberal policy agenda in 2009.[698] In 2012, he was elected to the CTU's Executive Board on CORE's slate, and as his school's delegate to the CTU Assembly. He was also an official speaker at several of CTU's political rallies (including at Board of Education meeting in 2011, from which Meegan was forcibly removed).[699] Meegan also participated in the CTU's formal political education programs, taking part in the CTU's organizer training and candidate program in 2013.[700] In 2014, Meegan launched a campaign for alderman, funded by the CTU.

In previous interviews, Meegan reports being driven by the same events which catalyzed other members of CORE (especially school closures, disinvestment from public education coupled with public subsidies for corporations, charterization, lay-offs of tenured teachers, and elected officials' seeming unconcern to popular opposition to these moves).[701]

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[698] James, 2014.

[699] Schmidt, 2015; E.g., Meegan gave a speech at a rally against ALEC, 8/8/13, co-hosted by the CTU.

[700] Kunichoff, 2014

[701] James, 2014. In 2014, Meegan recounted his path to activism in an interview with The Socialist Worker. The resemblance between his "origin story" and that typically told by CTU activists may reflect real common experiences of being catalyzed by neoliberal reforms, or the assimilation of a party line. Meegan reports that he was galvanized by "a huge round of budget cuts and layoffs in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). We lost about 17 teachers at my school, Roosevelt High, at the end of that year…I became politically active then. I went to political protests and demonstrations in the run-up to the CTU strike." Like so many others in Chicago, Meegan also cites the 2012 teachers' strike as a moment inspiring his activism.

Over the course of his activism, Meegan clearly assimilated (and may have helped create) CORE's analysis of neoliberal education reform, its redistributive agenda, and its strategic emphasis on grassroots activism and electoral work. By the time of his aldermanic campaign, Meegan's agenda and discourse closely mirrored those of the CTU and the budding UWF coalition.[702]

Three other WF33 members were mobilized within their unions. Johana is a delegate to the CTU Assembly, and Cindy was a long-time CTU member, prior to her retirement.[703] In an interview, Dawn confirmed that both were encouraged by the CTU to volunteer in Meegan's campaign, and have remained as active members of WF33.[704] Rich is a long-time SEIU HCII member, who connected with WF33 through the union.[705]

## Post-2016 Election Wave of Mobilization

Another set of WF33 members developed their commitment to socialism as part of a more recent, national wave of interest in socialism, driven by Bernie Sanders' presidential campaigns and anxiety over the Trump administration. Most of these members were channeled through the Chicago chapter of Democratic Socialists of America. They joined DSA after 2016, as a their first form of participation in left politics. And DSA appears to have deeply shaped their ideology: they joined DSA with vague and inchoate political views, but have since adopted some DSA's particular discourses and agenda. These members joined WF33 after these ideologically formative experiences at DSA.

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[702] Meegan's campaign platform and discourse were described in the first section of this chapter. For his views on strategy, see Kunichoff, 2014.
[703] Perez Jr., 2016; Dussault, 2019.
[704] Interview with Dawn, 1/11/18.
[705] Interview with Antonio, 3/24/18.

DSA is a national mass membership organization, formed in 1982 through the merger of a student-based New Left organization and a group which had previously split from the Socialist Party.[706] DSA has a national leadership and 200 chapters around the United States, each responsible for setting its own agenda and strategy. Since the early 2010s, the Chicago chapter has been committed to a policy agenda similar to that of the rest of Chicago's left milieu: a redistributive program, including Medicare for all, tuition-free college education, and an increased minimum wage.[707]

Like other chapters, DSA Chicago grew dramatically since the election of 2016. Its membership increased almost ten-fold, from 184 members in October 2016 to 1,340 in April 2018.[708] And like the members pouring into other chapters, most of the joiners in Chicago's were inspired by Bernie Sanders' 2016 presidential campaign, and/or galvanized by Trump's 2016 election. The enlarged membership also recruited increasing numbers through their social networks.[709]

It's not clear why the wave of individuals activated by the 2016 elections gravitated to DSA in particular. (One theory holds that individuals learned the term "democratic socialism" from the Sanders campaign, googled it, and found DSA.) Whatever its initial attraction, DSA has played a critical educative function for this wave of participants, according to my interviews. I will illustrate this phenomenon with a detailed account of one WF33 by way of DSA member, and briefly argue that several others had a similar ideological development.

[706] Henwood, 2019.

[707] I have not yet found any evidence that DSA Chicago participated in the forms of collaboration and mutual influence which defined the rest of Chicago's left milieu from the early 2010s. Commentators writing about the rise of DSA nationally observe many DSA chapters' positions developed in response to the same economic developments which catalyzed the growth of that that milieu— growing inequality; the Great Recession of 2007; the resulting crises for lower-class workers, rents and homeowners; and the abject failure of neoliberal governments to respond equitably to these crises (Henwood, 2019).

[708] This parallels the growth of the national membership, from around 6,000 in 2015 to 56,000 in May, 2019 (Henwood, 2019).

[709] Interview with Katie, 5/30/18.

One of the post-2016 joiners is Devon, a former city employee in his late 20s, originally from Mount Greenwood, a working-class neighborhood in the southwestern corner of Chicago. At the time of our interview, Devon had not yet joined WF33, but repeatedly stated his intention to do so as soon as he finished moving into the ward later that week.

In our interview, Devon suggested that he had had only a vague sense of working-class identity and concern with Chicago's severe poverty, but not a consistent or coherent orientation to politics, prior to joining DSA. Devon absorbed a working-class identity from his "straight-up blue collar" family and community.[710] He was aware of Chicago's deep poverty from his experiences at Chicago's Troubled Buildings Initiative (a program to repossess and refurbish privately owned properties, turning them into affordable housing). Devon observed "the seriously messed up housing situations, particularly on the West Side," and described graphic scenes of acute overcrowding and almost unspeakably harmful conditions. He expressed frustration with the government's failure to address the housing crisis.[711] And he expressed disgust at the racist and white supremacist rallies he had heard about in the neighborhood adjacent his family's.

But Devon does not appear to have had any developed or consistent political outlook, other than the discourses of DSA. He mentioned that "I was never that political, usually vote Democrat, but not super active in politics." And he had engaged in political activism only episodically: his work with DSA on the rent control referendum campaign in winter of 2017 to

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[710] Kevin implied that he absorbed both a blue-collar identity and critiques of the Democratic party as elitist and radical (typical of what historians call the "white backlash" of the 1960s). The combination is captured by Kevin's anecdote of his great uncle's vote in the 1972 presidential election: "He said, 'no way I'm voting for McGovern, this guy's way too liberal. But I'll be damned if I vote Republican,' cuz that's the party of the bosses. So he wond up writing-in Richard J. Daley for President."

[711] "The federal government isn't giving us any money to do it, the city isn't giving us any money [to build housing]"

spring of 2018 was his first time participating in politics in any sustained way, and his first time canvassing.[712]

Despite this varied background, Devon had enough of a proclivity for socialism to be interested when, through "a complete fluke," he encountered DSA literature while house-sitting for a hospitalized friend. He "looked up DSA later and thought 'OK I could do this,'" and asked his friend, "Hey, when you get out of the hospital, take me to meeting."

Since then, Devon appears to have embraced much of the agenda of DSA. Over our conversation, Devon repeatedly mentioned a $15 minimum wage and free higher education as both desirable and as programs that could appeal to working-class voters who currently vote Republican. Devon's unprompted use of class categories when describing neighborhood demographics was mentioned in Section 2.

Six other WF33 members were previously DSA Chicago members, but do not appear to have had any prior ties to Chicago's left milieu, or to other left-leaning political institutions.

- Betty was inspired to join DSA by the 2016 elections, previously a mostly inactive progressive Democrat. Since that time, she has come to reflexively view social issues through the lens of class (as documented in her conversation with Devon, reported in Section 2), and to affirm DSA's and WF33's policy agenda. This ideological development was likely driven by her experiences at both DSA and WF33.

- Joycelyn also had her first activist experiences as a member of DSA. She expressed intense anger over economic inequality, rooted in her childhood in a depressed post-industrial city in eastern Massachusetts. She joined DSA after College, and with no prior activist

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[712] Interview with Kevin, 5/30/18.

experience.  By the time she joined WF33, she already supported policies including a $15

minimum wage and rent control.

- Three other WF33 members—Joe, Patrick, and Jesse—were previously members of DSA and

   do not appear to have any other prior experience with left politics, or with political activism

   of any sort.

- One member (Sean) was previously a member of DSA, and two other social democratic

   organizations, and had previously only volunteered in charitable causes.

## Attraction to the pole of UWF

As chapter 4 recounts, the UWF coalition grew rapidly into a powerful formation.  The

Chicago Teachers Union's embrace of left-leaning politics after 2011 greatly increased the

coalition's capacity for electoral and legislative action.  By 2015, the UWF coalition regularly

deployed institutional and financial resources on electoral and lobbying projects at a significant

scale.  And the coalition expressed a consensus on policy and strategy worked out among

leaders of Chicago's most powerful left and progressive organizations.

As it grew, the UWF coalition increasingly exercised leadership in Chicago's broader,

progressive-left milieu.  In a fragmented milieu, UWF increasingly offered well-resourced and

seemingly viable progressive-left projects.  Individuals and groups with affinities for progressive

and left causes, but previously without ties (or with only weak, indirect ties) to the coalition,

gravitated toward these projects.

UWF leadership helps explain the ideological development of WF33 members.  Some

members embraced the particular agenda and strategy described in Section 2 because the

Meegan campaign, or WF33 itself, appeared to be best available options for pursuing left

politics.  UWF leadership has been particularly important in shaping members political strategy.

I found that WF33 members who had previously focused on grassroots base-building and

mobilization first embraced electoral struggle by joining UWF-backed campaigns.

UWF leadership helped cause a shift in the strategy of WF33's founding members (and

leading cadre).  For example, from 2010 to 2013, Antonio focused almost exclusively on

grassroots organizing, direct action, and policy advocacy in his work at Chicago Anti-Eviction

Campaign, Communities United Against Foreclosure and Eviction, and Metropolitan Tenants

Organization.  In 2014, Tim Meegan's well-financed and stridently left-wing aldermanic

campaigns presented a compelling model of political action, just as Antonio began to appreciate

the limits of issue-based work absent institutional power.  As Antonio told another interviewer

in 2017, "I felt burned out by housing organizing at the time.  So this initiative was when I saw

that electoral politics was where it's at."[713]

The rest of WF33's founding cadre likely embraced electoral politics for the same

reason.  These members (including Dawn, Ernie, Todd, and Rossana) were experienced in left-

leaning issue campaigns, but had no experience with electoral politics prior to the Meegan

campaign.[714]  Their embrace of electoral politics is hard to imagine without the presence of a

well-resourced and ideologically amenable campaign in their neighborhood.

I found suggestive evidence that two other WF33 members, committed to left or

progressive causes but not to the particular agenda of the UWF coalition, embraced WF33 as

the best available political project:

- Ken had been a socialist at least since his undergraduate career at Northeastern Illinois

  University, and a member of International Socialist Organization.  I could find no links

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[713] Budovitch, 2017:  54.

[714] Antonio and Dawn both mentioned that Meegan's campaign staff, who became the leadership of WF33, had no prior experience in electoral work (Interview with Antonio, 3/24/18; Interview with Dawn, 1/11/18)

between Ken and any of the other organizations or movements comprising the UWF

coalition or the larger left milieu.  However, Ken joined WF33 in 2017, perhaps seeing it as a

way viable way to pursue some of the economic goals espoused by ISO (withal the

differences between WF33 and ISO on strategic and policy goals).

- Mary had previously worked at an NGO advocating equitable funding formulas for public

  schools.  While she appears to have had no ties to social democratic politics, she may have

  seen WF33 as a the best available option for advancing her goal of increasing funding for

  public schools.

## 4. Geographic Sorting of Chicago's Progressive/Left Activists

The preceding factors produced activists at a city-wide scale.  Many of these activists

sorted into the 33rd ward as consumers of residential space:  they located on the basis of typical

consumer criteria such as housing costs, demographics, and cultural characteristics.  The

features of Albany Park which attracted WF33 members are typical of neighborhoods in the

early stages of gentrification.[715]

To date, I have spoken with six WF33 members about their decision to live in the 33rd

ward.  All six individuals rented or owned homes in the Albany Park neighborhood.  All six cited

the affordable cost of living, and in particular of housing, as a key reason for their decision.  All

six also mentioned liking the demographic mix in Albany Park—four explicitly noted the

neighborhood's "diversity," and two implicitly contrasted Albany Park's demographic mix with

that in other, nearby neighborhoods.  Three hinted that Albany Park also offered desirable

commercial or recreational establishments.

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[715] That members sorted into the neighborhood as residential consumers speaks to their geographic mobility, which is itself a reflection of members' economic position. The economic and social characteristics of WF33 members will discussed in the next chapter.

Betty, a member of DSA North Side and WF33, exemplified these sentiments.  Relating

her decision to move to Albany Park, she cited the affordability of housing, enabling her to have

her own apartment, and she compared the neighborhood's mix of residents favorably to her

previous neighborhood of Lincoln Square:  "When I was looking for my own place...I liked Albany

Park, I knew it was affordable, I wanted to live somewhere different than Lincoln Square, which

is very yuppy.  So I've been in Albany Park for six and half years.  Lincoln Square, when I moved

there it was pretty yuppie, but now it's like, completely."

Devon, a current member of DSA North Side and prospective member of WF33,

expressed the same take on Albany Park.[716]  He painted Albany Park as the opposite of his

previous neighborhood, Logan Square, which was prohibitively expensive: "I lived in the Logan

Square area for most of the last 10 years.  It is turning into Lincoln Park basically.  The only

reason I could afford to live there is because I had two roommates and because my house was

the [expletive] house on the block.  In Albany Park, could actually afford to live in a nice place."

We can see the WF33 activists' residence in the ward as a function of the current state

of citywide gentrification processes—the self-reinforcing cycle of investor speculation and

private real estate development, supported by city government and consumption of affluent,

newly arriving individuals and families (described in Chapter 2).  The neighborhood

characteristics which drew WF33 members are systematically determined by the redevelopment

process.  Albany Park's mix of racial diversity, affordability, and amenities desirable to upwardly

mobile consumers, are characteristic of neighborhoods in the early stages of gentrification.[717]

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[716] He had started the process of moving to Albany Park the day we spoke, and mentioned his intention to join WF33, now that he lived in the ward.
[717] Smith, 1995.

## Discussion

Carl Rosen, president of a local union and member of UWF's Executive Board, reflected

on the unlikely growth of the Little Village Independent Political Organization, a neighborhood-

based political action group formed in 1982.  While most of its contemporaries organized

around racial identities and sought particularistic benefits from the city, Little Village IPO

organized a multi-racial, working-class coalition around a broad progressive policy agenda.  This

orientation, Rosen recalled, reflected the ideology of leading members:  "There happened to be

a number of people who had a big picture outlook on the world, people like Rudy Lozano, Munel

Mustin, who was the key African American leader, who had the big picture outlook, and who

therefore could see how to unite people across racial lines, *et cetera*.[718]

Like that of Little Village IPO, the distinctive orientation of Working Families of the 33rd

Ward is a direct consequence of the ideas of its leading activists.  WF33's founders and leading

members shared deep commitments to socialist transformation, and had developed elaborate

views on political strategy through years of political experience.  It was these views, not

opportunities for influence or funding, which explain WF33's class-conscious social vision, its

socialist policy agenda, and—most distinctive from its contemporaries—its strategic focus on

winning institutional power through base-building and electoral mobilization.

The main argument of this chapter is that the existence of activists with these particular

ideas, and their presence in particular neighborhoods, are systematically determined features of

the political context.   The existence of these activists should be understood as an effect of the

expansion of Chicago's left milieu—the dense network of grassroots movements, left-leaning

unions, academic institutions, and media outlets—and its convergence on shared ideologies,

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[718] Interview with Carl Rosen, 3/15/17.

since the early 2010s.  Chapter 3 recounted this expansion and convergence:  since the Great

Recession, diverse actors mobilized to challenge neoliberalism and related economic crises;

through collaboration and mutual influence, these actors synthesized and converged on a set of

discourses about neoliberalism, social change, and political strategy.   In this chapter, I showed

that WF33's leading activists developed their social visions and views on strategy through

experiences in this milieu.  Using biographical data, I demonstrated that key WF33 members

adopted elements of the discourses spreading through the milieu, including critiques of

neoliberalism, a political analysis foregrounding the conflict between corporate and financial

elites and the lower-classes, and redistributive policy agendas, as graduate students in left-

leaning academic departments, members of Occupy Chicago and spin-off movements, as

members of the Chicago Teachers Union, and as journalists covering these movements and

actors.  Also, as the United Working Families coalition emerged as the leading force within

Chicago's left, it exerted ideological leadership, encouraging Chicago's diverse leftists to adopt

UWF's electorally focused strategy.   A secondary layer of WF33's members developed a vaguer

interest in socialism and activism as a result of national political developments since 2016.

My interview data showed that WF33's activists moved into Albany Park as consumers

of residential space drawn by the neighborhood's combination of affordability, racial and

cultural diversity, and relatively upscale amenities.  While I have only observed the residential

location choices of a handful of left activists in one neighborhood, their choices seem to indicate

that the sorting of left activists in city space is governed by the gentrification dynamic.  Racial

and cultural diversity and the combination of affordability with scattered amenities catering to

upscale consumers are characteristic features of neighborhoods in the early stages of

redevelopment.  Insofar as these preferences are common among the activists populating

resurgent left formations in the U.S., we could expect such activists would tend to reside in

neighborhood in the early stages of redevelopment.

These findings have implications for this dissertation's theoretical questions about the

construction of the terrain for neighborhood organizing.  As in Austin, I found that political

developments at scales beyond the neighborhood are crucial in creating terrain for

neighborhood organizing.  This chapter suggests that we should consider not just

neoliberalization, but also expansions of left formations at city and national scales as

developments shaping neighborhood terrain.  Specifically, this chapter suggests that the growth

of left movements, organizations, and milieus entails the production of left activists.  Insofar as

these activists reside in a particular neighborhood, they can be an important element of the

terrain for organizing, creating possibilities for a left base-building project.  This chapter further

suggests that the sorting of left activists in urban space is governed by the gentrification

dynamic.  The rapid growth of WF33 into an effective vehicle for base-building around a socialist

agenda must be understood as a manifestation of these prior city- and national level political

developments and sorting dynamics—in addition to the extraordinary leadership of Antonio,

Dawn, Ernie, Rosanna, and other core members.

# Chapter 7.  Organizing in Albany park and the 33rd Ward Part 2

## Introduction

The previous chapter described the rapid growth of the grassroots political organization

33rd Ward Working Families.  Since 2017, WF33 deployed its membership in a series of carefully

planned outreach campaigns, attempting to build popular support for a left-leaning agenda, to

be mobilized in elections and other political actions.  This chapter examines these organizing

efforts, and the factors which shaped their effectiveness.  Per the theoretical foci of the

dissertation, I am primarily interested in how historically emergent structures at the

neighborhood-level mediate the process of grassroots organizing, creating impediments and

opportunities.

As in the 27th Ward [i.e., Austin the case study in an earlier chapter], I found that non-

governmental organizations in the neighborhood played a critical role in diffusing

understandings of social problems.  In this case, a cluster of NGOs, ideologically opposed to

neoliberalism, and relatively financially independent of the neoliberal regime and its foundation

allies, diffused leftist perspectives on housing, immigration, and other social problems.  WF33

drew supporters from the bases organized by these NGOs.  This mitigated one of the barriers to

WF33's organizing, the social distance between its membership and its target populations.  I

could not find any NGOs diffusing neoliberal perspectives on these issues to politically contested

populations (working-class and low-income Latinx), as I did in the 27th Ward.

Previous chapters recount the national trends away from leftist community organizing

by neighborhood-based NGOs.  What explains the presence of such groups in the 33rd Ward?

I argue that the ward's distinctive organizational field was a product of the ward's development as a "point of entry" neighborhood for immigrants. Largely arriving in the last few decades, the neighborhood's activists are not steeped in the political culture which developed in most black neighborhoods since the late 1960s. As such, they are not as committed to community development as a form of racial empowerment. Instead, many of the 33rd Ward's activists are steeped in transnational networks of radical anti-colonial activists, from which they derive radical critiques of neoliberalism and militant organizing strategies.

I discuss the implications of the interaction between WF33 and these NGOs for ongoing debates about the political function of NGOs. I argue that progressive NGOs, rightly criticized as politically ineffectual or counter-productive on their own, can complement the work of an explicitly partisan neighborhood organization like WF33. I explore the conditions in which such collaboration is possible.

I argue that the rapid redevelopment occurring in parts of the ward, and resulting acute affordable housing shortages, created an opportunity for WF33's to organize effectively around affordable housing. Residents who experienced immediate, concrete harms, such as housing and financial insecurity, were highly receptive to WF33's outreach around rent-control and other progressive housing programs. In the final section of the chapter, I will argue that gentrifying neighborhoods are more amenable to organizing around progressive and left agendas than chronically disinvested neighborhoods like Austin.

In the first section of this chapter, I will describe the neighborhoods in which WF33 is attempting to organize, reviewing the demographics, salient issues, and civic and political organizations. In the second section, I review WF33's base-building goals, and the populations

they view as their most likely and natural base.  I find that, despite consistently talking about their base in class and racial terms, WF33 has chosen to primarily target the ward's Latinx population.  I speculate that WF33 members, though committed to a class analysis, have nonetheless internalized race and racial oppression as foundational analytical categories, leading to slippage in their conceptualization of their base.

In the third section, I review WF33's organizing strategies and projects.  I show that they attempted to organize around what they viewed as the most salient issues among their target populations.  I show how they partnered with the ward's left-leaning NGOs, tapping the NGOs' already organized bases, and reaching out to ward residents who had for years been exposed to the NGO's leftist accounts of issues.  WF33 also used its issue-based work to gain access to civic institutions which they would not otherwise have had.

# 1. The context for WF33's organizing project

## Demographic composition of the ward

I will briefly review the demography of the ward.  First, I will sketch the size, racial composition, and geographic distribution of the working- and lower-class populations WF33 intends to organize.  I find that the ward has a large working- and lower-class populations, including significant numbers living below the poverty line, and unemployment rates well above the city and national averages.  The Latinx working- and lower-class populations are concentrated in a handful of census tracts.[719]  With the exception of two high-poverty,

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[719] I will refer to populations with ancestry in South and Central America as "Latinx," a category eliding the many differences among these populations.  It is common for political and journalistic discourse, in the 33rd Ward and in Chicago generally, to use the category Latinx, and to address people of these origins as Latinx.  Jaime Sanchez (forthcoming) shows the origins of a discourse of pan-Latinx identity in the efforts of the Harold Washington administration to consolidate a Latinx constituency).  Almost all of the interactions I observed between these populations and WF33 were conducted in these terms, and I observed very few instances in which WF33 members distinguished populations within the Latinx category.  Since I am primarily analyzing the interactions between

predominantly white tracts, the white working- and lower-class residents are dispersed among many census tracts. Second, I examine the ward's large immigrant populations. I review the demographics of this population, and distinctive forms of civic institutions rooted in it.

*Class and race*

The 33rd ward is home to just under 70,000 people, distributed in 16 census tracts. A significant portion are in the working- and lower-classes, as measured by income and poverty rates and the types of jobs residents hold.

First, we can examine the number of people living in poverty in the neighborhood. The federal government provides official poverty thresholds, based on the costs of basic goods. Although these thresholds have been criticized as unrealistically low (i.e., that people with incomes above the official thresholds may still be quite poor), they provide a rough approximation of the incidence of poverty.[720] In 2017, the poverty lines were defined as household income below $24,600 for a family of 4, and $12,600 for a single person without dependents.[721] On these measures, approximately 15% of households in the ward are below the poverty line. The rate is higher in parts of the ward, with rates above 20% in three census tracts. While the ward's poverty rate is higher than the national rate of 12.3%, it is relatively low for Chicago, which has 7 out of 77 official "community areas" with poverty rates over 40% and 22 community areas with poverty rates over 30%.[722]

We can see the size of the ward's working- and lower-classes by looking at the distribution of households across income brackets. Graph 1 below depicts the number of households in each income bracket. Perhaps propitiously for WF33's hopes of organizing the

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WF33 and ward residents, I chose to use the same construct to conceptualize the ward's populations, while remaining open to any evidence that WF33's use of this construct, and erasure of differences among Latinx people, was politically important.
[720] See Desmond, 2016; Harding, 2010.
[721] U.S. Census Bureau, 2017. They calculate thresholds for households of 1-8 people.
[722] Farooqui, 2015.

lower classes, the ward contains a relatively large population of relatively low-income, but not

deeply impoverished households.  Approximately 10,900 households—almost 25% of the

ward—are below the median income for the city ($52,000), but not living below the federally

defined poverty line (less than $24,600 for a family of four).  Such households roughly

correspond to what theorists and practitioners see as, *ceteris paribus,* the population segment

most likely to support economic reform or revolution:  their relatively poor position creates an

incentive for change, but they may not experience incapacitating levels of deprivation.[723]

**Graph 1.  Income distribution, 33rd Ward**
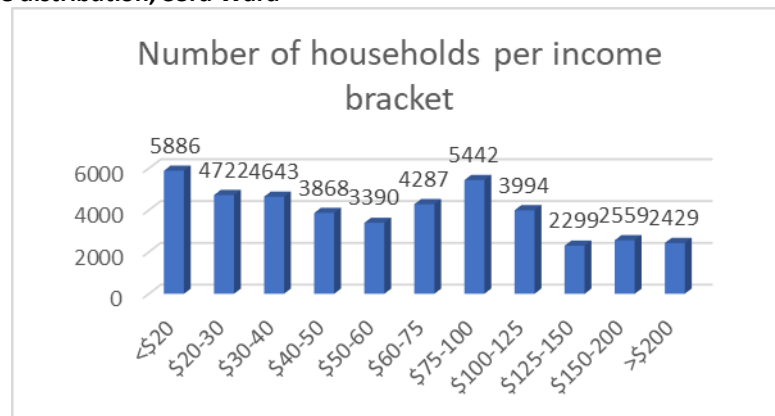


**Data source:  The Demographic Statistical Atlas of the United States[724]**

The impression of a significant population experiencing economic hardship is reinforced

by the ward's relatively high unemployment and joblessness rates.  The unemployment rate for

Latinx and white ward residents (the ward's two largest racial groups) are 10.2% and 7.4%,

respectively—significantly higher than the 3.8% rate in Chicago.  The joblessness rate (which

indicate people currently unemployed as well as people who have ceased seeking employment)

for whites aged 16-64 is 22.6%.  For Latinx people in the same age group, it is 30.6%.  Like

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[723] McAdam, 1982; Schaff, 1973, for a summary of the Marxian perspective.  Interview with Emma Tai, 3/7/17.
[724] Values calculated from data published by the Demographic Statistical Atlas of the Untied States, 2017.

poverty rates, unemployment and jobless rates are significantly higher in certain areas, with 7 tracts having an overall unemployment rate above 15%.[725]

We can also understand the economic position of ward residents by examining their occupations. 70.8% of Latinx people in the ward's labor force work in relatively low-skilled occupations, such as non-managerial positions in retail and food services, construction, and transportation.[726] 24% of whites in the ward's labor force work in these occupations.

As the aforementioned data on employment and occupation suggest, there is some association between class and race in the ward. However, there is also a large Latinx middle- and upper-class, with approximately 1,742 Latinx households making over $100,000 per year, or about 12% of all Latinx households in the ward.[727] And many whites are in the lower-classes, with just under 7,500 white households with incomes $50,000 or lower. The racial composition of income brackets in Albany Park is captured in Graph 2, below. The distributions are very similar in Avondale and Irving Park.

**Graph 2. Racial composition of income brackets, Albany Park, 2017**

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[725] Values calculated from data published by U.S. Census, 2012 American Community Survey.
[726] Occupational categories in the U.S. Census categorize workers within industries based on the type of work done. I included the categories "service" (which includes non-managerial retail, food-service, security, and other occupations); "natural resources, construction, and maintenance" (which includes landscaping, janitorial occupations, mining, and farming, among other occupations); and "production, transportation" (which includes non-managerial and non-foreman manufacturing jobs, truck driving, and livery services, among other occupations). I attempted to include occupations which tend not to require secondary education, and which tend to have lower wages and benefits. For a full explanation of the Census' occupational categories, see "Industry and Occupation indexes," available at https://www.census.gov/topics/employment/industry-occupation/guidance/indexes.html. Accessed 6/14/19.
[727] Values calculated from data published by Demographic Statistical Atlas of the United States, 2017.

| | 0% | 20% | 40% | 60% | 80% | 100% | Count |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| > $200k | | | 68% | | 12% | 13% | 1,203 |
| $150-200k | | | 64% | | 9% 8% | 14% | 1,461 |
| $125-150k | | | 63% | | 11% 9% | 14% | 1,125 |
| $100-125k | | 56% | | | 19% | 14% | 2,336 |
| $75-100k | | 45% | | 32% | | 10% | 3,276 |
| $60-75k | | 38% | | 39% | | 12% | 2,558 |
| $50-60k | | 38% | | 39% | | 10% | 2,142 |
| $45-50k | | 42% | | 39% | | 9% | 1,268 |
| $40-45k | | 39% | | 34% | 9% 7% 9% | | 1,162 |
| $35-40k | | 40% | | 43% | | 9% | 1,343 |
| $30-35k | | 33% | | 38% | | 17% | 1,214 |
| $25-30k | | 38% | | 33% | | 18% | 1,442 |
| $20-25k | | 30% | | 43% | 7% | 12% | 1,430 |
| $15-20k | 22% | | 45% | | 8% 7% | 14% | 1,052 |
| $10-15k | 32% | | 39% | | | 14% | 945 |
| < $10k | 34% | | 21% | 15% | 27% | | 1,777 |
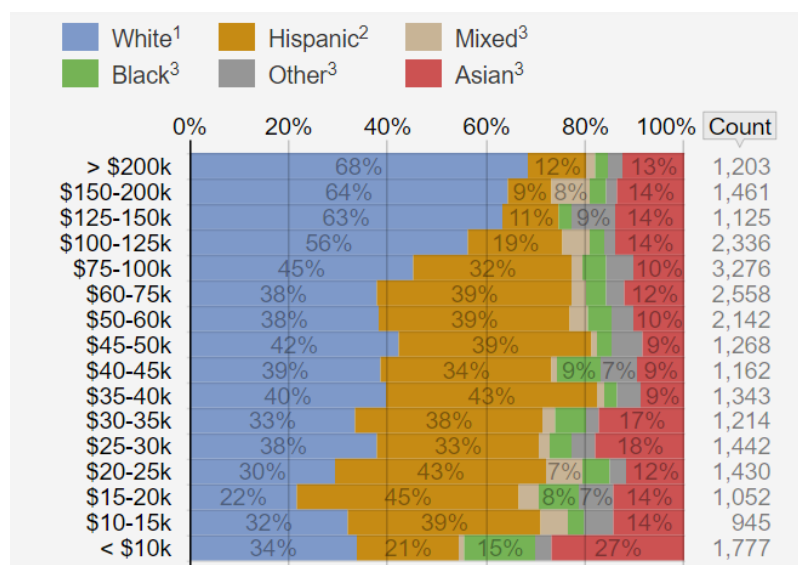
**Source: Demographic Statistical Atlas of the United States[728]**

Lower-class Latinx people are geographically concentrated in a about 5 of the ward's 16 census tracts. According to commentators, most of the ward's low-income Latinx people live in high-poverty tracts in northern Albany Park and Southern Avondale.[729] One census tract in northern Albany Park has a 25.7% poverty rate, and joblessness rate of 41%. This tract is almost 70% Latinx. An adjacent, predominantly Latinx tract in the northeastern tip of the ward has a 36.4% poverty rate and joblessness rate of 39%.

The ward also contains pockets of concentrated white poverty, located in three majority-Latinx census tracts. In parts of west Irving Park, white households had a median income around $35,000, significantly lower than the ward's median. These tracts had the highest percentages of whites in low-skill occupations, with 48% and 42%, respectively. In a predominantly Latinx tract in the south of Avondale, white households had a median income of $42,000, and the white unemployment rate was 16%.

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[728] Graph created by the Demographic Statistical Atlas of the United States, 2017.
[729] Stewart, 2018. McGhee and Newman, 2018.

Aside from these three concentrations, the white working- and lower-class households were dispersed throughout the ward.  In the remaining 12 census tracts, median income for white households was near or above $50,000, suggesting that none had a large enough low-income white population to move the median income near the poverty line.  And no other census tract had more than 1/3 of its white workforce in low-skilled occupations.

*Immigration*

The 33rd Ward has a large immigrant population, including thousands of undocumented immigrants.  Foreign-born people began to move into the neighborhoods of the 33rd Ward at a large-scale in the mid-1970s, attracted by housing prices driven down by years of out-migration and divestment.  "Immigrant entrepreneurship" created self-sustaining commercial districts catering to immigrant populations, and communities developed dense civic cultures, semi-autonomous of the citywide institutions.[730] New migration leveled off, and the foreign-born population of the ward begin to dip in the late 2000s, as nascent gentrification drove up housing costs (as discussed at length below).  As of 2018, 44.1% of Albany Park's population was foreign-born, along with 29.5% of Irving Park's, and 31.9% of Avondale's.[731]

The ward's neighborhoods have functioned as "point of entry" neighborhoods—i.e., gateways for newly arriving immigrants.  For instance, the 2000 census found that one third of Albany Park's foreign born residents had arrived in the United States in the previous 5 years.[732] A 2015 study of Albany Park finds that it has continued to function as a point of entry for immigrants.[733]

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[730] This and previous sentence, Theodore and Martin, 2007:  276-8.
[731] Demographic Statistical Atlas of the United States, 2017.
[732] Theodore and Martin, 2007:  274.
[733] Huq, 2016.  See, e.g., resettlement of recently arrived refuges (page 25).

The ward's immigrants are mostly Latinx.  Latin American countries account for 65% of

Albany Park's foreign born population, 57% of Irving Park's, and 72% of Avondale's.  Therein, by

far the most common country of origin is Mexico, accounting for almost half of all immigrants in

Albany Park and Avondale, and over one quarter of Irving Park's.  15-25% of the neighborhood's

immigrants are from Asian countries.  Albany Park is known as exceptionally diverse, with large

enclaves of immigrants "from India and Pakistan, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia,

and Eastern Europe."[734]  As all three 2019 aldermanic candidates were fond of pointing out,

students in Albany Park schools speak over forty different languages.

Recent research shows that the ward's neighborhoods, and especially Albany Park, have

types of civic and social institutions characteristic of "point of entry neighborhoods."  First, the

neighborhood's 501c3 non-profit service providers tend to tailor their programs to the

distinctive needs of immigrant populations.  Reviewing Albany Park's non-profits, Theodore and

Martin (2007) observe a focus on "citizenship and naturalization, redressing workplace abuses

suffered by undocumented migrants, and restoring the social safety net for noncitizens."[735]

These supplement (and given limited resources, supplant) more typical concerns of non-profit

service providers, such as job training, youth mentoring, and community engagement

programs.[736]

Instead, NGOs embedded in immigrant neighborhoods of the ward are part of

"transnational communities," linked "socially, politically, economically, and culturally to other

places across national borders."[737]  In non-immigrant urban neighborhoods, institutions are

typically linked to other neighborhood institutions, and to funders and political patrons beyond

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[734] Centro Autonomo website.  http://www.mexicosolidarity.org/centroaut%C3%B3nomo/albanyparkneighborhood/en0.  Accessed 9/17/18.
[735] Theodore and Martin, 2007:  276-8.
[736] Ibid.
[737] Ibid.

the neighborhood.[738]  In Albany Park, neighborhood institutions have close relationships to

institutions and activists in other countries, sharing money and ideas, and drawing personnel

through these relationships.  Some such institutions are discussed at length below.

## Salient issues among target populations

As later sections show, WF33 has tried to organize residents by engaging them around

salient social issues.  To help contextualize WF33's organizing, I will briefly describe the two

most salient issues among WF33's target constituencies, according to interviewees and

commentators:  deportation of undocumented people and affordable housing.

### *Rights and treatment of undocumented people*

An estimated 183,000 undocumented immigrants live in Chicago.  Albany Park is

thought to have one of the city's largest undocumented populations, with an estimated 10,000

as of 2017.[739]  Irving Park and Avondale are estimated to have a few thousand undocumented

residents each.[740]  In recent years, intensified enforcement of federal immigration laws by the

Obama and Trump administrations has catalyzed grassroots organizing and heightened public

concern with deportations and the rights of undocumented people.

Since 2017, Chicago has officially been a "sanctuary city."[741]  Nonetheless, ICE raids in

Chicago, and detentions and deportations of former Chicago residents, have increased each

year, since 2015, in line with national trends.[742]  Albany Park's large undocumented population

has made it an epicenter of both immigration enforcement and anti-deportation struggles.

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[738] See Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

[739] Chicago Tribune, Tribune Graphics:  "Estimating the Chicago area's undocumented immigrant population."
https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-met-undocumented-immigrants-gfx-20170103-htmlstory.html.  Accessed 6/27/19.

[740] Ibid.

[741] I.e., city law prohibits city employees from communicating city residents' undocumented status to federal agents.  In June of 2019, recently elected mayor expanded this prohibition, barring Chicago police from aiding Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids in any way.  On Lightfoot's recent rule, Ehrlich, 2019.

[742] Nunez, 2017; Mueller, 2018; Aleaziz, 2018.  Nationally, the number of ICE raids on workplaces increased almost 10-fold between 2017 and 2018, while the number of deportations increased by over 1/3 from 2016 to 2017.

Several Albany Park residents were among the 800 undocumented people arrested in a largescale raid of a Bakery outside Chicago in the summer of 2017.  A six-day sweep of several Chicago neighborhoods in May of 2018, resulting in 156 arrests citywide, included several in Albany Park and Avondale.[743]  Several of these arrests garnered attention of local and citywide media, for reports of violence by ICE agents, as well as the deportation itself.[744]

This enforcement has catalyzed grassroots organizing and political activity. Contradicting past findings that undocumented people are reluctant to engage in politics, the anti-deportation work in Chicago, and in the 33rd ward, engages and is led by undocumented people.  Albany Park's immigrant-serving NGOs, some of which include undocumented people among their staff, have been leading participants in the citywide coalitions conducting protests since 2015.[745]  The citywide group Organized Communities Against Deportation, which has helped create "defense networks" (communication networks to spread information about pending raids and share best practices for protecting undocumented people and holding ICE agents accountable during raids), is also led by undocumented people.[746]  One of OCAD's key leaders active in the 33rd Ward is an undocumented immigrant (who is also active in Centro Autonomo, discussed below).[747]

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[743] Mueller, 2018.

[744] Three high profile cases include those of Ms. Genoveva Ramirez-Laguna, a member of SEIU and OCAD, who was facing deportation; the "Bring Seven Home" campaign on behalf of Seven, a Nigerian immigrant and (perhaps surprisingly) a member of the Latino Union of Chicago, with whom OCAD is closely connected.  APDN worked the case of Wilmar Catalan Ramirez, who became a rallying point because of his violent treatment by ICE, and because he was targeted by ICE because of his inclusion in Chicago Police Department's controversial database of gang members—an institution frequently criticized by Chicago's progressives.

[745] Huq, 2016:  Centro Autonomo (described at length below) has participated in several actions to protest deportations and abuse of undocumented people since 2016.   Albany Park Theatre Project (also described below) has produced plays about deportation.

[746] Ramos, 2016; Hernandez, 2017.  OCAD's website describes the organization as "an undocumented-led group that organizes against deportations, detention, criminalization, and incarceration, of Black, brown, and immigrant communities in Chicago and surrounding areas."  http://organizedcommunities.org/about/.  Accessed 6/27/19.

[747] This individual won't be named given his vulnerability to deportation.

In the last 10 years, real estate developers, consumers, and speculators have invested in the redevelopment of real estate in parts of the 33rd ward.  As elsewhere, redevelopment has created an acute affordable housing shortage, increased the rate of evictions, and pushed long-time residents out of the neighborhood.  The linked issues of redevelopment, affordable housing, and displacement have become highly salient, the focus of grassroots organizing, media coverage, and engagement by politicians and civic leaders.

Parts of the ward are among Chicago's "hottest" housing markets.  In recent years, abutting neighborhoods—Logan Square to the South and West, Buck Town to the South, Rogers Park to the East—have been saturated with new development, increasing investor and consumer interest in Avondale, Irving Park, and Albany Park, with their relatively low property values, and aged housing stock amenable to upgrading.[748]  Crain's Business (a weekly newspaper covering business, real estate, and politics) listed Irving Park as one of the city's five hottest markets for single-family homes, and Avondale as the one of the five hottest markets for condos.  Graph 4 shows the steep upward trend in median housing prices for the three neighborhoods in the ward since 2012.[749]

**Graph 4.  Median sale price for houses in Albany Park, Avondale and Irving Park**

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[748] E.g., multi-family buildings—i.e., buildings currently subdivided into 2 or more separate households, which can be easily converted into larger condos.

[749] Available at Redfin's Data Center, https://www.redfin.com/blog/data-center (values for locales must be entered on the page, and do not have an independent URL).  Accessed July 2018.

Redfin also defines these neighborhoods as "highly competitive"—i.e. on average, housing put up for sale is sold quickly, and a large percentage of houses put on the market are sold.

Median Sale Price
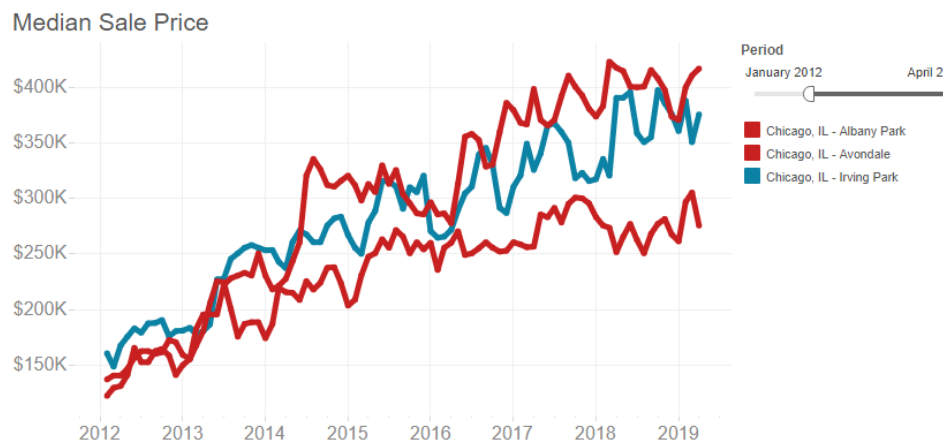
**Source:  Redfin**

As in other gentrifying neighborhoods, developers have purchased many of the ward's

multi-family buildings which had provided relatively inexpensive housing, demolishing them or

converting them into more expensive condominiums.  According to analysis by one of Albany

Park's NGOs, over one quarter of property transactions in Albany Park in 2015 involved the

purchase of a multi-unit building by a corporation or bank.  Most of these properties were

subsequently converted into more expensive housing.[750]

These trends are posing the usual problems for low-income residents.  This is apparent,

first in the large share of ward residents who are currently "rent-burdened," defined by the

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development as spending more than 30% of

household income on rent.  In over half of the ward, the median renting household spent at

least 30% of their income on housing.  In parts, the median renting household spent almost 40%

of their income.[751]

Parts of the ward have seen persistently high eviction rates.  Evictions peaked in the

aftermath of the financial crisis and recession of 2007, but have remained high compared to

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[750] This and previous sentence, Huq, 2016.
[751] Desmond, 2016; As a rough indicator of the number of rent-burdened households, the U.S. Census compares the median rent to the median income for all renting households in a given area.

national and city averages through 2016 (the time of their last measurement).  There were a

total of 240 evictions in the 33rd Ward in 2016.  In parts of the ward, about 3% of renting

households are evicted each year.[752]

Lower-income populations have also experienced "forced displacement" in the form of

foreclosures.  Like other neighborhoods with large populations of low-income homeowners,

Albany Park and Avondale had high rates of foreclosures after the 2007 financial crisis.

According to a database compiled by a local non-profit organization, 216 homes were foreclosed

upon in Albany Park alone, between 2007 and 2013.[753]

Affordable housing and displacement have become the most salient issue in local

politics in recent years.  Mass evictions have become high-profile events, garnering sustained

protest, coverage by neighborhood and citywide, and comments from institutional actors such

as former Ald. Mell and a principle at a local school.[754]  All of the ward's NGOs serving low-

income people have made affordable housing a priority, whether focused on policy research and

advocacy, or grassroots organizing to resist foreclosures and evictions.[755]  Affordable housing

and displacement have been highly salient issues in the 2015 and 2019 aldermanic elections:  all

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[752] In a census tract on the northeast tip of the ward, in Albany Park, 2.57% of renting households were evicted in 2016.  A tract on the eastern part of Irving Park had an eviction rate of nearly 2% in 2016.  Though their eviction rates dipped in 2016, a tract in northwest Albany Park and one in Irving Park had eviction rates above 3% from 2011 through 2014 and 2015 respectively.

[753] Centro Autonomo, 2016:  "Displacement in Albay Park:  Housing Hardships for Low-Income Tenants."

[754] For example, in 2017, approximately 60 people were evicted from a 24-unit apartment building in Albany Park, after its purchase by the ward's largest developer, Silver Properties LLC.  With the help of a local NGO, the residents formed a tenants' union, and held direct actions in the neighborhood, calling for a delay on the eviction and relocation assistance. The tenants elicited the sympathy of nearby homeowners and the principal of a local elementary school (who ultimately mediated a negotiation between the developer and tenants), and their direct actions were covered by local media.  Wetli (2017) quotes one neighbor saying "This is not a problem building, and these are not problem tenants"; ATU, 2017.  https://medium.com/autonomous-tenants-union/three-buildings-one-struggle-against-displacement-cb466c50e086). In her last two years in office, Mell spoke frequently about problem.

[755] Communities United (advocacy and research around foreclosures and affordable housing); Centro Autonomo: advocacy and research and grassroots organizing; one of the sites of the radical resistance to evictions and foreclosures described in the previous chapter.

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candidates have had elaborate positions on these issues, and affordable housing was the first

issue raised at several candidate fora, debates, and events.[756]

## Other Left-Leaning Organizations in the Ward

This section reviews another aspect of neighborhood context, the leading civic and

political organizations in the ward.  I found an organizational field quite different from that in

Austin.  The ward contains NGOs ideologically committed to leftist programs and relatively

independent of city government and foundations.  These groups (as well as one foundation-

funded arts organization) directly and indirectly contributed to WF33's base-building work,

diffusing left ideas about issues to attentive residents and organizing small bases of their own,

which WF33 subsequently tapped.  The ward also contains centrist NGOs, aligned with the

neoliberal regime.  However, I could find no such organizations which are both rooted in racial

minority populations and involved in real estate development, in contrast to the bourgeoning

race-conscious development formation in Austin.

### *Centro Autonomo*

Centro Autonomo (CA) is a non-profit organization in the northwest of Albany Park,

dedicated to organizing and mobilizing, and providing services to, the Latinx immigrant

population.  CA describes its mission as "building power from below" to challenge neoliberalism.

CA's leaders' and organizers' ideology, explained at length in published documents,

centers class conflict.  They describe neoliberalization as a project of "transnational

corporations" to organize the global economy to ensure supplies of cheap labor and natural

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[756] James, 2014: "RUNNING AGAINST THE MACHINE, Interview with Tim Meegan" (Socialist Worker); Kunichoff, 2014:  "Meet the High School Social Studies Teacher Taking On Chicago's Right-Wing Democrats" (In These Times); Schmidt, 2015:  "ALDERMANIC RACES: 33rd Ward race heating up..." (Substance News); Progress Illinois, 2014:  "33rd Ward Candidate Tim Meegan Talks Housing Issues"; Aldertrack, 2014:  "Tim Meegan, 33rd Ward"; "2015 Aldermanic Forum, 33rd Ward" (available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmHvxpjriNo&t=828s); Avondale Neighborhood Association, 2018:  "Rossana Rodriguez-Sanchez for 33rd Ward"; Midwest Socialist, 2019:  "LIVE with Rossana Rodriguez"; Field Notes, 5/30/18.

resources, generating corporate profits "but declining standards of living for the Mexican and

the US working classes, and an environmental disaster that affects both sides of the border."[757]

This macro analysis is the basis for positions on immigration, housing, workers' rights, and other

issues.[758]  For example, a 2016 report on housing in Albany Park defines displacement of renters

"as a systematic displacement of propertyless tenants by rentier capitalists...a continuation of

class warfare by other means...part and parcel of capitalist domination."[759]  I have not found a

detailed analysis of race per se, although CA does speak of its own identity, and that of its

clientele, in terms of race, class, and immigrant status.

CA operates a range of political education programs, based on the "popular education"

model of Paoli Freire and other post-colonial theorists:  they encourage participants to

understand social issues as related to larger structures of oppression, to become aware of their

shared interests in challenging those structures, through dialogue and critical reflection.  This

political education is embedded in CA's most popular services, its English as a second language

and "Adult High School" classes, which teach language through conversation about social

issues.[760]  CA mobilizes its base in issue campaigns around housing, workers' rights, and

immigration.

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[757] A statement on the MSN website, entitled "Social and Political Analysis:  The Impact of Neoliberalism and Responses from Below"
[758] For example, a CA document explains that, since Latinx immigrants were driven to the US by the poverty and environmental degradation wrought by neoliberalization, they have legitimate claims on the United States, and its capitalist class, which have instituted neoliberalism and captured the wealth generated by it.  This analysis also links immigrants' struggles for rights in the United States to their position in workplace conflicts in the United States.  CA's website mentions, for example, that "the wealthy systematically benefit from immigrant labor, and especially that of undocumented workers.  At the same time, the US government creates policies such as NAFTA that undermine Latin American economies and force mass northward migration."
[759] Centro Autonomo, 2016:  "Displacement in Albany Park.  Housing Hardships for Low-Income Tenants"
[760] Centro Autonomo's most popular services are its adult education classes, and particularly its English as a Second Language class. The ESL class (requested by residents when CA opened in 2006) has grown from an enrollment of five in 2006 to.  CA also offers continuing education courses, taught by volunteer instructors, in "Education and Methodology, Health, Work, Community and Housing, Immigration and Citizenship, Computers, Math, and English."  CA's ESL classes focus on "immigrant, worker's, women's, and human rights" as the substance of courses (e.g., teaching language skills through conversation and assignments focused on these issues), and designs classes to encourage dialogue and critical reflection.  CA encourages students and alumni to act on insights.  ESL classes, for example, have produced working groups attempting to form domestic worker and construction worker cooperatives.  However, at least two former CA organizers commented that CA's political education is better characterized as hierarchical, with organizers directly inculcating perspectives, and that CA prioritizes service delivery over political mobilization (Budovitch, 2017).

CA has built an ingenuous revenue stream, allowing it to fund community organizing

and service provision at a significant scale, while remaining independent of city government and

major philanthropic foundations.  CA generates most of its revenues from a "study abroad"

program for American college students, the Autonomous University of Social Movements.

AUSM runs programs in Mexico, Cuba, and Albany Park, with classroom instruction focused on

post-colonial social theory and field work in progressive or radical social movements, alongside

practitioners.[761]  Autonomous University of Social Movements also runs a Master's Program in

Community Organizing, based in Albany Park.

In 2016, CA made $785,659 from tuition and fees from its study abroad and master's

program, or 93.8% of its total revenues for the year.  With a three-person staff handling

classroom instruction and administration, and leveraging CA staff's personal connections to

movement practitioners to create rich field work opportunities, AUSM has relatively low

overhead, costing $413,241 in 2016.  The $372,408 in profit funded most of CA's community

organizing work, including the programs of Centro Autonomo.[762]  CA received only $42,822 from

grants in 2016.

CA is steeped in international networks of activists committed to global, mass struggle

against capitalism.  CA was founded in 2006 by Tom Hansen, long-time leader of an anti-colonial

civil disobedience group Pastors for Peace, and a militant activist associated with the Zapitista

movement in Mexicao.  Most of the CA's leading staff are activists drawn from grassroots social

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[761] The classroom curriculum for the Mexican program appears to focus on the psychological and cultural effects of colonization, and to emphasize the need for colonized groups to regain political subjectivity and develop a counter-hegemonic consciousness.  The reading list includes Paolo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Bonfil Batalla's Mexico Profundo, bell hooks' Teaching to Transgress, and a critique of the paternalism inherent in international service and aid programs.  The field work component of the program appears to focus on social movements oriented toward political and economic autonomy.  The program includes sessions working with Zapatista groups in Chiapas, a large collective of small farmers in Tlaxcala, and a housing cooperative in Mexico City. The program is currently accredited by Hampshire College, the SUNY system, and the Univesidad Autonoma Metropolitana in Mexico City.

[762] MUSN spent $382,138 on staff salaries, facilities, and programming associated with its community organizing in 2016.  All data on MUSN's financial information taken from their 2016 Form 990, available at: http://990s.foundationcenter.org/990_pdf_archive/364/364435604/364435604_201612_990.pdf (accessed 9/14/18).

movements in Mexico or the United States, or Albany Park residents, trained and educated by

CA.  Two of CA's community organizers are also on staff at a Unite Here local.  At least three

members of CA's small staff are Latinx immigrant Albany Park residents, trained through CA's

programs.[763]  CA's personnel thus differ markedly in background and training from the type of

professional non-profit administrator increasingly common since the 1970s (see Chapter 1).

CA is informed by the ideas flowing through this international network.  CA has official

connections with community organizations in Mexico, and brings activists from radical

movements in Latin America to Albany Park to meet residents and give lectures on social issues,

as part of CA's "speaking tours."[764]  In 2017, for instance, CA hosted activists from a socialist

housing rights organization in Mexico City, individuals from the Zapatista movement and

National Indigenous Congress, among others.  CA coordinates ten speaking tours per year.  CA

staff have appeared jointly with activists from those movements at various international

conferences and events.[765]  CA cites these activists, and especially the Zapatistas; an indigenous

separatist movement in Chiapas, Mexico; and a militant housing cooperative in Mexico City as

ideological influences.[766]

*Autonomous Tenants Union*

In 2015, four organizers from Centro Autonomo started a new organization,

Autonomous Tenants Union (ATU), dedicated to organizing tenant unions and protesting

evictions in Albany Park and nearby neighborhoods.  To date, ATU has organized tenant union in

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[763] https://centro.community/the-team/.  Accessed 12/14/18.
[764] https://ausm.community/speaking-tours/.  Accessed 12/14/18.
[765] Former CA organizer (and current staff of Rossana Rodriguez-Sanchez's aldermanic administration), for example, wrote and delivered a joint presentation with human rights activists in Chiapas, perhaps contributing to a synthesis of ideas.
[766] Centro Autonomo website, 2009:  "A critical and a strategic review of the MSN's History."  Accessed 12/12/18.

ten buildings in the 33rd Ward, and eight in other neighborhoods.[767]  ATU has helped these

unions wage anti-eviction and other pressure campaigns, and has also organized protests on

behalf of non-unionized tenants at other buildings.

ATU is funded by a mix of small grants from progressive philanthropic foundations, and

by the contributions of its volunteer organizers and members.[768]  ATU has low overhead, run

entirely by volunteers, and using meeting space donated by Centro Autonomo, local churches,

and other activists.  ATU is thus mostly independent of foundations and other sources of funding

which could compromise its political independence.

ATU's campaigns are designed to compel small concessions from landlords, such as

moratoria on evictions and financial assistance for relocation for evicted residents.  ATU's public

arguments often focus on landlords' illegal, unethical, or cruel behaviors.[769]  However, its

leaders see their work as part of a long-term project to build an anti-neoliberal movement.  They

intend tenant organizing and anti-eviction campaigns to, in addition to generating short-term

concessions from landlords, encourage tenants to understand their situation as a form of

oppression, rooted in capitalist system, and to build solidarity as a class.[770]  ATU has eschewed

electoral politics, seeing it as more likely to lead to cooptation than significant social change

(although one of these leaders recently accepted employment in Rodrguez-Sanchez's

administration).  ATU articulates a broader vision of housing, and critique of the capitalist

housing system.  Leaders have formulated these ideas in public statements, and appear to share

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[767] This includes five multi-unit buildings owned by large developers or LLCs:  the Sunnyside Manor Tenants Union in Ravenswood Park; Antoniotiana Tenants Union and the Kimbal Tenants Union in Albany Park.  It also includes multi-unit buildings owned by small landlords (families or individuals):

[768] ATU received grants from Crossroads Foundation in 2017 and 2018.

[769] Wetli, 2017.  For example, one ATU write-up accused a landlord of unethical behavior:  "Rather than give the tenants a warning of what was to come, Abrams elected to blindside them, pressuring them to leave in the middle of winter and the school year."

[770] Galeano, Gutierrez, Monzan, 2015.

them, if in colloquial terms, with tenant unions at rallies and meetings.[771]  Like CA, ATU argues

that evictions, displacements, and unaffordable housing, are forms of economic exploitation of

low-income people by developers, investors, and landlords.[772]  Most often, ATU leaders and

members express this idea by juxtaposing the profits of landlords and developers with the

suffering of evicted residents, and arguing that this is a recurring phenomenon (without

explaining its roots in a capitalist system).  While I could not find a specific, coherent, platform,

ATU statements sketch a vision of guaranteed housing for low-income people, and a right to

remain in the neighborhood in which they have social ties and an affective attachment.[773]  At

times, they articulate a form of community redevelopment and reinvestment without

displacement or substantial in-migration of new, affluent residents.[774]

In ATU's thought, while displacement is driven by an economic dynamic, it plays out as

cultural erasure and replacement of Latinx people by white.  Many ATU statements describe

populations in terms of race and class, observing that "low-income Latinx" or "low-income

immigrant" populations are replaced by "upper-class whites," and indicting developers or

speculators.  An ATU leader's speech at a 2017 rally captured this combination of discursive

elements: "Silver Property Group and Ron Abrams have made clear their vision of Albany Park:

One in which low-income immigrants are edged out to make way for hypothetical white tenants

that may not even materialize."

Less frequently, ATU add that gentrification erases the history and culture of longtime

residents.  A comment from a founding member of ATU reflects this addition:

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[771] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Dkoht6fDn8, accessed 12/29/18.  Budovitch, 2017.
[772] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvZGWv-ouEU.  Accessed 12/29/18.
[773] Wetli, 2017.  Galeano, Gutierrez, Monzan, 2015.  Huq, 2016.
[774] Huq, 2016.  E.g., ATU organizer Barbara Suarez Galeano argued that "Investment doesn't have to mean just bringing in wealthy white people. Investment could be for and by the community and that's the kind of conversation that we're trying to push forward" (quoted in Huq, 2016: 30).

They've already kicked out many families; most of them are brown families, Latinxs. They are lower income folks and they're [i.e. the corporation] bringing in higher income people without thinking about the history of this neighborhood, without thinking about the history of these families...There's a lot of cultural history. There are a lot of roots here.

I found only one instance in which ATU organized tenants for action against a non-white landlord, though this was landlord was Southeast Asian, not Latinx. The ATU used aggressive tactics, picketing outside the landlord's home and canvassing neighboring houses. Based on flyers for ATU's events and pictures of these events, it appears that ATU used discourses emphasizing the dignity of tenants. This may indicate a hesitancy to invoke racial discourses when organizing against POC landlords.

Interestingly, ATU appears to be the only group in the ward (including WF33) who openly criticizes and organizes against small landlords. During a 2016 rent strike in a family-owned property, ATU argued that small landlords were fundamentally on the same side of housing conflicts as large developers, corporate landlords, and banks which purchase and foreclose affordable properties: they have systemic incentives to exploit tenants, and can be stopped only be tenant power and government regulation.[775]

### Albany Park Theatre Project

Albany Park Theater Project is a foundation-funded, non-profit youth theater troupe. APTP write, produce, and perform plays about contemporary "sociopolitical issues," based on ethnographic research with local families and activists.[776] In recent years, APTP has staged plays with strong political messages about salient issues, such as foreclosure and eviction, immigration and deportation, and the state of public schools, as well as less political plays.

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[775] ATU, 2018. https://medium.com/autonomous-tenants-union/ralph-cielocha-one-slumlord-among-many-the-horner-park-tenants-unions-ongoing-struggle-ce3769409588. "Like so many landlords, they'd rather contribute to and benefit from gentrification than take responsibility for their property, harming not only their tenants but the whole neighborhood. As long as we grant property owners this amount of entitlement over other people's living conditions, landlords in gentrifying neighborhoods will neglect their buildings and disrespect their tenants, setting the stage for larger developers to displace them down the road."

[776] https://aptpchicago.org/blog/. Accessed 9/14/18.

Unlike CA and ATU, APTP receives most of its revenue from philanthropic foundations, who fund APTP handsomely.[777]  APTP's funders include foundations with strong links to Chicago's neoliberal regime, including the Chicago Community Trust and the MacArthur Foundation.[778]  However, in its day-to-day operations, APTP's closest collaborators include left-leaning activist housing and immigrant rights activists.  For example, APTP worked extensively with activists from Centro Autonomo, and two radical, grassroots housing rights groups, Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, and Communities United Against Foreclosures and Evictions, to produce a play about eviction and foreclosure in 2015, *I Would Kiss These Walls*.[779]  APTP writers consulted with activists to develop the script, and the groups co-staged the play at foreclosed homes, illegally occupied by CUAFE.  For a 2016 production about deportation, APTP worked with activists from militant immigrant rights groups and Centro Autonomo.[780]

Most of APTP's plays explore social problems in ways not noticeably aligned with any particular partisan perspective.[781]  But plays co-produced with the aforementioned activists import those activists' radical political vision.  For example, characters in *I Would Kiss These Walls* call for occupying vacant, foreclosed homes—the tactic used by CUAFE and Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign.  While the characters don't explicitly assert a right to housing, they suggest these "liberations" are morally just, and could be part of a new system of housing provision.  Pointing to a vacant, foreclosed house, one character asks

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[777] E.g., APTP received a $100,000 grant from Impact100 in 2015, and a $400,000 grant from the MacArthur Foundation in 2016.

[778] APTP received a $10,000 grant from Chicago Community Trust, which participated in several programs initiated by the Emanuel administration.  MacArthur Foundation collaborated with the Daley Administration on New Communities Program, and Daley's initiative to expand access to broadband internet.

[779] One CA organizer recalled that APTP "walked with us during bank protests, came to our meetings, and participated in our other efforts" to gather material for the play.  As noted in the previous chapter, three WF33 members (Antonio, Norman, and Jake) participated in CUAFE in the early 2010s.

[780] "they joined Chicago's immigrant justice movement in its meetings, marches and vigils, visited the deportation center in Broadview and conducted countless interviews with nuns, priests and immigrant families." (Serrano, 2016)

[781] In Rodriguez-Sanchez's account, the plays "…tell the painful stories of losing their homes, or telling us they were moving to the suburbs or beyond because their families could no longer afford to live in our beloved neighborhood."

Who says we can't live here?  Who says we can't create better laws and ways of thinking?  You'd be surprised how angry people are, how ready they are to do something that is right and just.  There are 100,000 vacant homes in Chicago…Maybe we can help [another character] liberate a home, maybe her kids can feel the warmth those walls provide.[782]

Another character suggests that "liberating" foreclosed homes is empowering, and an act of solidarity with neighbors.  When a family liberates a home, that whole family becomes part of the movement…Wait until you meet my mom, she has become the most powerful woman." [783]

APTP appears to choose issues as the subject of plays because they are salient among the program's youth participants and their families.  Rodriguez-Sanchez, speaking as the director of APTP, mentioned youth's experiences as the inspiration for Kiss These Walls and Home/Land: "A lot of our company members are part of a family in which one of the members is undocumented or sometimes they are undocumented themselves. And we thought it was really important that we started talking about it."[784]

And what explains APTP's choice to adopt the radical perspective of local activists on these issues?  This choice appears to be a function of 1) the presence in the neighborhood of vibrant radical housing and immigration movements, and 2) the ideology of APTP's leadership.

The presence of a vibrant, radical movements around housing and immigration is likely related to other neighborhood characteristics.  The amount of organizing around housing appears to be higher in neighborhoods experiencing consecutive or simultaneous waves of displacement associated with the post-2007 foreclosure crises and ongoing real estate redevelopment.  Whereas in Austin, organizing around housing issues subsided after the post-2007 foreclosure crisis, it has continued to thrive in Albany Park, driven by persistently high rates of eviction and cost-burdened households.

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[782] Rada, 2015.
[783] Rada, 2015.
[784] Lee, 2016.

In this context, APTP choose to work left-leaning and militant activists like those at CA, CUAFE, and OCAD. They could have worked with any of Albany Park's several moderate, regime-affiliated NGOs, who also work on housing and immigration, and who are larger and better-funded than the radical groups. Yet, while newspaper and other records show repeated collaboration with radical groups, I found no record of collaboration between APTP and centrist NGOs.[785] This choice to collaborate with radical groups may be explained by the ideology of APTP's leadership. At the time of the collaborations, APTP's director was Rossana Rodriguez-Sanchez, long a socialist committed to militant direct action (then devoting her free time to the fledging WF33).

## 2. WF33's Base-Building Goals

In this context, WF33 is attempting to build a popular base. They intend to go beyond the current core of left-leaning activists from Chicago's left milieu and DSA, building support among the populations they view as potential, even natural, constituencies for a left project. This section will unpack WF33's thinking about exactly who their potential base is, and the types of relationships they intend to build with this base. I present the following findings:

- WF33 is building a range of relationship with residents, from training residents to lead WF33, to gaining formal members, to building weaker relationships with wider swaths of the ward.

- WF33 continues to debate the worth of attempting to organize the ward's middle-class populations.

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[785] I could find no record of collaboration between APTP and Communities United, Albany Park Center, North River Commission, three of the neighborhood's most prominent NGOs.

- WF33 members consistently refer to a base defined by class; but they have targeted their outreach on the basis of race, focusing on Latinx sections of the ward. I discuss possible explanations for this contradiction.

- Even as they target Latinx constituencies, they consistently organize around economic issues, and conflate racial and class interests (perhaps incoherently).

- These goals are impeded by the social distance between WF33's current membership (which is largely white, college-educated, and recent transplants to the neighborhood) and the populations they are trying to organize.

## Building a multi-leveled base

WF33 leaders envision a base with varying levels of commitment, and varying types of relationship with the organization. First, WF33 wants to incorporate as many residents as possible as formal members of WF33, into leadership positions (such as committee members and leaders), and into its informal cadre of leaders. WF33 encourages all contacts in the ward to engage with the organization, contacting them repeatedly with invitations to WF33 meetings and events, in which they could learn more about the organization and develop personal relationships with its members. WF33 also builds leadership training into its canvassing and other events, in part to encourage participants to take on larger roles in the organization. Dawn mentions that WF33 has successfully cultivated active participants in this way, including "some of our best precinct captains."[786]

While they recognize the value of greater levels of participation in the organization, they are open to, and recognize the likelihood of, lower-levels of commitment. WF33 leaders

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[786] A "precinct captain" runs a canvass in the precinct in which they reside.

envision a broader networks of ward residents who, though not formally affiliated as WF33 members, have a relationship with WF33 that encompasses more than merely voting for its candidates. This may involve occasional participation in WF33 activities. Or it may involve the resident being aware of WF33 and its positions, and believing that WF33 represents them and their interests. This may or may not be underpinned by ongoing contact between WF33 and the resident.

Finally, WF33 is open to growing what could be called an "electorate"—a swath of residents whom they reach only episodically, during election or issue campaigns. Such people might have only a vague sense of WF33's identity and positions, or tune in only during elections. The value of such supporters is purely in advancing WF33's goal of winning institutional power. As Antonio commented, "ideally we want people to join, but we also just want them vote for Rossana."

## Perceived constituencies in the ward

WF33 has a detailed sense of their potential constituencies in the ward, based on 1) grounded analysis, including analysis of past political behavior and relationships between population segments and former alderman Mell; and 2) perceptions of populations' material interests, drawn from WF33's foundational, class-focused social analysis.

### Debating the potential of the middle-class

WF33 leaders recognize large segments of Eastern Irving Park (known as Ravenswood Manor and Horner Park) as unlikely to support WF33's agenda or candidates, for (at least) two reasons. These are the most affluent segments of the ward, with a predominantly upper-middle class population. WF33 members perceive this population's material interests as opposed to

WF33's project. Second, these communities have especially strong ties to Ald. Deb Mell. They were the political base of Alderman Dick Mell (who served from 1973 to 2013). Multiple commentators have observed these loyalties were transferred to Deb Mell.[787] Mell has solidified this relationship by working closely with the block clubs and homeowner associations in this area, who, in WF33's Dawn's words, "appreciate the access." In 2019, all 13 of the precincts which Mell won were in this section of the ward.[788]

More generally, WF33 members appear to have contradictory views on the middle-classes. On the one hand, they consider middle-class voters less likely to support WF33's project, given the former's material interests. Even when middle-class populations supported Tim Meegan's 2015 aldermanic campaign and the rent control referendum, WF33 members remained skeptical of the reasons for this support, and of its durability.[789]

On the other hand, as explained further below, WF33 has targeted much of its outreach on the basis of race, rather than class, apparently assuming that Latinx middle classes were in play, particularly in the 2019 aldermanic election. It's possible that WF33 members, consciously or not, have in mind a particular white sub-section of the middle-class when they talk about the difficulty of organizing the ward's "middle-class" residents.

*Perceived base*

As discussed in the previous chapter, WF33 and the Rodriguez-Sanchez campaign most often construct a hybrid class-race-immigrant subject. Members usually define their identity

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[787] Stewart, 2018.

[788] Ibid.

[789] Dawn suggested that middle-class support for Meegan was driven by anger over Deb Mell's appointment, by Rahm Emanuel, to succeed her father, Dick Mell as alderman. The appointment and dynasty recalled the nepotism and corruption of the old Chicago machine, and Meegan's campaign had made these central themes. One long-time commentator on politics in Chicago's Northside shared this impression (Stewart, 2019). Similarly, WF33 members speculated that middle-class homeowners' concerns with gentrification were primarily aesthetic. While they may oppose rapid and chaotic redevelopment, such residents could not be expected to back rent control and other left-leaning remedies, particularly as pro-development politicians crafted moderate proposals to address aesthetic concerns within a pro-development framework.

and constituency in terms of class, race, and immigrant status.  Most of their statements

construct a subject either in economic terms only, for example referencing "the many,"

"working families," "working people," or in terms of class and race, often referring to "working

people and people of color," and noting solidarity with immigrants.  This is also reflected in

WF33's policy agenda, which focuses on redistribution along class, not racial lines, while

addresses additional concerns of undocumented people and racial minorities.  This identity and

agenda is underpinned by a social analysis foregrounding capitalist exploitation and class

conflict, but also acknowledging the unique exploitation and expropriation of people of color,

and the unique needs of immigrants and racial minorities.

Yet, when planning their outreach, WF33 has mostly focused on Latinx populations,

eliding class distinctions with that population, and relegating the ward's white working classes.

As described in detail below, WF33 conducted outreach around pending zoning changes,

associated with major, rent-intensifying redevelopment projects in 2017 and 2018.  As Dawn

noted, these canvasses were intended to build relationships with target constituencies with

whom WF33 had not previously connected.[790]  While rent-intensifying redevelopment occurred

in many parts of the ward, WF33 choose to canvass around 3 developments in predominantly

Latinx sections.  These choices appear to prioritize outreach to Latinx populations, even as they

built a constituency around an economic problem.

WF33 explicitly targeted Latinx populations for voter registration in the run-up to the

2019 aldermanic election.   In the Summer of 2018, Antonio, Betty, and others created a

document "to act as a guide and point us to potential precincts to target for voter

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[790] Interview with Dawn, 1/11/18

registration."[791]  In short, the guide calculated which precincts had the largest numbers of voter-eligible but currently unregistered Latinx people, and labeled these "prime for canvassing."[792]  The document did not explain why specifically Latinx unregistered voters were the target.  The authors appear to have assumed that Latinx voters were the priority target.  The guide did not attempt to distinguish within the Latinx population on the basis of class, or to identify majority working- and lower-class neighborhoods.  Dawn reported that WF33 did not make a comparable documents determining the location of working-class voters.

**Emphasizing economic issues in outreach to Latinx populations**

As WF33 and the Rodriguez-Sanchez campaign canvassed Latinx populations, they attempted to appeal to them on the basis of economic issues, and a discourse stressing class conflict.  They rarely invoked the constructions of racial justice common in U.S. politics—and certainly Chicago politics—since the 1970s, as community control, descriptive representation, a share of city jobs and contracts, and cultural authenticity.  Most often they highlighted the issues of affordable housing, displacement, and public services.  They did also mention immigration and the protection of undocumented people.  And in this outreach, they continued to describe their antagonists in class terms, as "economic elites," "the few," "the wealthy," "elites," "developers," and "banks."  Such references pervade any text from the Rodriguez-Sanchez campaign, including those delivered to predominantly Latinx audiences.[793]

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[791] "Latinx voter registration map tutorial," created by WF33 in the summer of 2018.  Available upon request.

[792] Ibid.

[793] Most obviously, this economic focus was expressed in the Rodriguez-Sanchez's campaign slogan, "Neighborhood for the Many, not the Few."  Both this class antagonism and focus on the distribution of resources are exemplified by one of Rodriguez-Sanchez's rhetorical mainstays, a story likening Chicago's regressive revenue policies to the U.S. military's monopolization of basic resources in Rodriguez-Sanchez's native Puerto Rico:  Rodriguez-Sanchez's town depended on a nearby river for potable water; the U.S. military dammed the river, diverting its flow to a nearby military base, and creating a draught in Rodriguez-Sanchez's town.  Residents of the town collective undammed the river, recovering their water supply.

I did find a few instances in which Rodriguez-Sanchez articulated Latinx empowerment

as descriptive representation and elite-level inclusion.  In such instances, she argued that her

candidacy and election challenge the exclusion of Latinx people from institutions and positions

of power.  Speaking on behalf of a collective Latinx subject, she called for "asserting our right to

be in the spaces we've been told don't belong to us."[794]  In an interview in the Summer of 2018,

Rodriguez-Sanchez linked this empowerment narrative with an argument that descriptive

representation enhances substantive representation:  "I live in a ward that is 52 percent Latino,

and we have had Dick Mell and Deb Mell running that ward, and clearly our needs are not being

met by the Democrats.  I feel like it's time for us to be able to step up and take leadership roles

and spaces not meant for us."

Even in contexts when we would most expect the campaign to appeal to voters on the

basis of racial identity, they continued to foreground economic issues.  For example, the

campaign appeared to have had incentives to make race-based appeals at a February 2019

meeting with potential voters:  occurring less than two weeks before the election, the

campaign's goal was surely short-term mobilization, rather than consciousness-raising in service

of the long-term movement-building project; all meeting attendees were Latinx (and the

meeting was conducted largely in Spanish).  Furthermore, the event was co-facilitated by a

staffer whose previous statements suggest a commitment to inclusion of racial minorities in

capitalist institutions as the crux of racial empowerment.[795]

Yet, throughout the event, campaign staff focused on Rodriguez-Sanchez's positions on

economic issues.  They posed a series of questions to the attendees, asking "do you feel like the

city spends its money in a good way," "do you feel like you can afford to live, stay, and grow, in

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[794] Smith, 2018.
[795] Interview with anonymous member, 3/30/19.

your neighborhood," and other issue-specific questions, highlighting economic issues.[796] The

ensuing conversation focused on housing affordability, priorities in public spending, and other

economic issues.[797]

**Explaining the contradictions in WF33's conception of its base**

I have not yet determined why WF33 choose to target outreach on the basis of race,

despite usually describing its base in terms of class and race. I will briefly discuss three

possibilities. First, WF33 leaders may simply have used Latinx population as a proxy for low-

income and working class residents. As mentioned in the previous section, majority Latinx tracts

contain the bulk of the ward's poor and working-class white and Latinx residents. WF33

residents may be aware of this correlation, and thus used racial composition (which data is more

readily available than class composition) to target outreach.

Second, WF33 leaders may have made a strategic choice to target outreach on the basis

of race. Given that Rodriguez-Sanchez is a Latina and was running against a white woman,

campaign staff may have reasoned that, the campaign could supplement their issue-based

appeals with identity-based appeals to attract Latinx voters, but not white voters. Perceiving an

easier pathway to winning support among Latinx populations, they may have targeted their

outreach accordingly. Thus, even if WF33 members envision an inter-racial working- and lower-

class base as their ultimate goal, they may have perceived a short-term opportunity to create a

majority coalition on the basis of racial identity, in addition to issues of economic justice and

protection of undocumented people.

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[796] Photos posted on Rodrigeuz-Sanchez campaign's official Facebook page; webpage no longer available.
[797] Interview with anonymous member, 3/30/19.

Finally, WF33's decision to organize Latinx residents may reflect more subtle and even unconscious aspects of their thinking about race and class.  The last chapter noted that most members affirm the particularity of minority exploitation within capitalism, and that they sometimes express this particularity in a way that elides the status of non-minority working classes as oppressed groups.

It's possible that targeting Latinx people is a conscious decision, informed by the recognition of minority's distinctively negative experiences under capitalism.  Members' analysis clearly shows exploitation of lower classes in general, and especially extreme effects on groups historically subjugated on the basis of race and currently discriminated against on the basis of race.  But, when referring to this in passing, members sometimes substituted race for the more complex class and race hybrid.  A discussion of the economic dynamics driving the foreclosure crisis, for example, issued in a condemnation of "racist appropriation."[798]  Or, the tendency to elide the white working class when talking about exploitation may make it easier to slip from a class subject to a Latinx working-class subject without noticing the slippage.  The previous chapter also noted that some members simply use race and class interchangeably, referring to a hybrid race and class subject in one moment, a class subject the next, and a racial one the following.  It's possible that this tendency allowed members to substitute Latinx for working-class when thinking about their base in the ward, without noticing the slippage.

## Social Distance of WF33 and Target Populations

A review of the background and demographic characteristics of WF33's current membership shows that WF33 has not yet recruited members from the working-class or Latinx populations of the ward.  As noted in the previous chapter, WF33's members are drawn from

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[798] Swartzman, 2015.

city-wide networks of left-leaning activists and from Democratic Socialists of America's Chicago

Chapter.  Like Chicago's left milieu and DSA, WF33 members are predominantly white, middle-

class, and more educated than the populations they are hoping to organize.[799]  In part because

most moved into the ward within the last five years, WF33 members also have few preexisting

social ties with the ward's working-class and Latinx populations.  Given the oft-noted utility of

personal relationships in grassroots organizing, this social distance between WF33's current

membership and their intended base is an important challenge for WF33's organizing.

### *Race and age*

WF33's membership is overwhelmingly white.  Of the 41 members, three identify as

Latinx, and three as South Asian.  All 41 were United States citizens.  A large majority is also

relatively young.  Of the 26 members for whom I could obtain data, 7 were over 40, and three

over 60.  The other 19 were in their 20s and 30s.

### *Education*

Of the 36 members for whom I could obtain information, eleven have or are currently

pursuing graduate degrees.  The other 25 have bachelor's degrees.  Members were equally

distributed among public colleges and private schools (including highly prestigious ones).  It

should be noted that at least 4 of these individuals were the first in their families to attend

college, and either attended community colleges and affordable public colleges, or amassed

student loans to attend private college.

The undergraduate institutions were:  Dayton College, Indiana-Bloomington, Knox

College (2), New York University, Northern Illinois, University of Puerto Rico-Rio Padres,

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[799] Peterson, 2018; Interview with Matt Luskin, 3/16/17.

Northwestern, and Yale.  The institutions granting graduate degrees were University of Illinois at

Chicago (3), Depaul, and Notre Dame.

*Employment*

WF33 members mostly work in skilled, knowledge-intensive jobs.  No members are

currently unemployed, and only one is contingently employed.  Table 7.1 lists the profession of

31 members for whom I could obtain employment data.

**Table 7.1.  Professions of WF33 Members**

| Profession | Number of Members |
|---|---|
| Academic (full-time graduate student, researcher, or instructor | 3 |
| Primary or secondary education teacher | 3 |
| Attorney | 3 |
| Web developer | 3 |
| Policy analysis | 3 |
| Community organizing | 2 |
| Non-profit (administration) | 2 |
| Journalist | 2 |
| Nurse | 2 |
| Non-profit (staff) | 2 |
| Architect | 1 |
| Education administration | 1 |
| Corporate research | 1 |
| Mortgage broker | 1 |
| Video production | 1 |
| Paralegal | 1 |

*Length of tenure in ward*

Most members are somewhat recent transplants to the ward, having moved there as

adults, from other parts of Chicago, the region, or the country.  Of the 20 people for whom I

could obtain data, only two members had lived in the ward prior to 2013.  Of the remaining 18:

- 9 of 18 were from other states.

- 5 of 18 had grown up in Chicago and had moved to Albany Park from other parts of the

  city.

- 4 of 18 were from Illinois, near Chicago.

- 1 of 18 was from Puerto Rico.

*Social distance from target populations*

WF33 members are geographically concentrated in parts of the ward with concentrations of Latinx people. However, Interview data and patterns in WF33 members' employment, indicate significant social distance between WF33's members and the ward's working- and lower-class and Latinx communities.

As displayed in Map 7.1 below, most WF33 members live in a small cluster in Albany Park, in predominantly Latinx census tracts. The blue and white pointers on the map indicate the residential location of the 35 WF33 members for whom I could obtain such data. The areas shaded dark purple are majority Latinx census tracts, according to the 2015 American Community Survey. This geographic proximity could enable social interactions.

**Map 7.1: Residential location of WF33 members and majority Latinx census tracts**
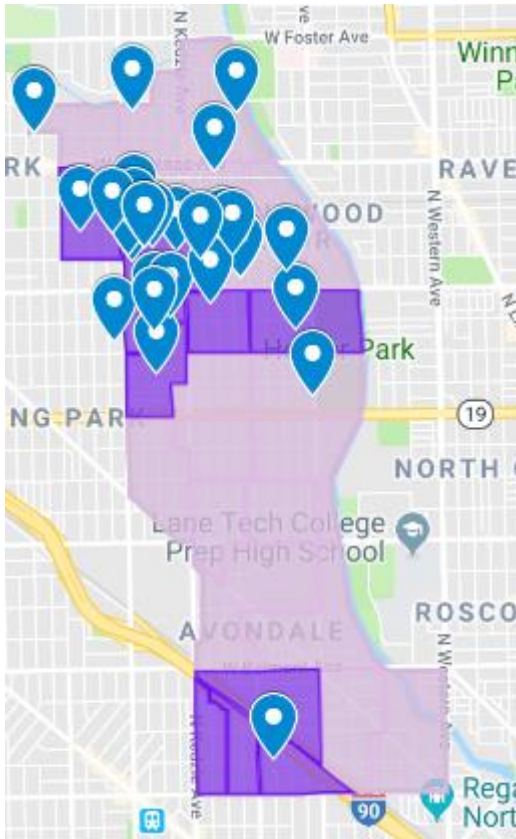
However, interviewees reported having few regular social or professional interactions with these populations. Only two WF33 members have had regular contact with members of local Latinx populations in professional contexts. One member worked with Latinx and other immigrant youth as the director of the Albany park Theatre Project, non-profit involving neighborhood youth in theatre arts. The other (who left WF33 upon moving out of state in 2019) worked with Latinx populations as a leader of Salud Sin Papeles, a non-profit providing health care to undocumented immigrants.

To the extent that WF33 members socialize with members of the local Latinx population, it is with a small handful of leftist activists rooted in the local Latinx population. These activists are affiliated with Autonomous Tenants Union and Centro Autonomo. According

to five people interviewed on this subject, all reported that they do not socialize other members of the Latinx population.

## 3. Organizing Strategy:  Building a Base Through Issue Campaigns

This section reviews WF33's organizing strategies, their chief organizing campaigns, and their results.  I will emphasize four findings:

- WF33 embedded its organizing in advocacy campaigns (i.e., campaigns to change policy or the practices of public or private entities) and service projects (i.e., providing discrete benefits to particular recipients).  WF33 carefully designed these campaigns to maximize their utility as organizing tools.[800]

- Ward residents responded very favorably to WF33's outreach around issues, indicating the high salience of those issues among ward residents and the resonance of WF33's proposals and discourse.

- WF33 also used its issue-based work to build relationships with the ward's left-leaning organizations.  WF33 drew supporters from the bases organized by those NGOs and likely benefited from those NGOs' years of work diffusing progressive and left ideas about the issues among ward residents.

- WF33 also leveraged its issue-based work to gain access to institutional venues it would not otherwise have had, as a partisan organization.

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[800] It should be noted that these campaigns had two more political purposes, in addition to grassroots base-building:  they were intended to build a record on salient issues, and (at least through the 2019 election) to demonstrate and dramatize Ald. Mell's contrasting record; and they were a trains their own membership through these activities.

## Issue-Based Organizing Campaigns

In 2017, WF33 launched a series of advocacy and service projects around housing and immigration.  In 2017 and 2018, it tried to prevent pending zoning changes associated with major real estate redevelopments.  In 2018, it organized around a citywide campaign to pass a referendum favoring rent control.  From 2017 through the present, it has worked with local tenants unions to prevent mass evictions.  And Since the 2017, it has worked with local NGOs to assist undocumented people threatened with deportation.  WF33 designed each of these projects to function as effective base-building tools. [801]  In each case, they choose the issue on which to work based on perceptions of the issue's salience among WF33's target populations. They locate their issue campaigns geographically to maximize contact with target populations. And they built opportunities for outreach and relationship-building into the campaigns.

*Organizing around zoning changes*

Starting in the winter of 2017, WF33 conducted outreach around a series of pending zoning changes in rapidly gentrifying parts of Avondale and Albany Park.  As recounted in the last chapter, WF33 choose to work on redevelopment because they recognized the salience of affordable housing and displacement among the ward's working-class Latinx populations, having observed the number of evictions and cost-burdened households, and the popular concern with them.

WF33 members explained that these campaigns were deliberately located in areas with the potential to organize this population.  Dawn explained: "There's redevelopment in a lot of places, but these pending developments where in areas where we wanted to connect with

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[801] These campaigns had a second component, focused on building a record of contrasts with Ald. Mell.  After the canvassing, WF33 members confronted Ald. Mell with signed petitions or other evidence of residents' concerns, and demanded a delay in the zoning change, and greater consideration of public input.  When Mell inevitably refuse these demands, WF33 publicized accounts of the interaction through social media (e.g., open letter to Mell 2/9/18).

people but hadn't yet, parts of South Avondale, parts of Albany Park.  We knew there was a lot of concern with displacement there, as gentrification was pushing up from Logan Square."

WF33 led a series of canvasses in the areas surrounding the pending rezoning, going door-to-door on blocks near the proposed development.  A WF33 canvasser described the canvassing script: "We asked what changes [they] have seen in the neighborhood, and what [they] think about these changes.  They were pretty forthcoming about their concerns about gentrification."[802]  Another member added: "You could say we were doing political education, in that we linked their concerns to the zoning question.  They would talk about gentrification, and we would say 'well, did you know that the alderman has power over that?  And we would tell them about the zoning change."[803]  In some cases, WF33 collected signatures for a petition to Ald. Mell to delay the zoning change and consider public concerns, or asked residents to join WF33 in protest at Mell's "ward nights" (monthly public meetings between residents and the alderman.  WF33 conducted such outreach for several pending developments in 2017 and 2018.[804]

*Canvassing around rent control*

This strategic design of issue campaigns as vehicles for outreach to target populations is also illustrated by WF33's work as part of citywide coalition advocating rent control.  In 2017

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[802] Interview with Dawn, 1/11/18.

[803] Interview with anonymous WF33 member, 5/27/18.

[804] For example, one WF33 campaign targeted a proposed zoning change associated with the construction of a three story building, including condos and a commercial property, by Barrett Homes, a developer of luxury condos.  The building (under construction as of the Summer of 2018) replaced a set of smaller single-family homes on the lot (http://workingfamilies33.org/blog/2017/4/1/working-families-reaches-neighbors-to-talk-belmont-ave-development; accessed 12/19/18).  The property is in the Southern part of the Avondale neighborhood, on a commercial corridor (the 3000's blocks of Belmont Ave.), in which several properties have recently been built or significantly renovated (this is based on my observation during a field visit, and confirmed by people in the area).  The property also falls within a precinct targeted by WF33 for its high levels of working-class Latinx eligible voters.  Similarly, WF33 targeted a proposed zoning change associated with the development of a 27-unit condo building, replacing a closed storage facility and "general merchandise" store, in the winter of 2018.  This development was in the rapidly redeveloping southern edge of Albany Park, one of several recent redevelopment projects on the 3000s blocks of Lawrence Ave., a popular commercial corridor (http://workingfamilies33.org/blog/2018/2/9/we-need-more-than-bare-minimums-open-letter-regarding-3215-w-lawrence; accessed 12/19/18).

and 2018, the Lift the Ban Coalition launched a non-binding referendum declaring support for

the repeal of Illinois' ban on rent control in municipalities.[805]  The coalition's member

organizations each conducted outreach on behalf of the referendum in their respective

geographic areas, with WF33 and the Northside Chapter of Democratic Socialists of America

leading the effort in the 33rd ward.[806]

According to Antonio and Dawn, WF33 saw the Lift the Ban referendum campaign as

another opportunity for outreach among targeted populations (while advancing a valued policy

goal).  WF33 chose to campaign in precincts in the legislative district of a target state

legislator.[807]  But therein, they selected precincts where they perceived untapped potential

constituencies.  Most of the precincts were in parts of Albany park experiencing rapid

redevelopment, and attendant housing cost pressures.  According to Dawn, these precincts

were also places "we wanted to meet more people."[808]

As in the zoning campaigns, WF33 did extensive outreach for the rent control

referendum.  They canvassed in high-traffic public spaces, such as train stations, and later door-

to-door, targeting households based on voting history and any opinions on issues expressed in

previous contacts.[809]  Dawn described the conversational script: "We would ask, 'have you

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[805] intended to signal the bill's popularity to legislators. As of the Fall of 2018, the Lift the Ban coalition included 20 groups (neighborhood based service, development, and advocacy non-profits; citywide housing advocacy groups; progressive labor unions), including UWF, and UWF members (Northside Action for Justice; Action Now; Metropolitan Tenants Organization; Northwest Side Housing Center; Lawyers Committee for Better Housing; DSA Chicago; Pilsen Alliance; WF33; KOCO; Lugenia Burns Hope Community Center)

[806] For example, the Pilsen Alliance and DSA led the campaign in Pilsen.  KOCO, DSA, the Lugenia Hope Burns Center led the campaign on the South Side.  The campaign was not intended to be a citywide campaign right away; they intentionally picked 9 orgs who could lead the effort in their own wards.  From the spring of 2017 through the spring of 2018, coalition members led petition drives, ultimately placing the referendum on the ballot in 76 precincts in 9 wards.  They collected signatures for a petition to get the referendum on the April, 2018 electoral ballot, and having accomplished this, they mobilized voter support for the referendum.

[807] This was Representative John Cullerton, of the 6th District.

[808] Canvassers also targeted households based on voter registration and past voting behavior, and targeted people who signed the petition on zoning changes and/or mentioned that they were supportive or undecided on rent control.

[809] Interview with Dawn, 4/22/18.

noticed rising rents?  Would you be interested in something that made rents rise less?  We're campaign for something called rent control.'  And we would explain the policy."[810]

WF33 has attempted to continue developing relationships with people contacted through the rent control canvasses.  They invited contacts to a series of follow-up events, aimed at continuing education about affordable housing.  In April of 2018, WF33 held a forum on rent control in April, featuring speeches by Rossana and representatives of allied groups about the need for and politics of rent control.  In subsequent months, WF33 invited contacts to participate in grassroots lobbying events.[811]

WF33 leveraged the campaigns as a chance to build the organization in other ways. They used the campaign as an opportunity to deepen their relationship with the Northside Chapter of DSA Chicago.  At the start of the campaign, they had only a few overlapping members.[812]  Several of the DSA members who canvassed alongside WF33 subsequently joined WF33.  Experienced organizers within WF33 trained relative newcomers how to plan and implement canvasses in their respective precincts (and thus, in organizing parlance, to serve as "precinct captains").[813]

### Results of outreach

The campaigns accomplished some of their immediate goals:  the rent control referendum passed by 40-60 percentage points in all six of the precincts in which it was on the ballot, contributing to the issue's momentum in the state legislature.  The zoning campaigns

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[810] Ibid.

[811] These included a "lobbying day" in May (in which attendees wrote and called their city and state representatives to demand they support removal of the state ban) and a "Call-in Day" in June (in which participants called Illinois Senate President John Cullerton to demand rent control).

[812] Interview with Dawn, 4/22/18.

[813] Participants learned canvassing skills including how to "cut turf" (i.e., divide up geographic territory among canvassers) and use an app to target households based on past political participation and other criteria.

caused Ald. Mell to delay one rezoning decision, and forced her into a defensive posture on redevelopment (at least according to observers in WF33).

The campaigns also produced new contacts. One interviewee estimated that WF33 had collected contact information and from "a few dozen" people interested in learning more about WF33 or the issues in question. WF33 has continued developing relationships with some of these, although I have not been able to determine how many. Dawn observed with satisfaction that several "new faces, including Latinx ones" were at the rent control forum WF33 held after the rent control canvasses.[814] Underlying the campaigns' success as organizing tools appears to be acute popular concern with gentrification and the associated problems of rising housing costs and displacement. Several members I spoke with were struck by residents' concern with unaffordability and displacement and receptivity to WF33's proposals. Dawn reported, "we all felt it was the easiest canvassing we had ever done."

Residents were focused on the material aspects of displacement. One canvasser observed "I would start to ask about changes in the neighborhood and they would go off about rising rents and displacement." May residents quickly responded that they were having difficulties affording housing, or had friends or family who had had to move due to rising rent, or the purchase and demolition of their building by developers.

In some cases, residents seemed to be familiar with left positions on redevelopment, repeating mainstays of progressive discourses, such as derogatory references to "big developers," or "a right to housing." One canvasser recounted that "some were clearly familiar, not just with the problem, but had clearly heard some of the arguments."[815] Antonio recalled

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[814] Interview with Dawn, 4/22/18.
[815] Interview with Kaitlin, 5/27/18; Interview with Antonio, 5/23/18.

that "people were literally completing my sentences" as he attempted to articulate WF33's positions.

## Interaction with Advocacy and Service NGOs

As noted, the 33rd Ward contains a cluster of left-leaning NGOs, conducting advocacy and grassroots organizing around issues. Autonomous Tenants Union has organized a large grassroots base, mostly contained in its several building-specific tenant unions. Organized Communities Against Deportation has large networks in the neighborhood, especially in immigrant populations. Both of these organizations, as well as Centro Autonomo and Albany Park Theatre Project, have diffused progressive and left discourses about housing, immigration, and other issues through the ward for several years.

A second element of WF33's strategy has been collaboration with these NGOs, in the context of issue projects. WF33 worked with Autonomous Tenants Union to protest mass evictions and advocate tenants' rights. Along with ATU and Organized Communities Against Deportation, WF33 formed the Albany park Defense Network, an organization dedicated to protecting undocumented people from deportation. Though not the primary purpose of these collaborations, through them, WF33 gained access to the grassroots issue constituencies built over the years by those NGOs.[816] WF33's other issue-based outreach may also have been facilitated by those NGOs' years of discursive work.

These findings clarify how neighborhood-based NGOs may contribute to social change. The ward's progressive-left NGOs were engaged in modes of practice that are, on their own, widely considered incapable of producing policy change. However, this chapter suggests there

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[816] Dawn argued that, like the zoning and rent control canvasses, the primary purpose of the campaign was to generate a record of WF33's work on salient issues, and a record of Mell's positions, to use in the aldermanic election. And indeed, Rossana and WF33 repeatedly highlighted these actions, contrasting them with Mell's inaction, during the campaign.

may be complementarity between the electoral and movement-building projects of a group like WF33 and the issue-based service and advocacy work of NGOs like the Albany Park Theatre Project and Centro Autonomo.  These hypotheses are discussed in the final section of the chapter.

*Tapping the grassroots bases of local NGOs*

As described in Section 1, these NGOs have built their own bases in the ward's working-class Latinx population—populations which WF33 hopes to organize, but with whom it lacks preexisting connections.  Centro Autonomo has organized dozens of residents, as demonstrated by the mobilization of large contingents in local and citywide protests around immigration, foreclosures, and other issues.  Autonomous Tenants Union has organized tenant unions at 12 buildings, comprising approximately 90 ward residents.  And Albany Park Theatre Project has produced a large network of young alumni, who have passed through the theatre program.  In their regular programming, each of these groups educates their members, exposing them to critical, progressive or left discourses about issues, and especially affordable housing and displacement.

WF33 has tried to integrate these already organized people as participants in or supporters of WF33.  It has also been able to expose NGOs' bases to WF33's distinctive discourses, which are aligned with NGOs' construction of the issues, but which more pointedly link these issue positions to attacks on Ald. Mell and demands for policy change (and regime change).  Insofar as NGOs work closely with families on urgent issues such as housing and protection from deportation, they may become the object of intense affection or loyalty of residents.  Some of the NGOs base appear to have transferred these affections onto Rodriguez-Sanchez, if not WF33 itself.

**Anti-Eviction Campaigns**

Since 2017, WF33 has worked with Autonomous Tenants Union to pressure landlords, banks, and then Ald. Mell to halt mass evictions and negotiate with tenants.  In these campaigns, WF33 took an opportunity to work with the base of low-income tenants already organized by ATU around issues of affordable housing and displacement.  WF33 drew some contacts and participants from ATU's members.  And WF33 had an opportunity to raise its own profile, and propagate criticism of Mell's record on affordable housing, among this already organized constituency.  WF33 has also deepened its relationships with ATU's core activists (as opposed to the grassroots base, the members of ATU's tenant unions).[817]  The collaboration was arranged through a common member, Brig, a leader in ATU, and may also have been facilitated by WF33's previous work with Centro Autonomo, with whom ATU is closely connected.[818]

WF33 worked with ATU and its building-specific tenant unions on campaigns to protest mass evictions.  For example, working with ATU and the Sunnyside Tenants Union in the Summer and Fall of 2017, WF33 helped conduct a series of press conferences, marches, and protests, and publicized the stories of tenants in local media and social media.[819]  WF33 and ATU conducted similar activities around two other mass evictions in the ward.[820]  In these campaigns, WF33 worked directly with ATU's tenant unions, including the Sunnyside Tenants Union, with approximately 24 members; the Autonomous Tenants Union, with approximately 12 members;

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[817] Dawn, 12/07/18.  Dawn reports WF33 members have developed increasingly close personal ties with these activists, "going to the same house parties" and otherwise socializing together.

[818] This may have endeared WF33 to some ATU leaders with backgrounds at ATU.  WF33 held monthly meetings at CA's space 2015 and 2016, and the two groups cohosted a reading group on building a left political party in 2017. http://workingfamilies33.org/upcoming/2017/3/8/reading-group-the-party-we-need

[819] They protested outside the alderman's and mayor's office, and outside the bank financing the developer evicting residents loans with which Silver purchased buildings held a march through Albany Park, trying to raise awareness about the practices of Silver Properties http://workingfamilies33.org/blog/2017/8/22/working-families-urges-silver-properties-to-negotiate-with-tenants; http://workingfamilies33.org/blog/2017/9/21/as-developer-issues-notice-renters-organize-to-stay

[820] See posting on WF33 Facebook page, 7/9/18.   One campaign in the summer of 2018 targeted Starck Holdings LLC, an entity who purchased an Albany Park building and promptly evicted tenants.  WF33 and ATU held a call-in day (i.e., asking supporters to call Starck and demand that they work with the tenant union at the building in question). https://www.facebook.com/workingfamilies33/photos/a.304799526336505/1082950641854719/?type=3&theater

and the Kimball Tenants Union, with approximately 13 members.  The unions were highly active

in the campaigns, helping to plan the actions, and turning out most members.

WF33 leveraged these collaborations to build relationships with union members.    For

example, WF33 collaborated directly with some members of 4500 N. Albany tenants union on a

project to publicize tenants' stories.  WF33 members worked with at least four tenants to write

accounts of their attempt to resist eviction, and distributed the written accounts via social

media.  One of these documents, co-created by a tenant union member and WF33 members, is

reproduced below.

An anonymous WF33 member mentioned that WF33 has added some tenant union

members to WF33's list of supporters, to be contacted for support in issue or election

campaigns.  I have not yet been able to determine the number of tenant union members with

whom WF33 sustained relationships after the campaigns.

**Picture 7.1: "Juan's Story" (flyer produced by WF33, during a collaboration with Autonomous Tenants Union)**
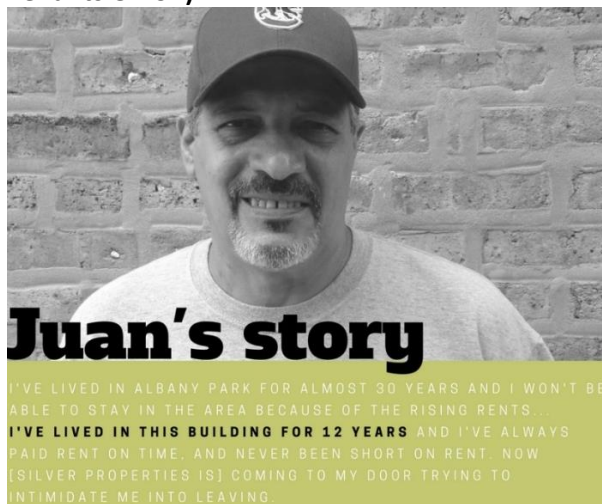


*This is a flyer produced by WF33 members, in collaboration with Juan, a member of the 4500 N. Albany Ave. Tenants Union.  WF33 members worked closely with Juan over the course of a campaign to pressure Silver Properties to make concessions to tenants.  Juan was one of a handful of tenants who worked directly with WF33 on this storytelling project.*

It is plausible that, in addition to building relationships with specific tenants, WF33 built

its own reputation as an entity fighting for tenants among a larger swath of ATU's building

unions.  WF33 appears to have kept its own brand visible during the campaigns:  some, though

not all, of ATU's social media posts describing events specifically mention WF33, billing events as

collaborations between ATU and WF33, and WF33 publicized its work via its own social media

posts and press releases, prominently featuring its own name.  However, it is not clear if ATU

union members were privy to such messages.

Finally, WF33 may have had the opportunity to reach tenants with WF33's distinctive

discourse, linking the issues of affordable housing, eviction, and displacement with attacks on

Ald. Mell.  As noted, ATU rejects electoral politics as an avenue for social change, and thus never

endorsed, or even mentioned, Rodriguez-Sanchez (although they did repeatedly criticize Ald.

Mell).  In their work with ATU, WF33 consistently framed housing issues in ways that highlight

Mell's developer-friendly positions and actions, and unwillingness to support tenants. For

example, a press release from the campaign on behalf of the Kimball Tenant Union stated that:

"[our] concern…is not just the housing conditions and the evictions, but also the tenants'

interactions with Deb Mell. We've asked her for help to protect tenants and residents of the

ward, and she's expressed [instead] that her priority is to have a good relationship with the

developer."  I cannot determine the extent to which tenants were exposed to this framing.  But

to the extent they were, the would have been encouraged to link their housing struggle, to

which they already were deeply committed, to Ald. Mell and to electoral politics.

**Albany Park Defense Network**

WF33 has had similar opportunities as a participant in the Albany Park Defense Network

(APDN), a network of organizations and individuals protecting undocumented people from

deportation through a variety of legal methods.  APDN has built close relationships with local

residents, becoming part of a social and organizational networks which form and express a

community of undocumented people and their supporters.  Via her visible participation in

APDN, Rodriguez-Sanchez helped establish herself as a member of that broader community,

rather than as a partisan politician.

WF33 launched APDN with ATU and Organized Communities Against Deportation

(OCAD, an immigrant rights organization formed in 2010 and active in several neighborhoods of

Chicago) in February of 2017.  It is one of several similar "defense networks" organized by OCAD

around Chicago.  The impetus for APDN was the intensified threat of "raids" by Immigration and

Customs Enforcement, associated with the Trump administration's immigration policies.[821]

Founders envision APDN as "a rapid-response network against raids and deportations,"

organizing and educating ward residents to protect undocumented people in the event of raids.

To date, APDN has recruited ward residents to attend a series of "Know Your Rights

trainings," workshops on citizens and undocumented people's legal rights.[822]  APDN has been

"developing community infrastructure" to enable effective responses to raids, such as phone

trees and protocols to spread information.  APDN has canvassed Albany Park, distributing

information about legal rights, best practices, and ongoing legal disputes over individual

deportations, and integrating people into alert networks.  They also held a series of block parties

in the summer of 2018 "to build community and [let people] learn about our work resisting

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[821] Raids in which ICE officials arrest undocumented people at their homes or workplaces, often without warning and with considerable force.

[822] Hernandez, 2017.  One workshop shared best practices for interacting with ICE agents during raids, for instance encouraging "neighbors born in the U.S. to approach ICE agents entering their community to ask why they're there…or to record ICE's interactions with neighbors on a cell phone."  Other workshops explained undocumented immigrants' rights in the workplace, landlord-tenant relationships, and health care system, training both undocumented people and U.S. citizens who interact with undocumented people in the aforementioned contexts.

deportations and displacement right here in the ward."[823]  APDN has also assisted individuals

and families in legal proceedings related to deportation, detention, and citizenship.[824]

Through this outreach, and building its member organizations' existing ties, APDN has

developed a large network in Albany Park.  APDN's events typically draw around 30 attendees, a

mix of undocumented people and U.S. citizens—the family members and friends of

undocumented, people who work professionally with undocumented people or on immigrant

rights, and people sympathetic to the cause of undocumented immigrants.[825]  An anonymous

WF33 member, who works with APDN, suggests this network is partly drawn from the existing

networks of OCAD and ATU, but that APDN's outreach efforts have successfully brought in

additional residents.

ADPN has at least three characteristics which have been found to produce strong

affective ties among participants, and between an organization's service providers and

recipients.  First, APDN works with people under threat of deportation.  As documented,

imminent threat tends to enhance feelings of solidarity in an organization dedicated to

protecting threatened actors.[826]   Second, APDN works not just with individuals, but with already

close-knit collectivities, such as families, and intense networks of neighbors and friends.[827]

Third, as an all-volunteer operation, APDN's volunteer organizers are likely driven by values and

feelings of solidarity with undocumented people and their families.[828]

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[823] https://www.facebook.com/pg/albanyparkdefense/posts/.  Accessed 6/12/19.

[824] They publicized cases, provided legal counseling, supported families (and attended court proceedings in shows of solidarity). Some of these were individuals affiliated with organizations networked with APDN.

[825] Hernandez, 2017.  https://www.chicagoreader.com/Bleader/archives/2017/03/30/little-village-and-other-neighborhoods-are-setting-up-defense-networks-for-undocumented-immigrants

[826] Jasper, 1998; Farias, 2017.

[827] According to anonymous WF33 member, families and small groups of friends and neighbors attend APDN events together (interview, 5/30/18).  According to Mann (1986, 228) this linkage of a collective action organization with participants' most affectively intense relations strengthens participants' identification and emotional bond with the organization.

[828] Han (2014) found these value-driven sacrifices can elicit reciprocal feelings of solidarity and commitment from other volunteers.

APDN conducted several activities which conduce to building a community out of its diverse supporters. First, APDN episodically activates its "rapid response" networks, requiring its members to collaborate on spreading information and taking various defensive actions. APDN also holds social events, including multiple block parties in the summers of 2017 and 2018, which appeared to convene a multi-racial network of neighborhood residents. The combination of periodic collaboration and social ties, may help build and express a community of undocumented people and their supporters in the neighborhood.

Like ATU, APDN never officially endorsed Rodriguez-Sanchez. However, APDN may have contributed to WF33's electoral goals in several ways (in addition to giving WF33 and Rodriguez-Sanchez a record to run on). Like ATU, APDN organized and consolidated a constituency around particular issues, creating an opportunity for WF33 to appeal to an already established constituency in their outreach.

As in its work with ATU, WF33 may have developed a reputation as a pro-immigrant rights group, among APDN's participants and audience. I have not been able to determine the extent to which WF33 itself was visible in APDN's spaces. However, in its own social media, WF33 proudly proclaimed its role as a co-founder of APDN. WF33 also publicizes APDN's events, implying its own involvement with them. Though boundaries between the organizations blurred (and no one involved in either organization was concerned to distinguish the boundaries), WF33 members did participate *qua* WF33, alongside APDN, in some anti-deportation events. [829] This may have helped establish WF33's identity as aligned and allied with APDN, to APDN's participants and clientele, and to any attentive audience.

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[829] WF33 Facebook Post, 2/7/18. Accessed 6/1/19. For example, a WF33 contingent attended immigration court hearings for some Albany Park residents facing eviction, and supported a campaign to release another resident from an ICE detention center. And they "attended immigration court in solidarity with Freddy, a young father in our community." See also WF33 Facebook post on 7/2/18. Accessed 6/1/19.

Rodriguez-Sanchez has participated extensively in APDN events, which may have helped

establish her as a member of a larger community, organized in part around APDN.  At least since

the summer of 2018, Rodriguez-Sanchez participated regularly in ADPN events.  For example,

she was part of the APDN delegation to immigration court to witness proceedings on behalf of

an asylum seeker facing deportation in June 2018, and attended APDN's rallies and block parties

in the summer of 2018.  She frequently mentioned her work in APDN in campaign statements.[830]

**Picture 7.2.  Rossana Rodriguez Sanchez participates at a rally of the Albany Park Defense Network**



**Rossana Rodriguez-Sanchez (front row, third from left, close to the "S" in "Stop") at an Albany Park Defense Network rally in June, 2018.  Rodriguez-Sanchez was a prominent presence at APDN events.**

While APDN did not formally endorse Rodriguez-Sanchez, organizational representatives

did appear, and help publicize, at least one of Rodriguez-Sanchez's campaign events.  In June

2018, APDN had a designated table "Rossapolooza," a block party explicitly dedicated to

promoting Rodriguez-Sanchez's campaign.  APDN may have advertised the event to its

members.  And the joint appearance may have strengthened the association between APDN and

Rodriguez-Sanchez in the eyes of APDN participants and clientele—and by extension,

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[830] Field Notes, 5/30/17; Chicago Sun-Times Editorial Board, 2019; Smith, 2018.

established Rodriguez-Sanchez as a member of this valued community. The photo below shows

two young Latinx attendees of Rossapolooza holding an APDN sign.

**Picture 7.3. Children holding an APDN sign at Rossapolooza, a campaign event for Rodriguez-Sanchez**
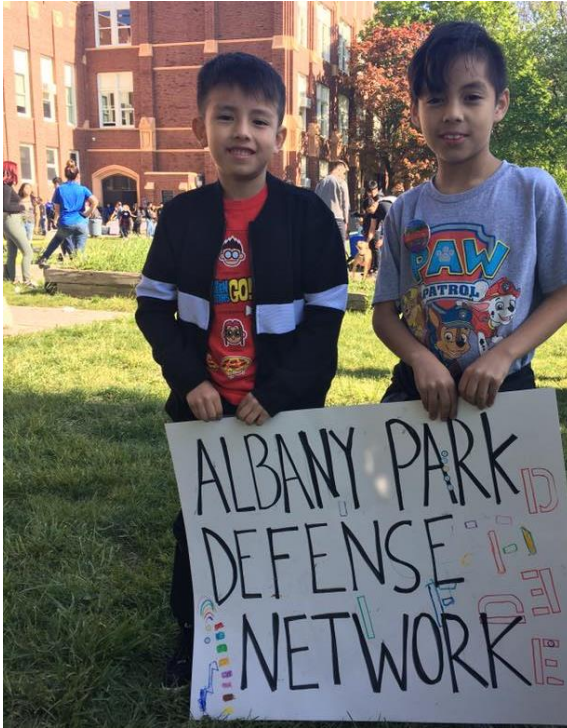


*Two young, Latinx Albany Park residents hold an Albany Park Defense Network Sign at Rossapolooza, a campaign event for Rossana Rodriguez-Sanchez in June, 2018.*

Finally, as WF33 and Rodriguez-Sanchez worked in parallel to APDN, they framed

deportations and undocumented people's rights in ways that highlighted institutional politics,

and especially former Ald. Mell's failures. For example, when WF33 followed-up on an APDN

event with a press release, they highlighted Mell's refusal to join a coalition of Chicago-area

politicians calling for the abolition of ICE. Like ATU, APDN refrained from such references to

partisan politics. To whatever extent WF33 and Rodriguez-Sanchez had APDN's participants and

clientele as an audience, they diffused this explicitly partisan framing of the issues.

**Albany Park Theatre Project**

The Rodriguez-Sanchez campaign has drawn volunteers from the alumni network of the youth arts non-profit, Albany Park Theatre Project. These volunteers were particularly valuable for their extensive social networks among Albany Park's immigrant families, via which they recruited additional people to the campaign. These volunteers appear to have been drawn to the campaign by their personal relationships with Rodriguez-Sanchez, who worked as a youth organizer and administrator at APTP for several years. Even more so than the previous groups, this base of volunteers appears to have incomplete ideological alignment with WF33's core goals, a problem discussed at length in Section 4 of this chapter. Whereas the campaign accessed affordable housing and immigrant rights constituencies through collaborative issue-based projects, it tapped APTP's networks on the basis of the strong personal ties between that network and one individual, Rodriguez-Sanchez.

The network of APTP alumni has been an important source of campaign volunteers.[831] The campaign has slated Rodriguez-Sanchez's former students as speakers at official campaign events.[832] And some APTP alumni took important staff positions in the campaign, for example helping to run a campaign office and facilitating meetings with local residents.[833] APTP alumni also comprise most of Youth For Rossana (YFR), a group of youths organizing a variety of forms of youth support for the campaign. The leadership of this group—approximately 8 recent APTP alumni from Albany Park— "plann[ed] outreach and voter registration for the ward's young people," and participated in the campaign's decision-making about its platform and messages.

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[831] This is in addition to other ways that the campaign has drawn on Rodriguez-Sanchez's experiences at APTP. Rodriguez-Sanchez's history as an arts educator and youth organizer has been a prominent theme in any discussions about her biography and character.
[832] For example, APTP alumna (and as of April 2019, staff member in Rodriguez-Sanchez's administration) Lilia was one of three official speaks at Rodriguez-Sanchez's Campaign Launch party.
[833] For example, Lilia and one other helped run an office and facilitate events, such as a brainstorming session on how to reach the ward's young voters.

And the group furnished significant numbers of volunteers for canvasses and GOTV events.[834]

Not surprisingly, at least one leader from Youth for Rossana has joined Rodriguez-Sanchez's

aldermanic staff.

In their organizing work, YFR members appear to have conducted outreach via their own

social networks in the neighborhood.  In February 2019, YFR helped recruit several Albany Park

families to attend a brainstorming session about how to improve the neighborhood's schools.[835]

According to an anonymous interviewee, YFR organizers had been acquainted with these

families from APTP or other experiences in the neighborhood.  While I cannot determine how

many local residents YFR members accessed in this way, they appear to have had a reach into

the neighborhood population which WF33 members lacked.

## Tapping NGOs' participants and audiences

In years of organizing and activism around displacement and deportation, Albany Park's

NGOs appear to have diffused ideas about these issues among ward residents, perhaps affecting

the terrain for WF33's project.  These NGOs shaped conceptions of issues of the relatively small

numbers of people with whom they worked directly, and wider audiences for their public

statements, direct actions, and artistic productions.  WF33 members were aware that this

history of activism may have left ward residents more receptive than they would otherwise have

been to WF33's campaigns.  Past association with or exposure to the NGOs discourses is one

possible explanation for ward residents' familiarity with progressive and left positions on

housing, observed by WF33 members during canvassing for the rent control referendum.

[834] the 1st day of Rossana's candidate petition drive were APTP alumni.
[835] Rossana for 33rd Ward Alderman, Facebook post, 2/13/19.
https://www.facebook.com/rossanafor33/photos/pcb.2333256543585910/2333253416919556/?type=3&__tn__=HH-R&eid=ARAks9umIzwhT6DkSh1hxsNKWLrB1SHnd3wxd3A54mBMnHMPHbeJs2V1nat28Y6kiF9fwPx05UW-7QeB
Accessed 4/29/19.

There has been sustained activism around displacement in Chicago since the Great

Recession. In addition to parts of the South Side, neighborhoods in the North and Near West

Side, in and around the 33rd ward, have seen most of this activity. From 2012 through 2016,

much of the militant direct action against foreclosures took place in Rogers Park, just east of the

33rd ward.[836] A wave of activism around gentrification and rising housing costs in Logan Square,

just southwest of the ward, crescendoed in 2016, with a series of marches and rallies.[837]

There was extensive activism in the 33rd Ward itself. From 2010, Centro Autonomo,

Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign, and Communities United Against Foreclosure and Eviction

organized households facing foreclosure, offering a range of services and attempting to mobilize

people in direct actions.[838] CA, for example, recruited local residents facing foreclosures to

participate in a "housing group," dedicated to consciousness-raising and grassroots lobbying for

a foreclosure moratorium.[839] I have not been able to obtain information on the size of the

organizations' constituencies in the ward. As a rough illustration of the level of activism around

housing in Albany Park, I counted the direct actions of CA, CAEC, CUAFE, and ATU in Albany Park

between 2012 and 2017, as reported in organizational documents and local media, finding an

average of four actions per year during this period.[840] CAEC, CUAFE, and CA helped organize

several "occupations" of foreclosed homes (i.e., helping residents "squat" in the home). In the

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[836] Mata, 2012.

[837] Bloom, 2018.

[838] CA co-founded Resistance Legal Clinic; CA, CAUFE and CAEC helped residents illegally occupy homes and sometimes carried out civil disobedience campaigns to physically obstruct foreclosure proceedings.

[839] https://centro.community/casas-del-pueblo/ accessed 12/14/18.

[840] I included direct actions to resist a foreclosure or eviction, occupations of houses, rallies, and marches. I did not count regularly scheduled organizational meetings, even if open to the public.

time studied, there was at least one illegally occupied home in Albany Park, which residents used as a residence and a community center.[841]

As noted in the previous section, Albany Park's progressive and left-leaning housing activists diffused their discourses through a play produced by Albany Park Theatre Project. As explained, APTP's 2013 play on displacement, *I Would Kiss These Walls,* incorporated CAEC's, CUAFE's, and CA's discourses on the causes and solutions to housing crisis. *Walls* ran for two months at APTP's theatre in 2013, selling out many nights, and was performed again in 2015, at a foreclosed home illegally occupied with the help of CUAFE in Rogers Park, on the edge of the ward.[842] There is anecdotal evidence that participants in APTP and collaborating groups drew their friends, relatives, and peers to these plays.[843]

At least some of the participants in these activities appear to have adopted the NGO's discourses about housing and displacement. A cast member in *Walls* recounted that "I've invited friends [to watch the play]… and they they're like 'Wow, this is nothing we knew about…Maybe they won't take that step to do anything at first, but at least they're exposed to what there is out there."[844] An organizer at Centro Autonomo recalls a similar effect on participants in CA's housing program.[845]

That NGOs' activism shaped local residents' perspective on housing is displayed most clearly by residents' statements at a June 2013 forum on a foreclosure moratorium. 14 people, facing foreclosure and participating in the NGOs' support programs, gave testimony at the

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[841] Galeano, Gutierrez, Monzon, 2015: CA did "an occupation of a house that was vacant in our neighborhood. After much discussion, we came to the realization that no one was willing to live there for fear of facing legal repercussions. Therefore, although no one actually ever stayed in the property, it was used as a communal space for community meetings and gatherings."
[842] APTP blog
[843] Rada, 2015.
[844] Rada, 2015.
[845] Coleman, 2013. This article quotes Roberto De la Riva, an organizer at CA: "First of all, these people have gone from never telling their stories to owning their stories…It has changed the conscience of the center. It changes many people's minds about being poor because they move from a place of shame…because they see that we can win and fight for justice."

forum.  11 of 14 speakers stated their intention to defy the law and remain in their homes despite their pending foreclosure or eviction, reflecting the NGO's support for illegal occupations.  Several argued that they, as residents, and not the banks which formally owned the deeds, were entitled to the house in question—implying a claim to housing which transcends or is unrelated to legal ownership.[846]

I have not adduced any direct evidence that people exposed to these discourses by the NGO's work were more receptive to WF33's outreach.  However, WF33 members are aware of the possibility that years of activism (some of which they participated in) around housing and immigration in and around the neighborhood have created receptive audiences for WF33's campaigns.  As one informant said, "it's hard to say how much, but it definitely helps that people have been talking about this for almost a decade now."[847]  Such exposure is one plausible explanation for residents' apparent familiarity with progressive and left discourses about displacement and affordable housing, which WF33 members observed during their rent control canvassing (described above).

## Accessing strategic institutions via issue-based work

WF33 also used a strategy of changing public conversations about issues from the vantage of important civic institutions.  They gained access to these institutions by joining the Albany Park Defense Network, positioning themselves as an issue-focused, community-based civic group.  They likely would not have had access to these institutions as a partisan political

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[846] For example, one speaker asserted that "this is my house, and I'm going to stay in my house".  Another asked, referring to the banks, "[w]hy do they have the right?."  Several others pointedly referred to the houses in question as "mine" or "ours," suggesting continued possession, withal legal dispossession.
[847] Interview with Dawn, 12/5/18.

group. There is suggestive evidence that, in this context, WF33 advanced its perspective on issues in important public conversations.

WF33 has used this strategy in attempting to elect a slate of candidates to the neighborhood's Local School Councils (LSCs). LSCs are part of the official governance structures of each school in the Chicago Public Schools system, created by state law.[848] Among other functions, LSCs serve as important deliberate bodies, and activists have found them useful sites at which to spread ideas, particularly on issues related to education.[849] WF33 members also see LSCs as an important place to articulate their own constructions of issues, their vision of expanded economic rights, and other important ideas. By electing allies to LSCs in the neighborhood, they hope to influence other LSC members, who they recognize as some of the neighborhood's leading activists, and to gain an institutional platform from which to participate with other public conversations about education.

Albany Park Defense Network has provided an additional pathway for WF33 to participate in conversations at Local School Councils. APDN engages with LSC's as an expert witness and potential programmatic collaborator on programs for undocumented students. As representatives of APDN, WF33 members have spoken during at least two LSC meetings at two neighborhood schools. The representatives appear to have used the opportunity to raise the salience of one policy issue on APDN and WF33's agenda, the Chicago Police Department's Gang

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[848] The LSC is comprised by three parents of students at the school, three teachers at the school, and three residents from the school's neighborhood, each elected annually by several residents. LSC's have the power to shape schools budgets, administrative hiring, and other policies.

[849] The Chicago Teachers Union views the LSCs as an important site for organizing, and reportedly used them to build community support for the 2012 teachers strike. Bradbury et al, 2015; CTU Chief of Staff Jackson Potter reports that the CTU organized against the Emanuel administration's attempt to impose a longer school day (Interview with Jackson Potter, 3/10/17). As of 2017, CTU organizers were training LSC members to lobby city and state government for funding increases (Interview with Matt Luskin, 3/10/17).

Database.[850]  In May, an anonymous WF33 member, who participates in APDN, asked a question about how the gang database affects Roosevelt students.  In June, a representative noted an upcoming event about the gang database being held by ADPN.[851]

In a variant of this strategy, WF33 is considering how to work with prominent civic actors who have taken positions on displacement and deportation similar to WF33's.  For example, they are currently exploring ways of working with the principal at an elementary school in the ward.  This principal has previously called for progressive policies to mitigate affordable housing and displacement, having witnessed many Hibbard students leaving the school after their families' evictions.  For his institutional position, he enjoyed media access and may have been perceived by public audiences as a credible and compelling witness on the problem of eviction.  Given the principal's stance on issues, WF33 leaders have been considering how to incorporate him into WF33's issue-based work, to leverage his ability to intervene in public conversations about issues for WF33's ends.[852]  Antonio sees some potential to contribute to WF33's struggle to construct issues in a favorable way, even without taking any partisan positions.

I have not been able to obtain any evidence about the effects of these strategies. WF33's access to LSCs via APDN likely complements the work of WF33 members elected to LSCs in advancing left perspectives on issues in these venues.  Having won the aldermanic election, WF33 will now have additional institutional platforms from which to intervene in public conversations.

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[850] Roosevelt High School LSC meeting minutes, 5/8/18 and 6/12/18.  Minutes available at
https://www.rhsroughriders.org/ourpages/auto/2017/7/25/41699066/LSC%20Minutes%205_8_18.docx
and
https://rhsroughriders.org/ourpages/auto/2017/7/25/41699066/LSC%20Minutes%206_12_18.docx
[851] LSC minutes, 6/12/18.
[852] Interview with Antonio.  As of May 2018, Antonio was planning to invite the principal to a WF33 monthly meeting, to speak about housing issues, and was considering other ways to engage him.

## Analysis

By 2017, WF33 was a cohesive organization of about 30 activists, skilled and capacious enough to design and carry out strategic organizing projects. Through a series of projects in 2017 and 2018, WF33 cultivated supporters for a progressive housing and immigration agenda—and a broader class-focused political narrative—primarily among Latinx working-class and lower-class ward residents. Like UWF's efforts to organize in the 27th Ward, WF33's efforts are an opportunity to observe how neighborhood-level structures and processes mediate grassroots organizing, and interact with organizing strategies.

First, this chapter reinforces the findings of previous chapters that local NGOs critically mediate organizing projects. In this case, WF33 tapped constituencies already organized and educated by the ward's left-leaning organizations. The 33rd Ward's NGOs thus played a similar role as the 27th's: they cultivated a population of local activists and politically attentive residents committed to certain understandings of local problems. In this case, the left-leaning NGOs created a population of activists who saw real estate developers and investors as adversaries, and committed to government intervention on behalf of low-income renters and homeowners.

Given the national trends toward incorporation of neighborhood-based NGOs into neoliberal regimes and real estate development coalitions, why did there exist a vital network of relatively independent, left-leaning NGOs in the 33rd ward? The ward's distinctive organizational field appears to be a product of three factors.

First, the ward's NGOs reflected the ideologies and political strategies of the transnational activist networks in which they were steeped. Most notably, Centro Autonomo drew its own personnel from an international networks of radical revolutionary activists, and

maintained close ties with this network.  Its programming reflected this networks' commitment

to building power through grassroots organizing (through particular methods of anti-colonial

"popular education").   Some of these ideas have passed onto Autonomous Tenants Union,

three of whose key leaders were trained at CA, and to Albany Park Theatre Project, who worked

with CA's activists (among others) to develop its content.

Second, some the ward's left NGOs grew out of the same expansion of Chicago's left

milieu which produced most of the activists in WF33 (see previous chapter).  The radical,

grassroots housing organizations which grew in the early 2010s, Communities Organized Against

Foreclosure and Eviction and Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign were active in the neighborhoods

of the ward, likely helping to diffuse left analyses of the affordable housing problem.  These

organizations also collaborated with APTP, and some their members co-founded ATU.

Third, Centro Autonomo's almost complete financial independence of city government

and philanthropic foundations allowed it sustain a much larger investment in grassroots

organizing and militant advocacy than typical regime- and foundation-funded NGOs.  CA has

achieved financial independence through its ingenious study abroad program, Autonomous

University of Social Movements.  Placing American college students with CA's practitioner allies

in Latin America, CA generates hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, more than enough to

fund its community organizing.

The effective interaction between left NGOs and WF33 raises questions about the

political function of neighborhood-based NGOs.  NGOs have been roundly criticized as

undermining progressive and left politics.  Even those ideologically committed to left projects

are seen as irrelevant:  groups like Albany Park Theatre Project do cultural or discursive work, at

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best distantly link to political change; the relatively few NGOs which invest in grassroots organizing, like CA and ATU, fail to connect to a broader project to build and use political power.

This chapter suggests that such discursive work and grassroots organizing may in fact create a foundation for the explicitly partisan electoral and movement-building work of a group like WF33. CA's and APTP's years of spreading ideas about displacement, educating youth about issues, and organizing local families, appear to have created a population receptive to WF33's arguments, and networks of activists with whom WF33 could collaborate. This suggests that typical NGO strategies of culture change and grassroots organizing are not inherently flawed so much as incomplete: they can be potentiated by an actor like WF33 capable of integrating grassroots constituencies and audiences into a well-financed and strategically sophisticated project.

The interaction between WF33 and APTP raises the question of what kinds of discourses can support a progressive or left agenda. Does theatre, for instance, have to be intensely partisan *agit-prop* to advance a base-building project? Or can non-partisan, humanistic treatments of issues, like those in APTP's plays, facilitate a partisan project like WF33's? This chapter suggests that the political impact of a cultural product is far less a function of the discursive content of the product than of the presence of political actors capable of linking their agenda to the resonance of the cultural product. An audience moved by APTP's plays about eviction or deportation would likely be open to a range of political actions. It is up to partisan actors to turn this audience, sensitized to the issue, toward their agenda. If a powerful progressive or left organization is present in the environment, an institution which produces non-partisan, humanistic discourses about issues may contribute to their base-building work.

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Past work clarifies the intrinsic challenges of organizing around gentrification and displacement. Importantly, displacement itself erodes the base for resistance or alternative projects. But the ease with which WF33 found support for rent control, and for a class-focused critique of redevelopment, suggests that redevelopment and its associated problems are also particularly fertile for organizing. Most simply, as scholars of political behavior have long pointed out, newly imposed harms are more likely to catalyze political reaction than long-stable absences of goods. Gentrification imposes many such harms, as residents experience rising housing costs, resulting financial insecurity and housing stability, and the dissolution of communities. WF33's canvasser found that residents facing these new, painful, and quite concrete problems, needed little convincing to support.

Second, it appeared to be relatively easy for organizers to link these problems to a progressive-left policy agenda, such as rent control, and expanded public investment in affordable housing. WF33's agenda immediately address the problem experienced by local residents, at the point at which they are experiencing it: people experience rising rents; rent control will prevent rent increases. People cannot afford housing; government programs can directly provide affordable units. In this case, organizing involved the relatively simple task of presenting residents a clear, concrete prospective benefit. It did not depend on any prior ideological agreement, or require any political education.

The contrast with organizers' experience in Austin is instructive. Like WF33, UWF's organizers tried to organize around the neighborhood's most salient problem, violent crime. But they struggled to convince Austin's resident that a public jobs program and expanded public investment in schools would address the forms of social breakdown which, residents believed, caused violent crime. UWF organizers' argument depended on abstract, ultimately unverifiable

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claims about complex social conditions and their relationship to behavior. In other words, making this argument required deep consciousness-raising. Jason and Emma's painstaking efforts at pedagogy contrast sharply with WF33's canvassing script in the rent control referendum canvassing: "Have you noticed the rising rents? Would you be interested in something that made the rents rise less? We're supporting something called 'rent control'…"

In other neighborhoods, activists have articulated redevelopment as racial empowerment and constructed displacement as a problem of cultural expression and representation rather than as a struggle for material benefits. The propagation of such constructions among the ward would surely complicate WF33's attempts to organize around a class-conscious, economically focused vision of housing and development. But the 33rd ward does not have a vital race-conscious pro-development formation, as other gentrifying neighborhoods do. The main regime-aligned NGOs which serve low-income and Latinx populations focus on policy advocacy, not on commercial and residential real estate planning and development. I did not find any public actor embedded in low-income and/or Latinx populations articulating development as the interest of those groups.

This absence may also be rooted in the neighborhoods' histories as "points of entry" for immigrants. As described in the introductory chapter, the discourse and practice of race-conscious community development grew out of a particular sequence of institutional development. In late 1960s and 1970s, racial justice activists, interacting with federal and local governments and corporate and foundation philanthropists, invented commercial and real estate development, managed by neighborhood activists, as a form of racial empowerment. Subsequent interactions between neighborhood activists, the local state, and a growing real estate development industry, reinforced this vision. In other words, race-conscious community

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development is part of a political culture specific to black and Latinx communities developing in

urban neighborhoods since the late 1960s. Recently arrived immigrant populations—and in

2007, 1/3 of Albany Park's population had arrived in the previous 5 years—are not steeped in

this political culture. Certainly race-conscious community development could be imported to

Albany Park (and we might expect pro-development forces to import it soon). But forces

committed to race-conscious development are not a long-developing part of the neighborhood's

civic life, as they are in historically black neighborhoods on Chicago's South and West Sides.

# Chapter 8.  Conclusions and Implications

## Introduction

Beginning in the mid-1960s, federal policy, foundation programs, and economic restructuring drove a series of related institutional changes in U.S. cities.  These factors transformed the field of neighborhood-based activism, eliminating militant and radical groups, and causing the proliferation of non-profit service and development institutions, operating within a framework of public retrenchment, market-based development, and self-help.  Similar factors produced neoliberal urban regimes, pursuing corporate-led economic growth, and defining commitments to racial and economic justice in ways compatible with their neoliberal growth strategies.  Past work shows that these institutions helped construct and promulgate a neoliberal racial justice praxis, erasing questions of structural economic inequality and poverty, and defining an urban racial justice agenda of authentic political representation, opposition to discrimination, racial redistribution of municipal patronage, and participation in the neoliberal real estate redevelopment economy.

This dissertation suggests that these institutional and cultural developments have shaped the terrain for neighborhood organizing around economic issues, creating possibilities for some kinds of political agency, and foreclosing others.  In particular, the findings suggest that commitments to community development as a form of racial justice practice may be widespread.  These commitments, along with ideological and material investments in a "racial uplift" practice, may make neighborhood residents uninterested in progressive or left economic projects, impeding left-leaning formations' attempts to organize.

The dissertation also suggests that, under certain conditions, racial justice activism may be unaffected by these institutional and cultural developments. Specifically, the Albany Park case study suggested that recently arrived immigrant activists may not be subjected to channeling pressures which eliminated militant and radical racial justice activism from, and promulgated neoliberal or neoliberal-compatible modes of racial justice praxis in, most Black neighborhoods. Recently arrived immigrant activists may also have access to radical critiques of capitalism ideas largely eliminated from mainstream political culture in the U.S., and be less exposed to neoliberal discourses. Such activists help produce a neighborhood-level political culture much more amenable to progressive and left organizing projects.

The Albany Park case study also suggests that the expansion of the left at the city- and national scales may also affect the terrain for neighborhood organizing, mediated by activists residential location choices. I found that city-level developments and the increasing interest in social democratic politics nationally produced a growing population of left-leaning activists in Chicago. These activists enabled successful leftist grassroots organizing in the neighborhoods where they live. The case study also suggested that these activist sorted into neighborhoods as residential consumers, and tended to choose neighborhoods in the early stages of gentrification.

The dissertation thus suggests a series of hypotheses about the possibilities for grassroots organizing around economic issues in contemporary urban neighborhoods. If these hypotheses were true, they would have implications for the political conflicts between left formations and neoliberal regimes, sharpening in some cities and nationally in recent years. Insofar as left formations face significant barriers to grassroots outreach in many neighborhoods, neoliberal regimes could be expected to be politically resilient. However, left formations may have opportunities to build bases in neighborhoods with significant numbers of

immigrant activist and domestic left activists, suggesting opportunities for the growth of left

formations.

This concluding chapter will review the central findings of the Austin and Albany Park

case studies. I will first review descriptive findings about the contemporary neighborhood-level

terrain for organizing, examining how neighborhood-level civic, social, political, and economic

institutions shape neighborhood residents' material and ideological commitments to particular

projects. These institutions can also be important resources and collaborators for left

organizers. I will then review the historical development of these neighborhood-level

institutions, showing that the institutions in Austin were shaped by the post-1960s institutional

developments referenced above, while the institutions in Albany Park were relatively unaffected

by those developments.

This dissertation also attempted to elucidate left actors' thinking about the relationship

between racial and class justice. Previous chapters recounted the visions of leaders of the

United Working Families coalition, of organizers in Austin and Albany Park. This chapter will

review some unresolved disagreements within the coalition, and possible contradictions in some

actors' own thinking. Though these were not a central focus of the dissertation, I will also

briefly review additional coalition strategies for developing a class-conscious racial justice

politics.

I will consider two additional theoretical implications of the dissertation's suggestive

findings. First, echoing arguments of Ira Katznelson (1982, 1994), I argue that urban

neighborhoods are a key site at which people acquire their ideologies and material

commitments. Neighborhood institutions and activist milieus may function as mechanisms of

hegemonic incorporation, or sites for the development of counterhegemony. I argue that these

functions of neighborhoods have been ignored in recent research on racial politics and social movements.   Second, I argue that the case study findings support recent work arguing that neoliberalization itself has created barriers to challenging neoliberalism and advancing left or liberal democratic projects.  The case studies findings clarify which aspects of the neoliberal turn create this effect, and how exactly neoliberal reforms shape consciousness and material commitments.

Finally, I will consider four strategic implications of these findings.  First, I argue that, contrary to the arguments of some practitioners and commentators, progressive non-governmental organizations can play an important role in projects to attain institutional power, given a specific set of conditions.  Second, I argue that left formations are better positioned to organize in rapidly redeveloping than chronically disinvested neighborhoods.  Third, I argue that, when planning base-building projects, organizers should consider the local institutions which systemically produce activists with particular visions and commitments, in a given locale. Finally, I will suggest the organizers should analyze terrain in terms of patterns of incorporation into neoliberal regimes.

## 1. Clarifying the factors which shape the terrain for organizing

First, this dissertation elucidates the mechanisms shaping the terrain for neighborhood organizing around anti-neoliberal and related economic projects.  The primary finding of the case studies is that neighborhood-level civic and social institutions, embedded in local populations can profoundly shape the terrain for organizing by influencing neighborhood residents' material commitments and ideologies.  They can also provide crucial institutional resources to organizers, as collaborators.

In Austin, local non-profits, block clubs, and other institutions were critical in crafting, reproducing and propagating visions of racial interest centered on market-oriented development and self-help. They organized residents into projects embodying these visions, and some projected these discourses via dense social networks and highly visible public projects. These organizations helped residents form material investments in real estate development, and in relationships with the neoliberal regime and philanthropic foundations. When organizers affiliated with the socialist United Working Families group tried to recruit in Austin, they found residents ideologically and materially invested in community development and self-help, These residents either rejected the left organizers, or tried to steer the nascent organization toward community development and self-help projects.

In Albany Park, grassroots organizations and non-profits organized residents around critical understandings of neoliberal political economy and assertions of rights to affordable housing and protection from deportation and state harassment. A non-profit arts organization, linked with grassroots groups, may have diffused these ideas more broadly in the neighborhood. UWF-affiliated organizers found neighborhood residents receptive to progressive and left agendas, due in part to residents' prior exposure to left analyses of social problems by prominent local organizations. The left-leaning neighborhood organizations in Albany Park also provided UWF organizers' access to already organized grassroots bases, the ability to identify with respected local groups, and access to public institutions in the neighborhood.

While local institutions are critical in shaping subjectivities and commitments of neighborhood residents, many people arrive in neighborhoods with formed subjectivities and commitments. Later sections of the chapter will explain how activists with left ideologies are systematically produced and sorted into certain types of neighborhoods. For now, I will just

note the almost tautological finding that the presence of clusters of activists with particular

ideologies shapes the terrain for organizing.  I will briefly recount how a population of leftist

activists was one key characteristic of the terrain in Albany Park.

*Austin*

Austin contains a network of actors collaborating on community development, closely

resembling the formations described by other scholars in other neighborhoods (e.g., Boyd,

2007).  A cluster of non-profits and business associations, most notably the Austin African

American Business Networking Association, the Austin Chamber of Commerce, and the

Westside Health Authority have spearheaded commercial real estate development projects in

recent years.  These groups work closely with the neighborhood's elected officials, and receive

funding, special taxing designations, and other support, from city government.  Each of these

actors articulates their development work, in discourses traceable through the Nationalist wing

of the 1960s mobilizations, as a form of racial empowerment and expression of an authentic

racial culture.

These groups appear to project their discourses widely in the neighborhood, via highly

visible projects, public events, and through their wide social networks in the neighborhood.

AAABNA and WHA in particular have close ties with many civic and social institutions, including

some of the neighborhood's largest church congregations.  I presented anecdotal evidence that

leading individuals in these organizations propound their visions of development as racial

empowerment for large audiences of neighborhood residents, in churches and public events.

The organizations' development projects also serve as powerful embodiments of these

discourses, symbols which neighborhood residents may encounter in daily life.  The redeveloped

"Soul City Corridor," for example, with its many physical references to cultural nationalism,

embodied the vision of community development as racial empowerment and authenticity. Residents who patronize businesses in this corridor, or simply pass through, encounter this vision.

Another cluster of institutions organizes local residents to improve public spaces, build social networks, and various other volunteer projects.  This includes Austin's two largest non-profits, Westside Health Authority and Austin Coming Together, and an array of smaller organizations, including many block clubs.  These institutions are also linked to local elected officials, and receive grants from the city government and foundations.  Most of these groups construct their work in a discourse about the importance of social fabric and social norms to collective well-being, and trace the neighborhood's challenges to cultural decline, in much the same terms as Austin's leading non-profits.

In 2015, organizers associated with United Working Families recruited about two dozen Austin residents, forming the Greater Austin Independent Political Organization (GAIPO). However, as recounted in Chapter 4, these residents brought visions of business and property development and self-help to GAIPO.  Many recruits attributed Austin's problems (such as crime and low educational attainment) to the deterioration of the neighborhood's social fabric and culture and wanted GAIPO to focus its energies on restoring the social fabric through voluntarist projects (such as block clean-ups).  Other recruits wanted GAIPO to prioritize the economic development (and in some cases, specifically the development of black-owned businesses), seeing it as a crucial form of racial empowerment, in much the same terms as the neighborhood's community development network.  Few recruits had any interest in the progressive and socialist economic policies at the core of UWF's agenda.  The ideological tensions undermined GAIPO, with many of its members dropping out, frustrated by UWF

organizers' unwillingness to focus on self-help and business development.  By 2019, GAIPO had

dwindled to a few members, and had ceased to provide UWF with significant grassroots

support.

Nor could UWF-affiliated organizers find existing organizations or networks of activists

in Austin with whom to collaborate.  Organizers perceived no basis for collaboration with the

neighborhood's many community development and self-help groups, given their rejection of

electoral politics, indifference or hostility to most of UWF's policy agenda, and close

relationships to UWF's political enemies (otherwise, they seemed like a great fit).  In 2018, UWF

organizers and GAIPO briefly worked with the citywide group #NoCopAcademy.  Although they

formed to oppose a new police training facility in Austin, and had a grassroots following in other

neighborhoods, #NoCopAcademy did not have a grassroots base in Austin, and thus could not

provide UWF with a base, or even with access to local populations.  UWF's organizers did recruit

some members of Chicago Teachers Union who resided in Austin.  Aside from these exceptions,

UWF organizers could neither ally with existing organizations nor recruit via existing networks.

Instead, they had to rely on door-to-door canvassing and flyering public spaces to recruit

individual residents.

One unresolved puzzle was the absence of working-class or lower-class residents from

GAIPO.  Chapter 4 explained that GAIPO's membership was almost entirely middle-class.  This

may be an artifact of the canvassing strategy of GAIPO's organizers, which filtered according to

political engagement (which is correlated with class), and focused on segments of the

neighborhood in which existing GAIPO members lived (reproducing an initial middle-class bias).

I was not able to ascertain if, as hypothesized, lower-classes have been influenced by their

experiences in service provider non-profits, or if other factors impeded lower-class participation.

It's not clear if the ideological and material commitments observed among Austin residents would have been similar and similarly common among working- and lower-class residents.

*Albany Park*

Diverging from national trends, Albany Park contains several groups committed to militant strategies and radical policy agendas, and mostly financially independent of the neoliberal regime and philanthropic foundations.  Most of these organizations focus on affordable housing and the protection of undocumented people.  Centro Autonomo, an NGO which has achieved financial self-sufficiency through an ingenious funding scheme, has integrated service provision with grassroots organizing and consciousness-raising.  It conducts grassroots outreach to low-income homeowners and tenants, and has mobilized them in grassroots lobbying, and militant resistance to evictions and foreclosures.  The Autonomous Tenants Union, a group that sustains financial independence mostly by keeping low costs, has organized tenant unions in several buildings around Albany Park.  Although their presence in the neighborhood is more episodic, the citywide grassroots groups Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign and Communities Organized Against Foreclosure and Eviction have been active in Albany Park, organizing residents and leading direct actions against foreclosures and evictions.  The citywide organization, Organized Communities Against Deportation, along with the aforementioned ATU and Central Autonomo, organize Albany Park residents to assist undocumented people in evading Immigration and Customs Enforcement.  A theatre arts organization (which, unlike the other groups listed, is financially dependent on foundation grants) has worked with all of the aforementioned militant groups to produce well-publicized plays about housing and immigration issues.

Just as striking was the absence of market-oriented community development

organizations rooted in Latinx immigrant populations.  While there were two community

development groups in the neighborhood, they appeared to have few ties to local immigrant

populations.  I found no actors in the neighborhood who articulated market-oriented

development as a form of racial empowerment or expression of authentic racial culture.  This is

particularly puzzling given that Albany Park's Latinx community contains many middle-class

homeowners, the demographic which furnishes most community development activists in other

neighborhoods (including Austin).

A group of predominantly white, college educated, left-leaning activists also resided in

Albany Park, recent transplants to the neighborhood.  I will discuss where these activists came

from and how they sorted into the neighborhood in a subsequent section.  For now, I will just

note that the presence of these activists enabled a highly successful grassroots organizing

project in the neighborhood.  These activists formed Working Families of the 33rd Ward (WF33)

group in 2015.  WF33 functioned as a highly effective cadre, launching strategically sophisticated

outreach campaigns in the neighborhood, and building relationships with other local activists.

WF33's attempts to organize a popular base for a socialist electoral project were greatly

facilitated by the aforementioned groups in Albany Park, especially Autonomous Tenants Union,

Centro Autonomo, the Albany Park Theatre Project, and Organized Communities Against

Deportation.  As WF33 launched its 2019 election campaign, it ran on precisely the issues which

local groups had been working on, using discourses similar to those which local groups had been

disseminating for years.  More abstractly, WF33 may have associated its own identity with that

of the local groups, who appear to have had strong affective bonds with their memberships and

bases.  I was not able to determine the level of impact of these strategies, but there is

suggestive evidence that WF33 organizers found it easier to appeal to local residents because the latter's perspectives had been shaped by the local organizations.

WF33 also collaborated directly with these local groups, with benefits for their organizing project.  WF33 collaborated with these organizations in the latter's issue-based work on affordable housing and protection of undocumented people.  To an extent I was not able to precisely determine, WF33 accessed the already constituted grassroots bases and networks of those local groups, developing relationships with them, mobilizing many of them as volunteers (especially during the election campaign).   WF33 also gained access to important public institutions in the ward as members of issue-focused coalitions with the ward's other grassroots groups.

## 2. The creation of neighborhood-level factors

As past work (reviewed in Chapter 1) suggests, neoliberal federal policies, rising influence of neoliberal ideas on foundation programming, and economic restructuring, directly and indirectly produced the neighborhood-level institutions described above.  In Austin, the field of neighborhood-level institutions was shaped by opportunities and pressures to provide services, generated by devolutionary federal policy and immiseration associated with economic restructuring, respectively, and opportunities to participate in the real estate redevelopment market, coordinated by Chicago's neoliberal regime (which was itself constitutively shaped by federal neoliberal policies and economic restructuring).  Austin's organizations were also shaped by longer-running trends in philanthropy, encouraging self-help activism and a "racial uplift" perspective.  The Austin case thus concurs with past work that the policy changes and institutional developments associated with neoliberalization (along with other factors) have

profoundly shaped fields of neighborhood-level activism, which mediate possibilities for organizing.

The Albany Park case shows how neighborhood institutions and activists can be unaffected by those national developments. The case suggests (perhaps tautologically) that organizations who have been less subjected to the channeling pressures of opportunity structures, and who have had greater access to radical visions and critiques of capitalism or neoliberalism, may maintain the militant strategies and radical goals which have been eliminated from most neighborhoods by the aforementioned national developments.

Specifically, I argue that recently arrived immigrant activists may be "outside" these structures. First, these activists have not been subjected to the aforementioned channeling pressures for as long as activists in other neighborhoods. The opportunity structures created by devolutionary federal policy, foundation programs, and the real estate development industry, shape activists' decision-making over time. Activists who have arrived in the United States recently may not yet have been pressured to tailor their work to these opportunities. Second, recently arrived activists may have developed ideologies in contexts outside U.S. political culture. I found suggestive evidence that the activists in Albany Park developed radical, anti-neoliberal ideas in experiences in their countries of origin and in transnational activist networks. I argue that this insulation from channeling and access to radical ideas help explain the independence, militancy, and radical goals, of Albany Park's neighborhood organizations.

I also found that radical, anti-neoliberal neighborhood activism can be produced by the expansion of the left at the city and national scales. Left-leaning political groups, unions, academic institutions, and other nodes produce people with left ideas. As a citywide milieu of such institutions has expanded and condensed around certain ideas in Chicago since the early

2010s, it has produced a growing population of activists committed to those ideas.  These

activists appear to sort into neighborhoods as residential consumers, perhaps tending toward

neighborhoods in the early stages of gentrification.  In the Albany Park Case, activists produced

in this case formed WF33.  This can be seen as another in which the terrain for neighborhood

organizing depends on developments at higher scales of the polity:  just as barriers to

neighborhood organizing are created by supra-neighborhood factors, so opportunities for

neighborhood organizing are created by developments at the scale of the city and nation.

The independence of activists from distributive relationships with neoliberal regimes

and neoliberal modes of accumulation can also be function of contingent factors.  In some

neighborhoods of Chicago, political elites have proactively incorporated recently arrived

populations into community development programs, and articulated community development

as racial or immigrant empowerment.  This has not occurred in Albany Park, seemingly due to

the strategic choices of Albany Park's regime-aligned aldermen.  The financial independence of

Centro Autonomo should also be seen as a contingent, rather than systematic factor.  CA's

ingenuous "study abroad" program has allowed them to fund grassroots organizing and service

provision at a significant scale without relying on foundation or government grants.

*Austin*

Reviewing secondary literature, I show that the same factors which caused the decline

of militant neighborhood organizing since the early 1970s generally eliminated Austin's militant

groups.  In Austin, as in other neighborhoods, federal policy, economic restructuring, and the

interventions of urban governments gradually narrowed what had been a diverse field of

activism.  A wave of Alinskyite groups, formed in the 1960s and 1970s, converted to service

provision in the 1970s and 1980s, pulled by opportunities to run federal service programs, and

pushed by the mounting service demands from a population increasingly impoverished by deindustrialization.  A set of racial justice organizations formed by street gangs on Chicago's West Side, combining entrepreneurship with welfare recipient and tenant organizing were destroyed by state repression.

I also suggested that the prevalence of self-help activism in contemporary Austin is explained by white philanthropists' and conservative civil rights organizations' attempts to cultivate such activism since at least the Reconstruction era.  I briefly reviewed secondary literature on the long history of "racial uplift" initiatives, which defined Black Americans' problems as the result of maladaptive cultures, and attempted to inculcate middle-class values via self-help projects.  I noted the attempts of the Urban League and others to organize block clubs, embodying this uplift vision, in Black neighborhoods following the Great Migration.  I noted the close resemblance of the discourses, practices, and organizational forms of contemporary self-help activists with these historical initiatives.  This resemblance suggests that contemporary activists are steeped in this long-running tradition.

I could not obtain detailed information about the history of community development in Austin.  However, I presented suggestive evidence that Austin's activists took up community development in response to development opportunities, presented by city programs and by the thriving neighborhood redevelopment industry.  The two leading community development groups (AAABNA and WHA) did not begin as community development organizations, but as service groups (providing technical assistance to businesses and social services, respectively).  It appears that they engaged in community development by way of the Emanuel administration's Retail Thrive program—a program providing grants to businesses in target areas.  A key activist at AAABNA orchestrated inclusion of a commercial corridor in Austin in the Thrive program in

2017.  Now, most of AAABNA's and WHA's development work is in this corridor, which is now covered by two city development programs.  At the least, whether or not these opportunities inspired activists' interest in development, they helped to crystalize and organize that interest.

More generally, I showed that the self-help and development organizations are well-funded by foundations and city government.  Whether or not they created these forms of activism, foundations and Chicago's neoliberal regime have sustained them.  In this, Austin's neighborhood activism resembles that evolving since the late 1960s in other neighborhoods.

*Albany Park*

Albany Park's institutions and political culture have been shaped by its position as a "point of entry" neighborhood for immigrants.  As of 2018, 44% of Albany Park's population was foreign born, and an additional 40% were the first generation of their families to be born in the U.S.  In the other neighborhoods comprising the 33rd Ward, just under one third of residents are foreign-born.

This fact has at least two consequences for the development of Albany Park's activist milieu.  First, recently arriving immigrants have brought radical ideas from the relatively robust radical milieus in their countries of origin, and through their networks with radical activists and movements in those countries.  The founders of Centro Autonomo, for example, include an activist with roots in the Zapatista movement, and in a radical, transnational, anti-colonial organization from the 1960s.  Albany Park's activists continue to participate in transnational networks, exchanging ideas with anti-capitalist housing organizers in Mexico City, the Zapatista movement.  Just as European immigrants brought radical critiques of capitalism and ideas and strategies to the U.S. labor movement in the 1930s, Albany Park's Latinx immigrants have incorporated these radical ideas into local community organizations.

Albany Park's organizations have succeeded in creating financial niches independent of city government and philanthropic foundations.  Most notably, Centro Autonomo has achieved financial independence, while operating at a large scale (relative to other neighborhood-based non-profits), through its study abroad program.  This could be seen as a contingent factor, enabled by CA leaders' extraordinary ingenuity and transnational networks.  It should also be noted that this program may not be expandable or replicable.  It requires accreditation by mainstream universities (and may stretch the limits of 501c3's disbarment from partisan politics), making it vulnerable to political attacks.[853]  And if such programs were replicated to the point that significant numbers of community-based organizations obtained independence from foundations and governments, or if CA expanded to the point that it was politically potent, political attacks would seem likely.

In Chapter 6, I speculated that the relatively recent arrival of activists may be one explanation for the lack of grassroots pro-development activism.  For some Black activists, the articulation of development as a form of racial empowerment, defense, and uplift was based on a longer-developing set of ideas that Black entrepreneurship more generally represented such collective racial goals.  Some commentators argue that this latter tradition evolved through interactions between upwardly mobile and usually middle-class Black Americans and White elites since at least Emancipation, and others argue that this tradition was influenced by a hegemonic capitalist culture in the U.S.[854]  It is possible that recently arrived immigrant populations, such as those in Albany Park, have not the types of experiences and interactions

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[853] Mainstream universities (who provide the students capable of paying 5 figure tuition) are likely more susceptible to political pressure, and could be pressured not to accredit an organization seen as radical and militant.
The radical political curriculum of CA's study abroad program, and direct links with militant movements, might violate the prohibition against 501c3's involvement in partisan politics.  However, loss of 501c3 status might not matter to CA, given their non-reliance on grants and charitable contributions.
[854] Hill and Rabig, 2012:  16-19; Dawson (2001:  29-31) describes this as among the "dynamics of interracial discourse" shaping racial ideologies in the 19th and 20th centuries.

which would organically produce a doctrine of racial empowerment focused on capitalist entrepreneurship.

The absence of grassroots pro-development racial justice activism in Albany Park is also explained by contingent ward-level political factors. In some neighborhoods of Chicago, political elites have proactively fostered race-conscious, pro-development, grassroots activism (perhaps jumpstarting such an activist tradition). The recent political leadership in Albany Park—Dick and Deb Mell (aldermen from 1976-2013 and 2013 to 2019, respectively)—appears not to have perceived a need to do so. The Mells recognized a need to incorporate the growing Latinx population into their electoral coalition. But they did so by providing public jobs and contracts, and giving local leaders prominent positions in the administration. They did not attempt to articulate the ward's redevelopment as a form of racial or ethnic empowerment or expression of authentic cultures, or cultivate grassroots Latinx involvement in redevelopment, who could so articulate it. Moreover, the Emanuel administration's targeted community development programs, which have solidified pro-development constituencies in Austin and other West- and South Side neighborhoods, have not included Albany Park.

*Expansion of Chicago's left milieu and the terrain for organizing*

Finally, I found that the terrain for grassroots organizing has been shaped by the city-wide and national growth of populations committed to left ideas, interacting with the dynamics of gentrification. The expansion of Chicago's left milieu since the early 2010s produced a population of left-leaning activists, committed to the particular set of left discourses elaborated within that milieu. National political developments since 2015 generated additional interest in socialist politics and activism in Chicago, as they did elsewhere. Many of these two populations

of activists sorted into Albany Park as consumers of residential space, pursuing neighborhood features typical of neighborhoods in the early stages of gentrification.

In Chapter 3, I traced the gradual expansion of Chicago's progressive-left milieu—networks of left-leaning and/or progressive labor unions, community organizations, academic institutions, media outlets, social movements, and social networks—since the early 2010s. Through a series of mobilizations, catalyzed by economic crises, and by successful episodes of resistance, the milieu expanded and produced shared discourses, including critiques of neoliberalism and capitalism, visions of change, and concrete policy agendas.

In Chapter 5, I show that almost all of the core members of Albany Park's radical electoral organization, Working Families of the 33rd Ward, have ties to this milieu. They worked as journalists or academics in left-leaning institutions, were members of the Chicago Teachers Union or Service Employees International Union Healthcare Illinois and Indiana, or had participated in leftist movements. Chapter 5 argues that these experiences were formative for the activists, profoundly shaping their views on strategy and their social visions.

The expansion of WF33's formal membership since 2017 has mostly been driven by incorporation of members of the nearby branch of the Chicago chapter of Democratic Socialists of America. Chapter 5 presented interview data that these DSA and WF33 members were part of the national wave of popular interest in socialism since 2016. Like the relatively politically inexperienced people who flowed into DSA chapters elsewhere, these DSA and WF33 members were interested in socialism by the 2016 presidential campaign of Bernie Sanders and the 2018 Congressional campaign of Alexandria Orcasio-Cortez, and were galvanized by the campaign and presidency of Donald Trump.

Albany Park's status as a gentrifying neighborhood also explains the presence of these leftist activists in Albany Park.  In Chapter 5, I reported interview data that WF33's activists moved into Albany Park as consumers of residential space, drawn by the neighborhood's combination of affordability, racial and cultural diversity, and relatively upscale amenities.  This combination of features is typical of neighborhoods in early stages of reinvestment.

This may reflects a generalizable fact about the spatial distribution of a particular kind of left-leaning activists, geographically mobile by virtue of their education and class, and what might be called "cosmopolitanism" (i.e., a lack of deep social ties to a particular neighborhood in their city of residence).  These activists may tend to have a particular consumer profile, valuing diversity, relative affordability, and attractive options for entertainment and consumption.  If so, they will tend to sort into gentrifying neighborhoods.

*Other influences on the terrain for neighborhood organizing*

In Chapter 1, I discussed the possibility that the primary explanatory factors in this study—the aforementioned changes in urban and neighborhood institutions, and corresponding development and diffusion of neoliberal racial justice praxis—shape the possibilities for neighborhood organizing alongside other ideological and material factors.  The Austin case study suggests that the primary factors of interest do act concurrently with longer-running cultural beliefs about racial uplift and self-help.  These beliefs powerfully shaped Austin residents' conceptions of collective interest and political possibility.  These factors are complementary, not competing explanations, jointly producing the terrain for organizing.  It is possible that possibilities for grassroots organizing are overdetermined by the complex, multifaceted neoliberal turn, and the neoliberal ideologies diffused by this turn, and by earlier, compatible cultural and institutional structures.

Of course, such beliefs long predate neoliberalization, traceable through a "politics of respectability" in the Reconstruction era. While these ideas are not integral to neoliberalism, they have been integrated into it. In their assignment of responsibility for neighborhood conditions to residents rather than the state or corporations, these beliefs are readily compatible with neoliberal policies of state retrenchment. Moreover, these beliefs were historically cultivated by pro-capitalist actors, and more recently have been reproduced by programs of neoliberal governments and neoliberal philanthropic foundations. The articulation of neoliberal programs of state withdrawal from troubled neighborhoods and market-oriented community development with older praxes of collective self-help typify the historically specific syntheses of neoliberal and other praxes which characterize all "actually existing neoliberalisms."[855]

## Racial and class politics in Chicago's left

The Austin and Albany Park case studies, and the examination of the citywide United Working Families coalition in Chapter 3, illustrate the complex relationship of racial and class politics for contemporary left formations. The case studies clarify the barriers to a strategy of articulating a class program within racial justice discourses. They also indicate potential tensions with left formations, including divergent understandings of the relationship between racial and class justice, and tensions between foregrounding racial justice and organizing White working- and lower-classes

Chapter 3 described UWF's strategy of articulating a class justice program in widely resonant discourses on racial justice. The experiences of organizing in Austin indicate the barriers to this strategy. Definitions of racial interest and justice as community development,

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[855] Brenner and Theodore, 2002: 349.

unity, and a strong social fabric are embedded in local institutions and quotidian practices, and appear to be common sense for many residents. For many these understandings of racial interest and justice are reinforced (or were encouraged) by material investments in self-help and development projects. It's possible that these material commitments and understandings are more common among middle-classes, and lower-class minority populations would be more receptive to UWF's articulation of racial justice.

UWF appears to be more successful in developing a leadership cadre who views class justice as integral to racial justice. Multiple UWF leaders described UWF's training programs as having this function. The programs draw activists rooted in neighborhood-based social movements and projects, some of whom are steeped in Black and Latinx Nationalist traditions. And the training programs include instruction in which trainees learn UWF's critical analysis of neoliberal political economy. Trainees participate in UWF's well-funded electoral and lobbying projects, deepening their relationship to the left formation. While I do not have data needed to assess impacts on participants' outlooks, these training programs may have the potential to produce at a significant scale racial justice activists committed to a left class analysis.

I also found divergent, and perhaps internally contradictory, ways of thinking about race within the UWF formations. In UWF, I observed two different understandings of racial justice, although the stakes of this difference appeared to be small. One tendency sees a redistributive economic program as the core of racial justice. For proponents of this tendency, political leadership of people of color and the articulation of the coalition's project in racial justice discourses indigenous to minority communities are strategic necessities, not integral parts of an emancipatory project. Another tendency sees economic justice and political self-determination as essential to a racial justice. Proponents of this tendency see an ethical imperative for the

aforementioned political practices, and advocate policies to enhance democratic control of

institutions.  Given that the two camps share an economic justice agenda, and differ only in

whether they see a set of race-conscious political practices and policies as politically expedient

or substantively important, this difference appears not to cause significant conflicts within the

coalition.  Both tendencies faced the strategic problem of building a movement to advance

economic justice demands among minority populations committed to different understandings

of racial justice which erase class inequality.

The coalition's thinking and practice on racial justice may have more significant

consequence for the coalition's relationship to the White working- and lower-classes.  First, the

coalition's articulation of class programs in racial justice language could make it more difficult to

appeal to white working-classes.  Some in the coalition would vehemently assert that an ethical

commitment to racial justice practices should outweigh any concern with alienating Whites, and

that any such alienation would be driven by racism.  One informant also reported that the

coalition could form a winning majority with relatively little support from the White working-

class, which is a relatively small percentage of Chicago's electorate.  Unlike left formations in

other locales, UWF does need to win both minority populations committed to race-conscious

programs and White populations alienated by them.

I found suggestive evidence that members' thinking about the relationship of race and

class shapes their own propensity to organize the White working- and lower-classes.  I could not

obtain any evidence about UWF members' thinking with respect to organizing the white-

working-classes, although 4 of the 5 grassroots base-building projects launched by UWF in 2018

(as opposed to the post-2015 wave which were launched independently and supported by UWF)

were in predominantly Black and Latinx neighborhoods.

However, I did find that WF33 chose to target Latinx populations, directing almost all of their canvassing and issue-based outreach to Latinx sections of the ward, despite the presence of a thousands of White working-class residents.  This choice may have been caused by a perceived opportunity to appeal to Latinx populations on the basis of identity as well as on a substantive program.   It also may have been caused by some WF33 members' tendency to elide the White working-classes in their analysis of capitalism.  Most members critique capitalist exploitation and neoliberal political economy in ways that would support an inter-racial working- and lower class movement.  They also perceive distinctive experiences of Black and Latinx lower-classes under capitalism.  At times, they talk about Black and Latinx particularity in ways that erases the exploitation of White working- and lower-classes, substituting the former's particular experiences for exploitation in general.  I could not obtain enough data to determine if this tendency is an unintentional conceptual slippage, or reflects a belief (like that of the UWF leaders mentioned above) that racial minority segments of the working- and lower-classes ought to have a distinctive status as the subject or leadership of an emancipatory project.

## 3. Theoretical Implications

### Ideological formation, hegemony, and counter-hegemony at the neighborhood level

This section builds on the case studies to argue two related theoretical points.  First, I argue that neighborhoods, and specifically the activist milieus in neighborhoods, are key sites at which people acquire ideologies and political commitments.  Second, I argue that neighborhood institutions can be key mechanisms through which people are incorporated into dominant cultures and regimes, or key mechanisms for building counter-hegemonic movements.

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*The neighborhood as a key site of ideological formation*

The dissertation suggests that the urban neighborhood is one key site at which people form ideologies and political commitments. In Austin and Albany Park, institutionalized collective action at the neighborhood-level reproduces and elaborates perspectives on social issues, collective interests, and other political questions, and facilitates residents' adoption of particular economic practices. I found that people in both neighborhoods developed ideologies through participation in or exposure to this neighborhood activism, and acquired material investments in distributive regimes and modes of accumulation via these nodes.

The high level of activity at the neighborhood-level can be explained by four factors. First, in Chicago, ward-level governing institutions can deploy institutional and financial resources to support ward-level collective action (as in Ald. Mitts' support for Austin's block clubs and community development organizations).[856] Second, especially since the 1990s, and the ascendance of the Comprehensive Community Initiative paradigm (see Chapter 1), philanthropic foundations have prioritized projects at the neighborhood-scale.[857] These factors help ensure resources are available for actors willing to work at the ward- or neighborhood scale. Third, activist groups crystalize at the neighborhood-level as people attempt to address problems where they experience them. Block clubs formed in Austin to improve deteriorated public spaces, and a "defense network" formed in Albany Park to protect the neighborhood's undocumented people from ICE raids, for example. Finally, the neighborhood is a common sense idea, continually referenced, implicitly and explicitly, in public policy, media, and everyday discourse. People reflexively understand their own identity as neighborhood residents.

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[856] Although Chicago's wards cut across official neighborhood boundaries, they are similarly scaled spatial units, and both connote residential contexts.
[857] The CCI paradigm seeks to coordinate stakeholders to and generate and implement a neighborhood-wide plan for integrated service provision and economic development (Stoutland, 1999; Betancur et al, 2015). Betancur et al (2015) note that CCIs were the dominant paradigm in foundation-funded community development by the late 1990s.

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I found that these neighborhood-level civic, political, and economic activist organizations are important nodes of ideological reproduction. These organizations engage in collective action on salient social issues, and in the course of their action they construct accounts of those issues, defining their causes, meaning, importance, and solutions. The activists also identify themselves, their organizations, and their work, within discourses about community, race, and class, in which the activists are steeped. In so doing, they elaborate definitions collective interest, racial interest and racial justice, and other constructs.

While these organizations are clearly not the only influence on people's ideologies, I found that they are importance influences, in part because of their embeddedness in local social contexts. An earlier section of this chapter enumerated the many ways that neighborhood organizations diffuse ideologies among residents:

- Many have built large grassroots bases and followings in the neighborhood, with whom they communicate regularly, in the context of the organization's programs and events.

- Many have participatory projects, in which neighborhood residents can personally enact the organization's vision.

- Activists' projects are powerful symbols of organization's ideologies, which neighborhood residents may encounter in daily life.

- Some neighborhood organizations have broad and deep social networks in the neighborhood, including ties to churches and other institutions with large grassroots memberships, and diffuse their discourses via these networks.

- Some organizations interact with people in affectively-laden aspects of life, and thus become deeply trusted entities.

*The neighborhood as a site of incorporation into dominant formations and organization of counter-hegemony*

In a passage of his Prison Notebooks, Antonio Gramsci describes the political function of the "intellectuals" of subordinate classes—the politicians, civic leaders, and functionaries embedded in the social life of the working-classes, who discursively construct the class's identity, interests, possibilities, and other meanings.[858]  Gramsci observes that the working-class intellectuals in his contemporary Italy had been incorporated into the dominant political coalition.  The working-class intellectuals' discursive production had become "a subordinate moment of the vaster directive function" of the intellectuals of the dominant group.[859]  That is, while they continued to articulate working-class interests and identity, they did so within the ideological frameworks of the dominant group.

Neighborhood-based organizations can be seen as performing the same articulatory functions for neighborhood residents.  This dissertation shows that the programs and discourses of many neighborhood-based groups (such as those of Austin) have been profoundly shaped by dominant neoliberal formations, at the federal and urban levels, and the neoliberal real estate development economy.  Inasmuch, their work constructing social problems, collective interests, and other elements must be seen as "a moment in the vaster directive function" of a dominant formation, committed to neoliberalization:  they function to reproduce and diffuse (and perhaps innovate and elaborate) the dominant group's discourses and practices.

Because neighborhood institutions are effective at reproducing and diffusing ideas and incorporating residents into modes of practice, they are a key site of the construction of hegemony.  For example, in Austin, the field of community development activism was a key site of the construction of neoliberal subjects.  The programs of neighborhood-based institutions

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[858] Gramsci, 1977:  1.  In Gramsci's words, the intellectuals give the class "homogeneity and an awareness of its own function."
[859] Ibid, 99.

(built around city and foundation programs) facilitate neighborhood residents' entry into the neoliberal economy, as property owners conscious of rising values; as stewards of public spaces preparing the ground for investment; as investors, participating in "investment clubs" or sell-offs of city property; or as entrepreneurs, hoping to serve a revitalizing market.  It is from these vantage points, constituted within the neoliberal real estate redevelopment system, that neighborhood residents understand economics and politics.

Neighborhood organizations may be influenced by political formations and actors opposed to the dominant formation.  In Albany Park, for example, organizations were relatively independent of the neoliberal regime, and drew radical, anti-neoliberal ideas from transnational activist networks.  As Austin's organizations were effective mechanisms of hegemonic incorporation, Albany Park's were effective at counter-hegemonic organizing.  Embedded in a local social networks and affectively bonded with local populations, Albany Park's NGOs effectively disseminated critical perspectives on the affordable housing crisis, and left-leaning notions of neighborhood residents' economic and social rights.

*The study of the political functions of neighborhoods in political science*

These arguments—that neighborhoods are key sites of ideological formation, and thus key sites of incorporation into dominant formations, or key sites of counterhegemonic mobilization—differ from most recent empirical work on neighborhoods in political science.  Recent work in racial politics considers different aspects of neighborhoods, and studies psychological rather than ideological mechanisms of influence.  Research on social movements recognizes neighborhoods as a site of ideological formation, but has not considered the possibility of neighborhoods as a site of hegemonic incorporation.  The perspective advanced in this dissertation is similar to one advanced most recently by Ira Katznelson, in his studies of class formation in 19th Century English and American cities.

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Ira Katznelson (1982, 1994) argues that 1) the urban neighborhood is a crucial site of class formation, and 2)the substance of class identities depends on the degree to which neighborhood-level cultures and institutions are independent of dominant political formations. In the U.S., urban machines (part of the national Democratic party) were "enmeshed in the organizational life of neighborhoods—their gangs, firehouses, secret societies, saloons…genuinely working-class institutions, rooted deeply in the local institutions and cultural life."[860] These neighborhood-level formations organized populations around demands for patronage and symbolic representation, on the basis of ethnic, territorial and religious identities. In England, class-based franchise restrictions left no dominant formations no incentive to organize working-class support, and raised the salience of class identities for the excluded classes. A class-conscious political culture thus developed in working-class neighborhoods. Neighborhood spaces, and their rich organizational milieus, were important sites for the development of critiques and visions which informed the Chartist movement.[861]

**Neighborhoods and racial politics**

Recent work in racial politics asks what seems like a similar question to this dissertation's: "how [do] different neighborhoods produce political environments, which, in turn, structure African American [and Latinx] political choice"?[862] But, according to my literature review, none of this work studies how local institutions (or any other factors) shape neighborhood residents' ideologies, or otherwise considers the effects of neighborhood contexts on positions on neoliberalism and associated economic issues.

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[860] Katznelson, 1982: 56.
[861] Katznelson, 1994: 151. In Katznelson's words, movements thrived due to "the concentration of workers in autonomous working-class communities, where, free from the direct supervision of their employers or the state, they could create such institutions as reading rooms, and working men's clubs and societies. The organized working-class movement utilized the semi-free space of the neighbourhoods to meet (in the pubs, friendly societies, and other venues), to proselytize, to organize."
[862] Cohen and Dawson, 1993.

Examining recent studies on neighborhoods in three top journals of racial politics, I find

recent work differs from this dissertation in three respects.  First, recent studies do not consider

the embedding of discourses in quotidian life and the incorporation into distributive

relationships with regimes and neoliberal modes of accumulation.  Rather, the studies take as

explanatory variables aspects of neighborhood structure such as poverty rates, "family

contexts" (i.e., number of single and married households, single- and dual-parent households,

etc., educational attainment, segregation, and social isolation.[863]  Relatedly, they see as key

mechanisms perceptions of collective efficacy, perceptions of inter- or intra-group

competition.[864]  Second, these studies do not consider political views or behavior with respect to

contemporary economic conflict, or any other particular issue or conflict.  Nor does it consider

particular modes of activism.  Rather, it seeks to explain propensity toward political behavior in

general, measuring political interest, electoral participation, and organizational participation.[865]

**Neighborhoods in the study of social movements**

Within social movement studies, much work analyzes how locally embedded institutions

and social networks facilitate mobilization; and other studies examine mechanisms of elite

influence over movements.  But I could find no work which consider the ways that elites

continually shape local institutions and cultures, with effects on movement strategies and goals.

Recent work clarifies the ways that local structures enable mobilization.  In a widely

cited chapter, McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1988) argue that social and organizational networks

embedded among within subordinate populations, which they refer to as a "micro-mobilization

context," enable collective action by disseminating information and aggregating resources.[866]

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[863] Alex-Assensoh and Assensoh, 2001; Shaw, Foster, Combs, 2019; O'Brien, Bareto, Sanchez, 2019
[864] Carey Jr. et al, 2013; O'Brien, Bareto, Sanchez, 2019
[865] Newman, Velez, Pearson-Merkowitz, 2016; Nesbit, Paarlberg, and Compton, 2019
[866] McAdam, McCarthy, Zald, 1988; McAdam, 1982, talked about local networks in similar terms.

Later studies, referring to these locally embedded structures as "social movement communities," stress their role in nurturing "oppositional consciousness," understandings of extent social arrangements, identities, and other elements which inspire mobilization.[867] Taylor and Whittier (1992) argue that social movement communities, defined as institutions and spaces relatively insulated from dominant cultures, enable the "withdrawal from the values…of the dominant, oppressive society and the creation of new self-affirming values."[868]

The argument that activists must develop institutions and spaces relatively autonomous of dominant groups and culture, in order to elaborate a critique and oppositional identity, implicitly acknowledges that, in general, people are immersed in a dominant culture. However, all of the work on "micro-mobilization contexts," "social movement communities," and cognate concepts focuses on their potential to facilitate mobilization and/or counterhegemony, and examines historical cases in which they performed this function. I could find no acknowledgment that, in the words of Gramsci, "the siege is a reciprocal one."[869] That is, within the research program on the relationship of social movements and local environments, there appears to be no interest in understanding elites' proactive efforts to colonize relatively autonomous spaces and domesticate oppositional cultures.

Studies of elite influence on social movements don't consider the ongoing diffusion of dominant cultures and incorporation of subordinate groups in via locally embedded institutions. Scholars working in the "political process" framework argue that elites shape movements by selectively opening the political system to certain types of claims. These opportunity structures determine movement impact, and may determine movement orientation, insofar as activists

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[867] Staggenborg, 1998. Taylor and Whittier, 1992.

[868] Taylor and Whittier, 1992: 111. While they do not explicitly reference Nancy Fraser's concept of counter-publics Taylor and Whittier accord social movement communities a very similar function to counter-publics, and state they are organized around "counter-institutions."

[869] Gramsci, 1977: 239.

tailor their demands to these opportunities.  The "resource mobilization" perspective suggests

that elites enable movement formation by providing marginalized groups the resources needed

to sustain mobilization.  Other studies examine elite cooptation and channeling of movements,

but see them either as the effects of fixed structures, or as short-term responses during

episodes of contention (and register only the short-term effects of such interventions).  I could

find no studies which examine long-term processes through which elites and dominant

formations shape local institutions and cultures, indirectly influencing or negating movements.

As originally formulated, Charles Tilly's concept of "repertoires of contention" does

address the concerns of this dissertation.  Tilly (1977) recognized that elements of dominant

discourses, for example about political legitimacy and possibility, come to be embedded in the

scripts which inform subordinate groups' demands and strategies.  However, more recent work

using the "repertoire" concept does not elucidate elite influence on movements' substantive

goals, focusing almost entirely on movements' selection of tactics.  Moreover, work on the

evolution of repertoires examines sees short-term episodes of contention as the key drivers of

change, and does not consider long-term processes of incorporation and domestication which,

although initiated during moments of contention, continue long afterwards.

## Neoliberalization and the negation of resistance

This dissertation showed that institutional developments associated with the neoliberal

turn have created institutions and patterns of activism in urban neighborhoods which impede

organizing against neoliberalization.  This finding illustrates the long-running argument in

political theory that ascendant political projects may shape popular consciousness and

reconstitute material interests in ways that generate popular consent to that project.  The

finding also supports and extends a more recent body of scholarship on the ways that

neoliberalization constrains and negates political contention.

Chapter 1 reviewed Antonio Gramsci's account of how policy and institutional reforms

can insert a ascendant political formation's ideas and concepts into the discourses and practices

comprising daily life.  Almost by definition, an ascendant formation enacts its social vision in

public policies and institutional reforms.  These reforms beget concrete programs and

institutional practices, carried out in quotidian social, economic, and political life.  In a more

complex line of thought, Gramsci also argues that the dominant formation's ideas will tend to be

absorbed into the doctrines and concrete programs and practices of important institutions in

civil society, independent of the state, but steeped in the same ideological currents.

As people encounter the dominant group's ideas, embedded in discourses and

practices, they internalize those ideas.  As explained in Chapter 1, Gramsci argues that

discourses embodying the dominant group's core concepts and ideas come to saturate everyday

life.  People who are steeped in this social context inevitably absorb those ideas and concepts,

especially those hidden in the discourse as implicit premises.  While Althusser has a different

conception of ideological change, which cannot easily account for the ideological effects of a

reform project within a capitalist system, his conception of the internalization of ideology

usefully complements Gramsci's account.[870]  In his account, people internalize ideology by

enacting the institutionalized practices in which the ideology is embodied.  In this enactment,

they come to recognize themselves, their actions, and other elements, as these are described in

the ideology.  Similarly, when people encounter discourses which address them as a particular

kind of entity, people recognize themselves as such.  As people come to think their relationship

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[870] Althusser defines ideology as the beliefs of the dominant class, which performs the function of reproducing docile labor.  In this functionalist account, it's not clear how ideologies can change substantially within a capitalist system, as I've argued occurred with the neoliberal turn.

to the world from the subject positions constituted within the ascendant formation's ideology, that formation's arrangements come to seem normal and legitimate.

The same changes may also reconstitute people's material interests, creating constituencies invested in particular arrangements.  As reforms create new modes of economic practice and new distributive regimes, people begin to produce their own material existence through these avenues.  Of course, actors who profit in the new modes of practice would defend those modes, and associated politics and political formations.  And actors who do not benefit from these modes of activity, but who have merely invested in their ability to participate in them, may also have developed a stake in their maintenance.

Wendy Brown (2003, 2005) and Stuart Hall (1988a, 1988b, 2011) described neoliberalism in this way, as shaping popular consciousness in ways that negate the potential for resistance and alternative projects.  Both begin with the observation that neoliberal ideas have been applied to policy and institutional reform projects in public and private institutions in "every domain of social life."  As these policies are implemented, neoliberal ideas are "concretely materialized through the practices of state regulation…in education, in schooling, in family policy, in the administrative apparatuses of local and central government," and in corporate, university, and other practices.[871]  These quotidian institutionalized practices encourage or require people to think of themselves, their relations, their goals, and other objects in economistic terms, as problems of maximizing return on investment.  Similarly, the rhetoric of political elites and functionaries continually addresses people as "human capital," as entrepreneurs, consumers, or "the self-reliant, self-interested, self-sufficient tax-payer."[872]

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[871] Hall, 1988:  46.
[872] Brown, 2005: 36-7; Hall, 1988:  49.

The neoliberal project also has a negative dimension. Neoliberalization removes alternative values and concepts from public life as institutions and practices which had been organized around non-market values such as democratic empowerment, solidarity, and human need are reoriented to neoliberal criteria. The result is the removal from social life of the values and concepts on which "political, moral, or subjective claims located outside capitalist rationality" had historically been founded.[873] Hall summarizes:

> Where previously social need had begun to establish its own imperatives against the laws of market forces, now questions of "value for money," the private right to dispose of one's own wealth, the equation between freedom and the free market, have become terms of trade, not just of political debate in parliament, the press, the journals', and policy circles, but in the thought and language of everyday calculation.[874]

Hall and Brown find that these changes negate the possibility for alternative projects, largely by shaping people's consciousness.[875] Relentlessly hailed as neoliberal subjects, people come to "spontaneously think their relation to the world," and to politics from the perspectives of entrepreneurs, taxpayers, "human capitals," and other figures within neoliberal discourse, and on the basis of neoliberal values. They are incapable of conceptualizing claims against the market, or democratic empowerment.[876] Even if people do not completely internalize these understandings, they lack access to alternative values and ideas, which have been removed from public life.[877]

Aside from Brown's analysis of the neoliberalization of higher education and law, neither she nor Hall attempt to specify key institutional or policy changes and their impact on

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[873] Brown, 2005: 45.

[874] Hall, 1988: 40.

Brown focuses specifically on the displacement and disarticulation of liberal democratic values and concepts, while Hall emphasizes

[875] Brown notes that neoliberalization also constrains political contention by eliminating political venues, exacerbating resource inequalities, and through other mechanisms (2005: 40).

[876] In Brown's words, the neoliberal subject "approaches everything as a market and can only think market conduct; cannot think public purposes or common problems in a distinctly political way" (2005: 39)

[877] Brown ask "from what platform would more ambitious democratic projects be launched? How would the desire for more or better democracy be kindled from the ash heap of its bourgeois form? Why would peoples want or seek democracy in the absence of even its vaporous liberal democratic instantiation? And what in democratized subjects and subjectivities would yearn for this political regime, a yearning that is neither primordial or cultured by this historical condition?" (2005: 17)

political contention, via subjectification or other mechanisms.  Other recent work has more concrete analyzed particular developments and their political impacts, contributing important insights about the barriers to resistance.

Krinsky and Simonet (2012)'s case study of the New York City parks department shows that neoliberal governance has fragmented the urban labor force, rendering labor organizing and collective action difficult.  Attempting to cut costs, control the labor process, and realize the perceived efficiencies of private management, the city government privatized the administration of some city parks, and used contingent labor in others, including people sentenced to community service, workfare participants, municipal job training program participants, and volunteers, alongside traditional municipal employees.  The reforms produced a menagerie workers, performing similar tasks, but "[r]egulated under vastly different systems, and with different "conditions of employment—or deployment."[878]  Labor unions were unable to organize workers, despite widespread discontent, because of the practical impediments and difficulty in bridging the interests of differently exploited workers.[879]

As Krinsky and Simonet analyzed the terrain for labor organizing, this dissertation was intended to elucidate how neoliberalization has shaped the terrain for neighborhood organizing. In so doing, the dissertation helps to specify which aspects of the neoliberal turn negate resistance, through what mechanisms.  The case studies identify important barriers to neighborhood organizing, in the incorporation of neighborhood residents into relationships with the neoliberal regime, and into the real estate redevelopment economy, and the diffusion of understandings of racial empowerment and interest focused on self-help and market-oriented development.  The dissertation traced these barriers to the rise of the Black neoliberal urban

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[878] Krinsky and Simonet, 2012:  33.
[879] Ibid, 38-9.

regime, the transformation of neighborhood-based racial justice activism since the 1960s, and the growth of the real estate redevelopment economy, each rooted in the neoliberal turn since the 1970s.  And the Albany Park case elucidated opportunities for organizing, amidst continuing neoliberalization.

## 4. Implications for Strategy

Organizers may simply underestimate the barriers to organizing around left and progressive projects.  Many of the recent calls to organize resistance to neoliberalization do not acknowledge the complex terrain.  They do not appear to recognize that target populations may be committed to neoliberal and neoliberal-compatible goals, and that organizers must develop strategies for engaging populations with such commitments, or focus their attention elsewhere.  This section will briefly discuss four possible strategies for organizing, given the complex terrain described above.

### Disinvestment vs. Reinvestment

Chronically disinvested neighborhoods may be less conducive to left organizing than rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods for two reasons.  First, the policy demands that working- and lower-class populations are likely to make, and left and neoliberal formations' respective abilities to address them, vary between disinvested and gentrifying neighborhoods. Disinvestment elides conflicting interests of classes, giving all an apparent interest in revitalization.  In these conditions, working- and lower-classes are apt to support market-oriented development.  Gentrification accentuates conflicting class interests, and is likely to generate working- and lower-class demands for protection from market forces, which left formations are better able than neoliberal regimes to address (given the latter's constitutive investment in abetting real estate markets).

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Second, left formations can effectively organize around a certain type of emergent crisis which 1)involves a sudden loss of valued goods, such as appears to trigger grassroots militancy, as opposed to the chronic absence of those goods, which does not; 2)involves a type of loss that is relatively easy to articulate to a left program, such as when the visible cause is a market process or market-based actor. The grassroots militancy produced by such crises can create allies on the ground for left organizers. Crises of eviction and displacement associated with gentrification fit these criteria (as do other crises) while crises related to chronic disinvestment do not.

*Working- and lower-class demands in disinvested and gentrifying neighborhoods*

Disinvestment temporarily obscures the conflicts of interests between classes with respect to redevelopment. In a state of disinvestment, all experience problems of inadequate access to consumer goods and services and deteriorating housing stock (although it's true that middle-classes are disproportionately concerned with a lack of access to capital and low property values). Revitalization appears to promise an improvement in the quality of life to all residents. In this state, there no concrete evidence that redevelopment leads to crises of affordability and displacement for lower-class population segments. Even if residents are aware that redevelopment has caused displacement in other neighborhoods, it would be possible for people with at best ambiguous relationships to the redevelopment process to imagine themselves as beneficiaries.

This may help explain the valence of community development in Austin, and the ability of community development groups to appeal to politically attentive residents across class. As noted, I found anecdotal evidence that even working-class residents of Austin were enthusiastic about market-oriented revitalization. This is likely partly the effect of civic and political leaders'

articulation of community development as universally beneficial, within widely resonant

discourses on racial justice. But the absence of concrete evidence of the problems associated

with redevelopment may have made this articulation more plausible.

In such conditions, it would be difficult for left formations to appeal to working- and

lower-classes. Because conflicts of interest remain latent, there is no material basis for left

formations to construct a class antagonism, for example portraying the interests of working- and

lower-classes as fundamentally opposed to those of developers or investors. Moreover, in the

initial stages of redevelopment, left formations' revitalization vision differs from the neoliberal

vision primarily at the level of the techniques used to spur reinvestment, rather than substantive

goals—both formations envision a revitalized commercial economy, creating jobs and growing

businesses in a virtuous cycle.[880] Without significant substantive differences between programs,

political conflicts are likely to be settled in other terms (such as symbolic appeals or patronage

relationships). In other words, when revitalization is the salient issue, UWF's usual strategy of

organizing around a clear class justice program would be difficult.

Gentrification, by contrast, accentuates conflicts of interest between classes. Some

segments profit from rising values, while others struggle with rising costs, and face the

possibility of displacement. The population segments with mixed or negative experiences,

including those who had previously embraced community development on the basis of

perceived interests, would have a clear material interest in market regulation. A left formation

may well-positioned to offer a coherent anti-displacement program, and to compellingly

articulate this class conflict. UWF, for example, has long made rent control and greatly

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[880] Left actors' difficulty to distinguish their program of revitalization from the neoliberal one are well illustrated by the attempts of UWF-affiliated elected officials on the West Side of Chicago. For example, Brandon Johnson, elected in 2018 to the Cook County Board of Commissioners with UWF backing, has attempted to win support in Austin by promising to expand the Emanuel administration's Retail Thrive program, increasing small businesses' access to city support (Karbal, 2018).

expanded public investment in affordable housing core agenda items. By contrast, neoliberal

regimes, with constitutive investments in rent-intensifying redevelopment, have a limited range

of policy options for dealing with affordability crises, none able to prevent widespread

displacement. On the issue of displacement, unlike revitalization, left formations can draw

clear, substantive contrasts between their program, and its effects on lower-income people, and

the neoliberal regime's.

To maintain a cross-class alliance amidst a crisis of affordability, neoliberal regimes must

rely on selective incorporation of lower-class actors (e.g., through patronage), and on

mystifications. As discussed at length in Chapter 1, neoliberal regimes and their neighborhood-

level allies have often attempted to legitimate redevelopment, amidst displacement, by

constructing it as a program of racial empowerment and racial authenticity. But, in gentrifying

neighborhoods, unlike disinvested neighborhoods, there is a material basis for left formations to

dispute this construction, highlighting the class contradictions.

*The right kind of crisis*

A crucial aspect of neighborhood terrain is the presence of potential allied groups,

networks, and movements. As noted, the left-leaning NGOs and activists In Albany Park greatly

facilitated WF33's base-building and electoral work. The absence of preexisting progressive or

left formations in Austin was one factor undermining UWF's organizing efforts there.

The case studies showed that crises of gentrification-induced displacement and earlier

foreclosure crises catalyzed militant grassroots mobilizations, with demands assimilable to a left

program. Whether they energized and reoriented existing organizations, or produced new

grassroots formations, these crises generated allies for left organizers. Chronic disinvestment

did not appear to have any such generative effects. Generalizing from these findings, I argue

that left formations should look for allies generated by crises which impose a sudden loss, rather than a chronic lack, and in which the role of market processes or market actors is highly visible.

The Albany Park case shows that the displacement crisis catalyzed militant grassroots activism.  While Albany Park's activists already possessed radical, anti-neoliberal ideas, the displacement crisis energized them, and encouraged organizations to converge on a common set of foci.  Most clearly, mass evictions led directly to the founding of Autonomous Tenants Union in 2015.  Widespread evictions also drew the citywide groups Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign and Communities United Against Foreclosure and Eviction to Albany Park.  While Centro Autonomo already worked on housing (and had been active in the fight against foreclosures), it continued its housing organizing in response to the eviction crisis in the 2010s. The crisis also caused Albany Park Theatre Project to engage issues of affordable housing and displacement, providing occasion for them to work with activists at the aforementioned radical organizations.  As discussed above, the presence of a highly mobilized activist milieu, condensed around the housing crisis, was a key factor facilitating WF33's base-building project.

While it occurred before the period under study, and was not discussed in Chapter 4, a foreclosure crisis in Austin catalyzed a similar form of militant grassroots activism.  In the late 2000s and early 2010s, Austin had very high rates of foreclosures.  This crisis generated a wave of housing activism, similar in form (although not in ideology) to that in Albany Park and other neighborhoods:  new groups formed, and existing non-profits (especially the South Austin Coalition Community Council) organized local residents to participate in direct actions.[881]

Even though there was no left milieu in Austin to channel discontent toward radical demands, the movement catalyzed by the foreclosure crisis spontaneously developed a focus

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[881] These groups generally did not use the anti-capitalist and socialist frames or militant tactics as Albany Park's housing movement has.  This was not covered in Chapter 4.

compatible with a left program.  Bearing out Piven and Cloward's insight that discontent

crystalizes around the most visible sources of the problem, activists mostly targeted banks who

initiated foreclosures.  They made demands for banks to refinance loans, and for government

action to aid households with underwater mortgages.

Even if these activists did not advance systemic critiques of capitalism or radical

demands, they may have been assimilable into the UWF coalition.  Their analysis, highlighting

corporate greed, and asserting claims to housing based on need, fits left formations' analysis;

and their demands for corporate and government redress of the foreclosure crisis fits UWF's

program of government regulation of corporate activity in housing markets.  The activists'

militancy may also have made them inclined to the types of base-building work formations like

UWF are attempting.

In gentrifying neighborhoods (including Albany Park), affordable housing movements,

initially galvanized by the foreclosure crisis, were sustained through the 2010s by eviction and

displacement crises.  But in Austin, the wave appears to have completely dissipated as the

foreclosure crisis passed (with hundreds of individuals and families losing their homes).  As

noted, at the time of my study (2017), Austin had almost no militant grassroots activism.  The

chronic lack of investment in Austin appears not to generate militant activism the way the

foreclosure crisis had.

*On the other hand, an eroding base…*

Of course, displacement is the departure from neighborhoods of working- and lower-

class populations.  While displacement creates opportunities for left formations to fracture

cross-class development coalitions and ally with grassroots mobilizations, it also, by definition,

erodes the left's potential base in the neighborhood.  Organizing around displacement is thus

necessarily a race against time, an attempt to build a base powerful enough to win institutional

power, and enact policies to stanch displacement, before the potential base is eliminated.  As

noted in Chapter 3, UWF leaders recognize this, and see Chicago as nearing a tipping point, at

which a populist resurgence in the city will be foreclosed by the displacement of the working-

and lower-classes.

## The role of progressive non-profits in political change

Progressive non-profits are sometimes criticized as politically ineffectual.  Groups like

Albany Park Theatre Project diffuse progressive discourses, but have no mechanism to translate

public concern into power in the policymaking or electoral spheres.  Given elevated public

concern with an issue, incumbent politicians are likely to have an advantage in any ongoing

discursive contestation over issue definition and the construction of solutions.[882]  Even the

relatively few NGOs who invest in grassroots organizing cannot connect their base-building work

to a project to build and use political power, due to restrictions on non-profits' political activity

in the tax code, and those imposed by funders.  This line of argument suggests that, even if such

groups influence culture and organize local populations, they cannot enable their constituencies

attain institutional power, and are rarely able to influence public policy.

The Albany Park case suggests that NGOs' discursive work and organizing can play a key

role in advancing policy and electoral projects—given the presence of an politically and

electorally focused institution like Working Families of the Thirty-Third Ward.  WF33 built an

electoral project around the issue-based work that APTP, Centro Autonomo, and Autonomous

Tenants Union had been doing.  WF33 mobilized as campaign volunteers and voters the

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[882] Reed (1999), for example, notes that office holders have "greater access to resources for shaping public opinion" than grassroots challengers (119).

networks and issue publics that the NGOs had built over years.  In this context, the NGOs were

part of an effective division of labor with a disciplined, electorally focused group.

As noted in Chapter 6, the interaction between WF33 and APTP raises the question of

what kinds of discourses can support a project to change policies and win control of institutions.

Does theatre, for instance, have to be intensely partisan agit-prop to advance a base-building

project?  Or can non-partisan, humanistic treatments of issues, like those in APTP's plays,

facilitate a partisan project like WF33's?  The Albany Park case study suggests that the political

impact of a cultural product is less a function of its discursive content than of the institutional

environment.  An audience moved by APTP's plays about eviction or deportation would likely be

open to a range of political actions.  It is up to partisan actors to turn this audience, sensitized to

the issue, toward their agenda.  When a powerful progressive or left organization is present in

the environment, they can compete with other actors to attach a program and political identity

to the emotionally resonant humanistic discourses.

Neighborhood-based NGOs' strong ties to local populations is even more important

given the dynamics of activist production at the city-level.  As noted, there are institutions

training socialist activists in Chicago, including academic institutions, labor unions, and

grassroots movements.  But, there appears to be a tendency for these activists to be socially

distant from the lower-classes they hope to organize.  Certainly in the Albany Park case, the

activists who formed WF33 were almost all white, college- educated, knowledge workers (even

if from working-class or precarious middle-class families), and recent transplants to Albany Park,

with no organic ties to the neighborhood's working- and lower-classes.  This may be a

systematic tendency in the left, given the number of activists formed in institutions of higher

education, to which the relatively affluent have greater access.  In Albany Park, CA, APTP, and

ATU were useful partners for WF33 because they had the strong relationships with local populations which WF33 lacked.

The Albany Park case also suggests that left formations can effectively organize in neighborhoods by building on organic progressive and anti-capitalist tendencies in the neighborhoods, and letting those tendencies shape the agenda of any emergent formation. WF33's cadre brought some of their own policy agenda, including demands related to public services and revenue. But the top priorities in WF33's issue and electoral campaigns— affordable housing and protection of undocumented people—were determined by WF33's assessment that these were the issues most salient among the neighborhood's working- and lower-classes, and among the left-leaning groups in the neighborhood. WF33 also recruited an organizer at APTP as their candidate for aldermen. In effect, WF33 helped the activists embedded in Albany Park's immigrant populations scale up their work, express their demands in the electoral sphere, and integrate their projects with a citywide progressive formation.

## Analyzing activist populations

Finally, when planning a base-building project, organizers should think in terms of systematically produced populations of activists. In any given neighborhood, organizers should ask what institutions are condensing or training activists, producing populations with particular perspectives on strategy or substantive goals. For example, organizers could look for left institutions, such as left-leaning academic centers, labor unions which invest in political training and activation of their rank-and-file, or grassroots movements or mass membership organizations. This could help to identify neighborhoods where potential cadres and allies exist.

This case suggested that recently arrived immigrant populations may views politics through discourses formed in their country of origin, or in transnational networks.

Similarly, organizers could consider where institutions produce populations committed to neoliberal or neoliberal-compatible modes of activism, such as self-help and market-driven redevelopment. Since we know that community development and self-help organizations are critical and reproducing and propagating those commitments, such analysis could consider the extent to which these institutions are common and integrated into the life of a given neighborhood.

Further, these findings suggest that organizers can think about organizing in terms of producing activists at the city scale, or even building institutions to train and socialize new activists. UWF's inability to organize a base in Austin can be seen as a mark of the success of Chicago's neoliberal regime in cultivating a community development field. Where UWF's grassroots base-building projects succeeded, it coalesced the activists produced by UWF's and allies' educative and socializing institutions. Left formations could see neighborhood organizing as in part a matter of producing left activists at the city scale, who are able to lead organizing efforts in their neighborhood of residence.

## The production and distribution of left activists

Base-building in Albany Park was successfully in part because of the activists produced by UWF's and allies' educative and socializing institutions who moved into the neighborhood. This suggests that left formations could should think about neighborhood organizing as, in part, a matter of producing left activists at the scale of the city and distributing them in space. Left formations can approach base-building by producing cadres at the city scale, and distributing

them to strategically important neighborhoods.  Even if they are socially distant from the

populations they intend to organize, they can conduct strategically sophisticated outreach and

relationship-building, like WF33 did in Albany Park.

In Chicago, the citywide left milieu grew organically, as difficult economic conditions and

inspiring episodes of resistance pushed people to mobilize, and a citywide conversation created

a set of common discourses.  While some institutions (especially the Chicago Teachers Union

and the United Working Families organization) proactively trained activists, the expansion of the

citywide population of left activists was spontaneous and gradual, not intentionally caused by

any particular agents.  Similarly, the distribution of left activists into Albany Park was driven by

individual consumption choices, not any conscious strategy to place activists in space.

This suggests that organizers should think in terms of the ongoing organic production of

activists, and their distribution as residential consumers.  Organizers could identify what

institutions are producing left activists—such as left-leaning academic centers, labor unions

which invest in political training and activation of their rank-and-file, or grassroots movements

or mass membership organizations—and where these people tend to live, in order to identify

neighborhoods where potential cadres and allies exist.  And organizers could think about

neighborhood organizing as consolidating the population of existing left activists in a

neighborhood.

A more proactive approach would be to attempt to build capacity to train and socialize

new activists, and to encourage them to move to strategically important neighborhoods.  This

would be analogous to a labor organizing strategy in which committed leftists take jobs in

strategically important industries with the intention of organizing workers in that space.

## Analyzing patterns of incorporation

Widespread material and ideological commitments to neoliberal or neoliberal-compatible modes of activism, such as self-help and market-driven redevelopment, can undermine left organizing.  Therefore, when planning their organizing, left formations should analyze who is and isn't incorporated into these modes of activity and steeped in these cultures.  Organizers should seek populations who are outside these formations, steeped in cultures which have not absorbed neoliberal ideas to the same extent.

This study has attempted to show that certain types of neighborhood-level institutions are critical in reproducing and propagating those commitments.  The findings suggests that, in analyzing the potential receptivity of populations to left projects, we should consider participation in neighborhood institutions oriented toward neoliberal modes of activism.  For example, we could expect that populations organized into block clubs, working on self-help projects, and networked with community development organizations, would be difficult to interest in a left project.

In addition to these analytical principles, the second case study suggests particular populations who may be likely to be steeped in political cultures relatively amenable to left projects.  This case suggested that recently arrived immigrant populations may views politics through discourses formed in their country of origin, or in transnational networks.  However, the case study also suggests that the incorporation of such populations into distributive relationships with neoliberal regimes and organized around neoliberal projects is in part a function of contingent neighborhood-level factors.

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