

Black and White Green Spaces

Segregation, the
Specter of Interracial
Violence, and the
Chicago Park District,
1957–1970

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Introduction

“It is at the boundaries of the Negro community that the pressure of Negroes to expand runs up against the stone wall of white opposition,” Joseph D. Lohman wrote in 1947 in *The Police and Minority Groups: A Manual Prepared for Use in the Chicago Park District Police Training School*. He declared that “these are the regions of greatest aggravation and tension.”¹ Lohman, then a graduate student in sociology at the University of Chicago, had produced one of the first studies to combine sociology’s evolving view of race and ethnicity with the day-to-day responsibilities of law enforcement, one that would help launch his career as one of the nation’s foremost criminologists.² The fact that he wrote it for the police

1. Joseph D. Lohman, *The Police and Minority Groups: A Manual Prepared for Use in the Chicago Park District Police Training School* (Chicago: Chicago Park District, 1947).

2. Norman S. Hayner, “Review of *The Police and Minority Groups: A Manual Prepared for Use in the Chicago Park District Police Training School* by Joseph D. Lohman,” *American Journal of Sociology* 54, no. 1 (July 1, 1948): 89–90, doi.org/10.1086/220276; Herbert Blumer, “Observations on the Career of Joseph D. Lohman,” *Issues in Criminology* 3, no. 2 (1968): 125, www.jstor.org/stable/42909579.



force of the Chicago Park District, rather than a larger citywide police force, may seem surprising on its face but is consistent with the history of Chicago and its parks. The 1919 race riot, as well as many conflicts that followed it, began in exactly the way described above: a rapidly growing Black population caused the boundaries of the Black neighborhood to expand, leading to White aggression and violence when Black residents used recreational space in boundary zones.³

This paper examines the specter of interracial conflict between Black and White residents, in Chicago's parks as both a determinant of Chicago Park District actions and justification for the district's segregationist policies from 1960 through 1970. In examining parks as a potential site for conflict, I use archival research coupled with quantitative data analysis to track the extent to which the district shied away from expanding park space in "boundary" areas of the city. These boundary parks are central, as they would likely have been utilized or at least contested by both Black and White residents.

Since its founding in 1837, rooted in its long-held pride in the natural beauty preserved within city limits, Chicago's motto has been *Urbs in Horto* (City in a Garden).⁴ In 1934, Chicago's twenty-two independent parks agencies became the Chicago Park District, a semi-independent agency with a Board of Commissioners appointed by the mayor and

3. For discussion of the 1919 riot, see Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1922). I choose to capitalize both White and Black in this paper in the context of race. For discussion of this question, see Kwame Anthony Appiah, "The Case for Capitalizing the B in Black," *Atlantic*, June 18, 2020, www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/06/time-to-capitalize-black-and-white/613159.

4. Julia Sniderman Bachrach, "Park Districts," *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 601–2.

confirmed by the city council.⁵ Since then, the park district has had jurisdiction over nearly all the park space in Chicago, taking control of several hundred small "playlots" from the city in 1957.⁶ Today, in addition to the traditional parks it manages, the district controls pools and beaches across the city, owns the 61,500-seat Soldier Field, and collaborates with eleven independent museums across the city.⁷

In the early to mid-twentieth century, as the Chicago Park District gained dramatically more responsibility and acreage, the great migration of Black Southerners to the North and West drastically changed the landscape of American cities, perhaps none more so than Chicago. By 1980, the Chicago metropolitan area had 532,861 southern-born Black residents, 7.4 percent of its population, and 13 percent of all southern-born Black Americans living outside the South. This percentage was the second highest outside the South.⁸ As the population of Black Chicagoans boomed, conflict between Black and White Chicagoans became a major and recurring issue. Conflict manifested particularly in the neighborhoods where the rapidly growing Black population pushed up against established White neighborhoods, as Lohman described in 1947.

Prior to and during the first decades of the great migration, the Black population lived almost exclusively in the "Black Belt," the narrow sliver of the South Side along State Street where Black residents lived in densely

5. "History of Chicago's Parks," Chicago Park District, accessed Mar. 27, 2025, www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/about-us/history-chicagos-parks.

6. "History of Chicago's Parks."

7. Bachrach, "Park Districts"; "About Us," Museums in the Park, accessed Apr. 16, 2025, museumsinthepark.org.

8. James N. Gregory, "The Second Great Migration: A Historical Overview," in *African American Urban History since World War II*, ed. Kenneth L. Kusmer and Joe W. Trotter, Historical Studies of Urban America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 22.

packed and largely squalid apartment buildings.⁹ As the Black population grew, a “second ghetto,” in the words of Arnold Hirsch, formed on the West Side, creating a smaller, diagonal mirror image of the South Side ghetto.¹⁰ By 1980, the Black population of Chicago was at its peak. Twenty-nine of Chicago’s seventy-seven community areas—a set of static geographical boundaries that each encompasses between one and eight neighborhoods—were majority Black, with sizable Black populations in a handful more.¹¹ As early as the 1960s, as sociologist Janet Abu-Lughod described it, “the border wars on the South Side had essentially been ‘won’” by the new Black population, and the remaining White West Siders would leave not long after the West Side riots of the late 1960s.¹²

Throughout the period examined here, and in the decades before and after, the ongoing process of American racialization underwent significant changes. As Black Southerners moved en masse to northern and western cities, particularly from rural areas, and as middle-class Whites

9. Wallace Best, “Black Belt,” *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 80; Christopher Manning, “African Americans,” *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 5–7.

10. Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940–1960*, Historical Studies of Urban America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

11. Alex Linares and Matthew D. Wilson, *Fact Sheet: Black Population Loss in Chicago* (Chicago: Great Cities Institute, University of Illinois at Chicago, July 2019), greatcities.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Black-Population-Loss-in-Chicago.pdf.

12. Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 72, 112.

moved from urban centers to the suburbs, the Black identity was construed as synonymous with “urban.” By the 1960s, “urban problems” and the “urban crisis” had become euphemistic for the problems of poor Black Americans, although the term “urban” did seem to include other American minority groups, at least in some cases.¹³ Some conflicts described in this paper may not have occurred had this process of urban and identity transformation not occurred. Conflicts over urban space were likely exacerbated by the conflation of “urban” with “Black” identities ongoing at the time, and it is even possible that White Chicagoans saw the transformation of the “urban” identity as a threat or affront, an aggravating factor in these conflicts.

As sociologist Kevin Loughran wrote, “parks developing in Western cities during rapid nineteenth-century urbanization” were wrapped in the “sacred guise of ‘nature,’” respite from the crowded and often unhealthy conditions of the industrialized urban center.¹⁴ This practice lasted into the twentieth century, with significant demand for parks in cities like Chicago, as industrialization and migration dramatically changed the layout of the city. Additionally, the characteristics of the segregated neighborhoods where Black migrants lived—dense, narrow strips of the city—exacerbated interracial conflict and increased the amount of boundary space.

13. Irving Kristol, “Common Sense about the ‘Urban Crisis,’” *Fortune*, Oct. 1967, 234; Allen D. Manvel, *Housing Conditions in Urban Poverty Areas* (Washington, DC: National Commission on Urban Problems, Jan. 1968), purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo118511.

14. Kevin Loughran, “Imbricated Spaces: The High Line, Urban Parks, and the Cultural Meaning of City and Nature,” *Sociological Theory* 34, no. 4 (2016): 314, doi.org/10.1177/0735275116679192.

Historiography and Literature Review

Interracial conflict in urban public parks that functioned as a racial no-man's land is a broadly documented phenomenon in twentieth-century American history. By expanding this lens to similar spaces for public recreation, including beaches, pools, and amusement parks (often operated by parks departments, including in Chicago), we can see just how crucial the sphere of public recreation spaces has been to the ongoing process of racialized and segregationist urban planning. By combining scholarship in urban planning, sociology, and public policy, the real-world effects of the specter of interracial violence on the distribution of park space in Chicago can come into view.

In Chicago, specifically, the history of interracial conflicts in public recreation spaces has been well-documented by historians and sociologists. Historian Victoria Wolcott's work on Black resistance to segregated facilities discussed the history of conflict in these spaces, including in Chicago, and argued that the segregation of parks was motivated and explained by a rhetoric of safety and preventing conflict.¹⁵ Moreover, Wolcott argued, the "erasure" from memory of historical White violence in the parks "has led many to blame the decline of urban recreation on 'deviant' behavior of African Americans in newly desegregated amusements."¹⁶ Erin Chapman put Wolcott and Andrew W. Kahrl into conversation with one another, showing that both in the southern municipalities Kahrl discusses and in the northern and midwestern cities which are Wolcott's focus, this

15. Victoria W. Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters: The Struggle over Segregated Recreation in America*, Politics and Culture in Modern America (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 4–5.

16. Wolcott, 4.

segregation resulted in demonstrable harm to Black residents in general and children in particular.¹⁷

The focus among sociologists and policymakers on interracial conflicts in parks began in earnest after the 1919 race riot, ignited by the drowning death of a Black teenager who had crossed the informal line of segregation at the 29th Street Beach. These spaces have been locations of conflict in many incidents since.¹⁸ While twentieth-century historians focused largely on housing (particularly public housing) as the main dimension of racial conflict in the changing northern city, more recent historians, like Wolcott and Andrew Diamond, have studied conflict in the parks and beaches with new vigor.¹⁹ Diamond's work on the topic of street conflicts between youths of different races discussed the way that parks were one of the "principal arenas of racial conflict," alongside beaches and schools.²⁰ Outside Chicago, this topic has been the focus of research in recent years on other cities such as Washington, DC, New Orleans, and Lancaster, PA; these works agree that public recreation spaces were significant locations

17. Erin D. Chapman, "The Racial Economies of Fun in the Bottom," *Reviews in American History* 41, no. 4 (Dec. 2013): 712, www.jstor.org/stable/43661612.

18. Chicago Commission on Race Relations, *The Negro in Chicago*; Steven Essig, "Race Riots," *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 667; Arnold R. Hirsch, "Massive Resistance in the Urban North: Trumbull Park, Chicago, 1953–1966," *Journal of American History* 82, no. 2 (1995): 533, doi.org/10.2307/2082185; Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters*, 174, 212.

19. Hirsch, "Massive Resistance in the Urban North"; Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*; Roger Biles, "Race and Housing in Chicago," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 94, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 31–38, www.jstor.org/stable/40193533.

20. Andrew J. Diamond, *Mean Streets: Chicago Youths and the Everyday Struggle for Empowerment in the Multiracial City, 1908–1969* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 223.

for interracial conflict as well as the assertion of civil rights by Black Americans.²¹

With a history of extremely rapid demographic changes due to twentieth-century Black and Latino migration and White flight, and now as one of the most segregated cities in the United States, Chicago always considered race in public and private decisions. Arnold Hirsch's study of the formation of the West Side "ghetto" is the most recognized work on this topic, and countless other authors have studied the confluence of forces that created the city's deeply segregated layout, including the research and market power employed by the University of Chicago.²² One government agency with a particularly well-documented history of participation in the segregationist project is the Chicago Housing Authority

21. Kevin G. McQueeney, "More than Recreation: Black Parks and Playgrounds in Jim Crow New Orleans," *Louisiana History: Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 60, no. 4 (Fall 2019): 437–78, www.jstor.org/stable/26864739; M. Alison Kibler and Shanni Davidowitz, "Our Color Won't Wash Off: The Desegregation of Swimming in Lancaster, Pennsylvania," *Journal of Civil and Human Rights* 2, no. 1 (2016): 3–32, doi.org/10.5406/jcivihumarigh.2.1.3; Martha H. Verbrugge, "Exercising Civil Rights: Public Recreation and Racial Segregation in Washington, DC, 1900–49," in *DC Sports: The Nation's Capital at Play*, ed. Chris Elzey and David Kenneth Wiggins (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2015), 108–16.

22. Walter Nugent, "Demography," *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 233–37; Hirsch, "Massive Resistance in the Urban North"; Davarian L. Baldwin, "The '800-Pound Gargoyle': The Long History of Higher Education and Urban Development on Chicago's South Side," *American Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (Mar. 2015): 81–103, doi.org/10.1353/aq.2015.0001; Biles, "Race and Housing in Chicago"; Daniel Kay Hertz, *Battle of Lincoln Park: Urban Renewal and Gentrification in Chicago* (Cleveland: Belt Publishing, 2018); Amanda I. Seligman, *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago's West Side*, Historical Studies of Urban America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

(CHA). As Hirsch has noted, the CHA used the placement of their projects, as well as the federal "Neighborhood Composition Rule," to maintain and reinforce existing racial dividing lines.²³

Economists David M. Cutler, Edward L. Glaeser, and Jacob L. Vigdor showed in a 1997 paper that "ghettoization" from 1940 to 1970 was driven primarily by the "collective actions taken by whites to exclude blacks from their neighborhoods."²⁴ Exacerbated by the White flight documented by historians Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas Sugrue, among many others, it becomes clear that the segregation and divestment prevalent in America's cities can be largely attributed to the collective and individual actions of White Americans and government institutions.²⁵ This later scholarship confirmed the conclusions reached by Hirsch and others in earlier years, backed up by the quantitative methods of economic analysis.

The field of urban planning has studied the topic of parks and race well, but experts remain divided on the question of how parks affect interracial contact. William Solecki and Joan Welch wrote in 1995 that large parks in Boston serve as "green walls," separating neighborhoods of different races in the same way as other large single-use spaces, such as railyards

23. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*; Hirsch, "Massive Resistance in the Urban North"; Harvey M. Choldin, "Chicago Housing Authority," *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 136–38.

24. David M. Cutler, Edward L. Glaeser, and Jacob L. Vigdor, "The Rise and Decline of the American Ghetto," *Journal of Political Economy* 107, no. 3 (1999): 455, doi.org/10.1086/250069.

25. Kevin Michael Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, rev. ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

and highways.²⁶ Three years later, Paul Gobster, an official with the United States Forest Service, responded to Solecki and Welch's paper in the same journal. He argued that some boundary parks, such as Chicago's Warren Park, serve as "green magnets" that facilitate, rather than prohibit, interracial and inter-neighborhood interactions.²⁷ Gobster's research, when put into conversation with historians like Diamond and Wolcott, creates the framework to better examine whether boundary parks served as spaces that facilitated interracial conflict in the 1960s.

Theoretical approaches to segregation in other public services, particularly education and housing, help inform discussions of segregation in parks. In the field of education, Andrew Highsmith and Ansley Erickson analyzed "segregation as joining," a quasi-progressive way of thinking that used "community building" as justification for segregated schools in Flint, Michigan.²⁸ Sociologist Eve L. Ewing, in turn, discussed school closings in Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood, which resulted in overcrowded and more segregated schools, as well the importance of community access to the physical space provided by the schools, a concept crucial in discussion

26. William D. Solecki and Joan M. Welch, "Urban Parks: Green Spaces or Green Walls?" *Landscape and Urban Planning* 32, no. 2 (June 1995): 93–106, doi.org/10.1016/0169-2046(94)00193-7.

27. Paul H. Gobster, "Urban Parks as Green Walls or Green Magnets? Interracial Relations in Neighborhood Boundary Parks," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 41, no. 1 (May 1998): 43–55, doi.org/10.1016/S0169-2046(98)00045-0.

28. Andrew R. Highsmith and Ansley T. Erickson, "Segregation as Splitting, Segregation as Joining: Schools, Housing, and the Many Modes of Jim Crow," *American Journal of Education* 121, no. 4 (Aug. 2015): 563–95, doi.org/10.1086/681942. The concept of "segregation as joining" sees policymakers' and local leaders' motivations behind school segregation as community building and sees "racial and social homogeneity" as a necessary condition for community joining" (Highsmith and Erickson, 569).

of parks as well.²⁹ The concept of "segregation as joining" adds an important framework when analyzing policymakers' language. We can now see calls for "community parks" in certain circumstances as part of the segregationist project, and Ewing's study of schools is translatable to the park closures and the effects they had on residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Finally, political scientists and scholars of public affairs spent significant time in the late 1970s and the 1980s discussing the political and racialized motivations (or lack thereof) of the distribution of urban services, particularly parks. Kenneth Mladenka, in a series of reports and papers on the distribution of these services in Houston and Chicago, found that parks were distributed equally on a socioeconomic, racial, and political basis.³⁰ In response to Mladenka, David Koehler and Margaret Wrightson argued that, while racial and socioeconomic equity were not explanatory factors in the distribution of Chicago parks, political considerations seemed to be a sizable factor in this process.³¹ Finally, two years later, Mladenka reexamined the Chicago parks, finding that in 1962 White wards received significantly more parks resources than Black wards, a disparity that

29. Eve L. Ewing, *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's South Side* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

30. Kenneth R. Mladenka and Kim Quaile Hill, "The Distribution of Benefits in an Urban Environment: Parks and Libraries in Houston," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (Sept. 1977): 73–94, doi.org/10.1177/107808747701300104; Kenneth R. Mladenka, *The Political Machine, the Urban Bureaucracy, and the Distribution of Public Services* (Evanston, IL: Center for Urban Affairs, Northwestern University, 1979); Kenneth R. Mladenka, "The Urban Bureaucracy and the Chicago Political Machine: Who Gets What and the Limits to Political Control," *American Political Science Review* 74, no. 4 (Dec. 1980): 991–98, doi.org/10.2307/1954318.

31. David H. Koehler and Margaret T. Wrightson, "Inequality in the Delivery of Urban Services: A Reconsideration of the Chicago Parks," *Journal of Politics* 49, no. 1 (1987): 80–99, doi.org/10.2307/2131135.

dissolved by 1983.³² He explains this as being the result of several factors, including increased Black political participation, public pressure after the late 1960s race riots, and White flight.³³ This study, despite contradicting Mladenka's own earlier work on the question of whether 1960s-era public resources were distributed fairly by showing that they were, does not contradict the conclusion that park space in particular (the actual acreage of parks in each ward) was distributed equally.

This analysis is crucial. If park space was distributed according to race (as Mladenka, Koehler, and Wrightson showed *not* to be the case, in favor of or against any particular racial group), my research would be confounded by discriminatory practices. Now, knowing that space was distributed equally across the city, we can look at the specific placement of individual parks as a phenomenon unexplained by broad-based anti-Black bias or discrimination against other groups.

Data and Methods

By combining official Chicago Park District publications between 1960 and 1970 with census data, it becomes clear that Chicago Park District officials were demonstrably considering the history and continued possibility of interracial violence in their parks when deciding policy. This analysis is supported by reports on park-based interracial violence in the preceding years, and the lessons that policymakers took from them. Finally, the records of external entities show how district policies manifested on a city level and how stakeholders interpreted those policies. This combined quali-

32. Kenneth R. Mladenka, "The Distribution of an Urban Public Service: The Changing Role of Race and Politics," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (June 1989): 556–83, doi.org/10.1177/004208168902400405. This suggests that from 1960s and onwards, Black areas of the city received more new park space, a finding that quantitative results for 1965–70 in this paper confirms.

33. Mladenka, 579–81.

Table 1: Census Tracts and Population by Race Classification, 1960

CLASSIFICATION	TRACT	%	POPULATION	%
White	655	76.8	2,976,480	75.4
Black	175	20.5	793,411	22.3
Mixed / Other	23	2.7	80,249	2.2
Total	853		3,550,140	

Source: 1960 Census (Note: This table reports the total population of the tracts of a given classification rather than the White, Black, and mixed/other populations of Chicago.)

tative and quantitative approach—which builds on Wolcott's and Diamond's work on this topic, Hirsch's examination of municipal agencies as major drivers of segregation, and Gobster's "green magnets" conceptualization of parks—allows me to examine the specter of interracial violence as a key determinant of park placement and Chicago Park District policies from 1960 to 1970.

Regarding quantitative methods, I had to create by necessity somewhat arbitrary definitions. First, I define all Chicago census tracts as White, Black, or mixed/other using 1960 Census data accessed from IPUMS.³⁴ I classified tracts as White if their population is greater than 60 percent White and as Black if their population is greater than 60 percent Black; I classified the remaining tracts as Mixed/Other. This definition, while imperfect, strikes a balance between the pitfall of classifying, for instance, a 51 percent White/49 percent Black tract as White, and the noise presented by the small size of some census tracts (table 1).

One of the weaknesses of census data—particularly the 1960 Census—is that its question regarding race is extremely insufficient to paint an entire picture, especially with contemporaneously evolving views of race and

34. Steven Ruggles et al., *IPUMS USA: Version 11.0 [dataset]* (Minneapolis: IPUMS [Integrated Public Use Microdata Series], 2021), doi.org/10.18128/D010.V11.0.

ethnicity. The census simply asked, with regards to race, “White,” “Black,” or “Other Race,” and denoted whether a respondent was “of Puerto Rican Parentage” or had a “Puerto Rican or Spanish Surname.”³⁵ This would complicate any analysis of race, but particularly in Chicago in the 1960s and 1970s, where the Mexican-born population doubled over the course of the decade. The Chicago Commission of Human Relations estimated the Puerto Rican population to be 55,000 in 1966, and the total Latin American population in 1970 was estimated at nearly 215,000.³⁶ According to the 1970 census, however, 94 percent of Chicago’s Spanish-speaking population was identified as “White.”³⁷

This raises the question: How should this paper treat Latino neighborhoods?³⁸ By the early 1960s, I could find no record of conflict in the *Sun-*

35. United States Census Bureau, “Total Population: Puerto Rican Birth or Parentage, 1960,” Social Explorer, accessed Nov. 30, 2021, www.socialexplorer.com/home/dataset-entry/us-census-data.

36. René Luís Alvarez, “A Community that Would Not Take ‘No’ for an Answer’: Mexican Americans, the Chicago Public Schools, and the Founding of Benito Juárez High School,” *Journal of Illinois History* 17, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 84; Floreal H. Forni, *The Situation of the Puerto Rican Population in Chicago and Its Viewpoints about Racial Relations* (Chicago: Community and Family Study Center, University of Chicago, Oct. 15, 1971), 2; Department of Development and Planning, *Chicago’s Spanish-Speaking Population, Selected Statistics* (Chicago: City of Chicago, Sept. 1973), 8.

37. Department of Development and Planning, *Chicago’s Spanish-Speaking Population, Selected Statistics*, 8.a

38. What constitutes a Latino neighborhood, or Latinidad more generally, is complex. Some modern scholars and activists “believe that the term [Latinidad] should not be used as a catch-all,” as “it erases away race” and “excludes and silences the presence and contributions of Afro- and Asian descendants.” See José F. Buscaglia-Salgado, “Race and the Constitutive Inequality of the Modern/Colonial Condition,” in *Critical Terms in Caribbean and Latin American Thought: Historical and Institutional Trajectories*, ed. Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, Ben Sifuentes-Jáuregui, and Marisa Belausteguigoitia (London:

Times, Tribune, or Defender specifically over parks between non-Latino and Latino Chicagoans, despite numerous small clashes and informal but rigidly enforced racial boundaries and incidents over parks in other major cities such as New York.³⁹ Further research into this topic could be fruitful, but preliminary keyword searches returned no results. The earliest record of such conflict over recreation space in Chicago for which I could find evidence was likely sometime in the 1960s, after the founding of the Young Lords in 1959 or 1960, but may well have been later.⁴⁰ For this reason, I believe it is better to classify tracts as solely White/Black/mixed, rather than trying to take into account a nebulous estimate of Latino population,

Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 114, quoted in Tatiana Flores, “Latinidad Is Cancelled’: Confronting an Anti-Black Construct,” *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture* 3, no. 3 (July 2021): 60, doi.org/10.1525/lavc.2021.3.3.58. Sociologist Floreal Forni’s 1973 study of Puerto Ricans in Chicago, however, discussed the intricate ways in which Puerto Ricans fit into Chicago’s contemporary racial hierarchy; his study determined, based on race relations, material conditions, and communal priorities, that the situation of the Puerto Rican community was significantly different from that of European-descended Whites but did not conform to the experiences of either “previous waves of immigrants” or “a diluted version of [that] being faced by Negroes.” Donald J. Bogue, foreword to *The Situation of the Puerto Rican Population in Chicago and Its Viewpoints about Racial Relations*, by Floreal H. Forni (Chicago: Community and Family Study Center, University of Chicago, Oct. 15, 1971), 1. For examples of later conflict over park space between Latinos and other ethnic groups, see William J. Wilson and Richard P. Taub, *There Goes the Neighborhood: Racial, Ethnic, and Class Tensions in Four Chicago Neighborhoods and Their Meaning for America* (New York: Knopf, 2006), 116–19; and Johanna Fernández, *The Young Lords: A Radical History* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 23, 27.

39. Lilia Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 79–80; “Police Seize 12 in Slaying of 2 Youths: Victims Were Knifed in N. Y. Playground,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 31, 1959.

40. Fernández, *The Young Lords*, 23, 27.

especially as I was unable to find any evidence of relevant past conflict that hinged on Latino identity. A compelling subject for future research would be the extent to which the budding Latino identity in this era (and earlier) affected policymakers; did they predict events like those that occurred in later decades and, if so, how did it affect distribution of resources? Did conflicts between Latinos and non-Latinos in other arenas such as housing have spillover effects on parks distribution?

Second, having discussed the questions presented by race and ethnicity, I classify census tracts as boundary or non-boundary. I classify Black tracts as boundary tracts if they physically border a White tract, classify White tracts as boundary tracts if they physically border a Black tract, and I classify Mixed/Other tracts as boundary tracts if they physically border both a White and a Black tract. This analysis was done using a combination of ArcGIS and Microsoft Excel using ArcGIS's Generate Near Table tool with a search radius of zero to find all neighbors (tables 2–4).⁴¹

I include these tables in the data and methods section to ensure that the methods as described above pass logical muster. Especially given Chicago's extreme segregation, these figures certainly seem plausible. As discussed below, the fact that Black Chicagoans were much more likely to live in boundary areas than White Chicagoans makes this a question of equity as well; a decrease in park resources in boundary areas would have an outsized negative impact on Black Chicagoans. This is due to the elongated shape of the South Side "Black Belt" and the West Side "Second Ghetto," whose borders were proportionately very long to their area (fig. 1).

Finally, by digitizing and comparing volumes of the Chicago Park District's *Table of Parks and Park Facilities and Programs*, I was able to isolate all changes in park acreage and locate each changed or new park in a census

41. Steven Manson et al., *IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 16.0 [dataset]* (Minneapolis: IPUMS. 2021), doi.org/10.18128/D050.V16.0.

tract. These changes can be separated into two categories: expansion/contraction and opening/closure. I classified these differently because, generally, the expansion/contraction changes are relatively small changes in the acreage of already large parks. Openings and closures are much more relevant to my framework. Nevertheless, I track both classifications

Table 2: Population of Census Tracts by Boundary Classification, 1960

CLASSIFICATION	TRACT	%	POPULATION	%
Boundary	238	27.9	930,253	26.2
Non-Boundary	615	72.1	2,619,887	73.8
Total	853		3,550,140	

Source: 1960 Census

Table 3: Number of Census Tracts by Race and Boundary Classifications, 1960

CLASSIFICATION	WHITE	BLACK	MIXED / OTHER
Boundary	128	92	18
Non-Boundary	527	89	5

Source: 1960 Census

Table 4: White and Black Population by Tract Classification, 1960

CLASSIFICATION	% WHITE	% BLACK
White Non-Boundary	81.4	0.8
White Boundary	15.0	4.3
Black Non-Boundary	0.3	45.1
Black Boundary	1.9	44.9
Mixed/Other Non-Boundary	0.2	0.9
Mixed/Other Boundary	1.2	4.0

Source: 1960 Census

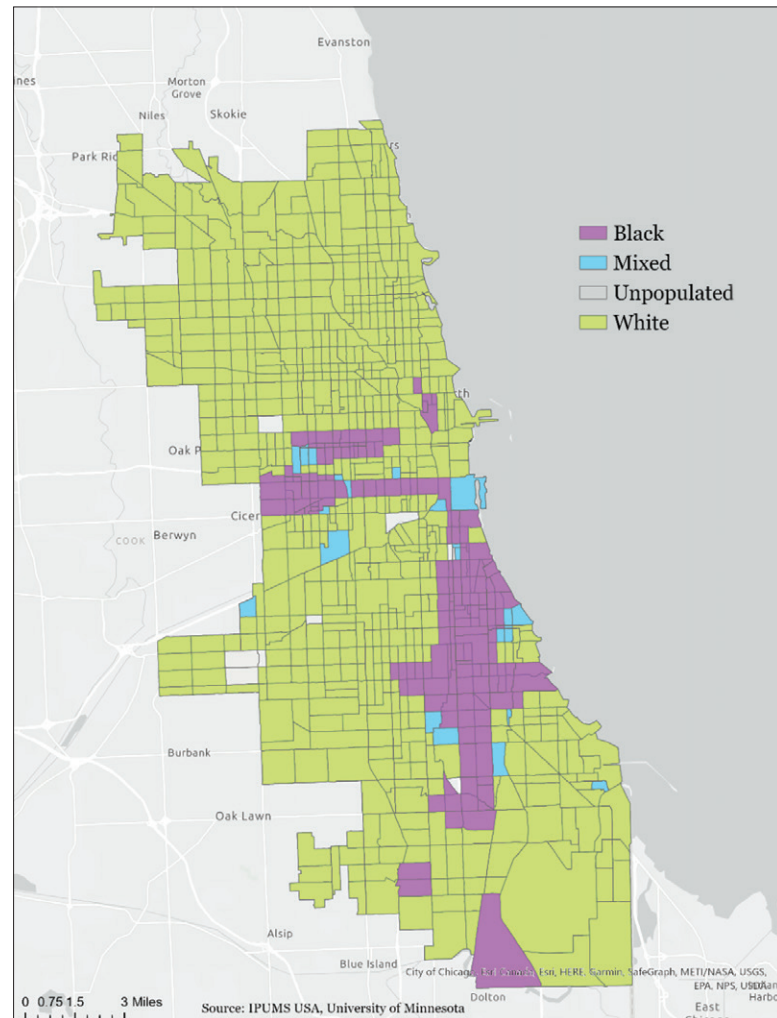


Figure 1: Racial Makeup by Census Tract, 1960.
IPUM USA, Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota,
usa.ipums.org/usa.

to best compare. Finally, using addresses provided by the publication (and some manipulation in the cases of streets that no longer exist), I assigned parks to census tracts. This data allows me to track changes in park acreage on the most granular possible level, to an extent that has not been done before, at least not in Chicago. Combined with my qualitative and archival work, I am able to track the ways in which the district's segregationist policies manifested during the 1960s.

“This is an All-White Park,” Racial Conflicts in the Parks, 1957–60

Throughout the 1950s, interracial conflicts ranging from skirmishes between a handful of young men to all-out riots plagued Chicago's parks and other public recreation areas. These conflicts, ultimately, weighed heavily in the minds of park district officials in the following decade and shaped their decisions, whether consciously or not. The most important of these incidents, at least from the perspective of public memory and worry, were the 1957 riots which began on Sunday, July 21, 1957, in Calumet Park and spread through the city. The Ta-Wa-Si Mothers' Club, a group of seventy Black Chicagoans who had held picnics in the park for the last two years, were surrounded by 150 or more young White men who threw bricks and bottles at the picnickers. Despite the presence of a Park District Police officer and another arriving in backup once the attack had begun, the White attackers continued to bombard the group and assaulted two uninvolved Black men, who had to be taken to the hospital.⁴²

⁴². *A Preliminary Report on Racial Disturbances in Chicago for the Period July 21 to August 4, 1957* (Chicago: Chicago Commission on Human Relations, 1957), 1–4, box 499, folder 1, American Civil Liberties Union Illinois Division, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago (hereafter ACLU).



Figure 2: Chicago Defender, July 29, 1957.

On Sunday, July 28, one week later, a group of roughly one hundred White men attacked a different Black group, the Bodine Social Club, also at Calumet Park (fig. 2). That day, the violence escalated severely, with one Park District Police sergeant reporting a “mob of 6,000 to 7,000 caucasians” a mere thirty minutes after the beginning of the violence.⁴³ By eight o’clock in the evening, the violence had spread over a mile away, to the Trumbull Park Homes, a CHA development in South Deering. Over the next eight days, the violence continued across the South and West Sides, including the stoning of Black fishermen at Wolf Lake Park, the harassment and assault of Black swimmers at Tuley Park pool, and the assembly

43. *A Preliminary Report on Racial Disturbances in Chicago*, 5–7.

of a White mob in Grand Crossing Park. In one incident at Tuley Park pool, the White mob threatened Black swimmers specifically by alluding to the Calumet Park riot two days prior.⁴⁴

The area surrounding Calumet Park seems to have been ripe for racial violence. In 1940, only a single census tract within four miles of the park housed over 150 Black residents; by 1960, the Black neighborhood of South Chicago had taken hold just across the Calumet River from the park, and over two thousand Black residents living within a mile and a half.⁴⁵ The speed with which the mob violence spread from what appeared to be a single event in the far southeast corner of the city to nearly every racial boundary zone in Chicago shows just how central park-based violence was to questions of violence prevention and urban planning.

In April 1958, with the events of the previous summer fresh in the minds of park district and police officials and the summer fast approaching, Chief of the Park District Police George A. Otlewis issued an order regarding “Arrests” and “Racial Incidents.” The order acknowledged that “racial incidents” were all but guaranteed to occur in Chicago’s parks. While the first paragraph focused on police officers’ duty to “give their best attention and activity to suppressing and preventing racial and social tension situations and disturbances,” the chief went on to describe the action to be taken “as soon as any disturbance is indicated as a racial conflict.”⁴⁶ This document reveals two crucial details. First, racial conflict was a subject of great concern to park officials, even as a proactive concern with no conflict yet that year. Second, racial conflict in the parks was seen as something approaching an inevitability, meaning that steps to address

44. *A Preliminary Report on Racial Disturbances in Chicago*, 8–26.

45. United States Census Bureau, “White and Black Population, 1940” and “White and Black Population, 1960,” Social Explorer, accessed Nov. 30, 2021, www.socialexplorer.com/home/dataset-entry/us-census-data.

46. George A. Otlewis, “Circular Order No. 575 Re: Arrests, Racial Incidents,” April 28, 1958, box 499, folder 5, ACLU.

was 86.6 percent Black).⁵⁰ An additional complicator was that 57th Street Beach seems to have been a Black beach at this point; the *Times* and *Defender* reported that the majority of beachgoers that day were Black, and a 1960s photograph of the beach discussed in the crisis and investment section below shows a Black majority among beachgoers.⁵¹ Regardless of who the instigator was and even regardless of the broader dynamics at play, it is clear that the boundary zone beach at 57th Street was a site of ongoing racial conflict; the *Defender* reported that “similar disturbances have occurred in the past” at the beach.⁵²

In several other incidents throughout the summer of 1959, Black visitors were harassed at Rainbow Beach at 75th Street.⁵³ Two incidents are especially telling. On May 31, Black visitors to the city were said to have been told by the lifeguard, an employee of the park district, that they should leave and go to 55th Street Beach.⁵⁴ In July, five Black women and children were attacked at the beach by three White boys throwing stones. Despite flagging down two policemen, the family received no protection and escaped in the car of passing strangers, leading the *Defender* reporter to conclude, “if you can’t rely on your own city protection, who can you

50. “Two Youths Injured in Beach Race Strife”; “White and Black Population, 1960.”

51. “Disturbance in Chicago”; “2 Hurt in Southside Beach Riot”; *Chicago Parks: General Information Brochure* (Chicago: Chicago Park District, [1965]), 25, (spe-n00096), box 5, folder 30, Chicago Department of Urban Renewal Records, Special Collections, Chicago Public Library (hereafter CDUR).

52. “2 Hurt in Southside Beach Riot.”

53. “The People Speak: Indifferent Policemen,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, Aug. 3, 1959; Inez Turner, “The People Speak: Negroes Not Welcome,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, June 10, 1959.

54. Turner, “The People Speak: Negroes Not Welcome.”

rely on.”⁵⁵ These incidents both highlight the extent to which street-level municipal employees helped perpetuate segregation of the parks, a topic briefly discussed in the parks and segregation section as it relates to police.

A unanimous resolution in August 1959 by the Chicago Urban League, a high-profile organization of elite and well-connected Black Chicagoans, condemned the violence and serves as a thematic conclusion to the violence of the 1950s.⁵⁶ After a Black family purchased a home in a previously all-White area of West Garfield Park in 1959, four thousand furious White residents arrived to protest their would-be move-in day, and over a dozen were arrested for failing to obey police orders.⁵⁷ In their response, the league specify two particularly commonplace axes of racial violence in Chicago: “When a non-white person seeks or purchases shelter in an area where non-whites have not lived before and in public parks, beaches and public recreation spots which certain white persons have come to think of as their own private property.”⁵⁸ The league’s view coheres with Hirsch’s study of postwar Chicago: “The worst violence occurred when the use of public parks and beaches was contested.”⁵⁹

In July of the next year, perhaps in an effort to address the issue condemned in the organization’s resolution, Chicago Urban League Executive Director Edwin C. Berry sent a letter to Police Superintendent O. W. Wilson requesting a series of policies to reduce or prevent racial conflicts. Included

55. “The People Speak: Indifferent Policemen.”

56. Preston H. Smith, “Urban League,” *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 848–49.

57. “Police Rout Chicago Mob of 3,000 in Housing Riot,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, August 15, 1959; “\$2,500 Bonds Set for 14 in Race Disorder,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 8, 1959.

58. “Chicago Urban League Resolution Re: Racial Disturbances and Law Enforcement,” Aug. 19, 1959, box 499, folder 4, ACLU.

59. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 66.

in that letter, the *Defender* reported, were Berry's observations that "public parks and beaches are danger areas" and that "peripheral areas of the 'so called Negro community' are sore spots when Negroes attempt to move beyond the boundaries of the ghetto."⁶⁰ This letter, paired with the clashes of the previous few years, shows the interconnectedness of the great migration, the expansion of Black neighborhoods, and White violent resistance.

By the beginning of the 1960s, repeated conflicts in the 1950s and previous decades had shaped the perception of public parks. To Black civic leaders and police officials, conflicts over access to these locations had the potential to spiral into disaster. The question remains whether park district policymakers held these views and whether this translated into decisions related to park allocation. Another question is whether new parks and park spaces in boundary areas evoked the same racial conflict as those that had previously lain in all-White areas and were beginning to diversify. The incident at Sherman Park and the resolution by the Urban League make clear that a potential cause for this violence was that White Chicagoans saw specific parks as their property and encroaching Black people as invaders. This begs the question whether a new park in between White and Black neighborhoods would be equally, less, or more contentious than existing parks. The question of whether the staff members and board members of the Chicago Park District who made decisions regarding park placements viewed parks specifically as potential sites of violence and whether that affected their decisions is a more difficult one to answer.

One potential clue lies in the 1959 revision of the Chicago Park District's 1952 *Suggested Goals in Park and Recreation Planning*. The document outlines, as stated in its subtitle, the "basic principles of planning of the Chicago Park District."⁶¹ In the "Park and Playground Registration Study"

60. "Cops Set to Nip Any Race Violence," *Daily Defender*, July 20, 1960.

61. *Suggested Goals in Park and Recreation Planning*, 1959, box 3, folder 23, Chicago Park District (MSS0060_05_003_023), Special Collections and Archives, DePaul University, Chicago.

appendix of the 1959 document, the authors write that "racial, ethnic, and economic differences ... are to be analyzed as physical 'barriers'" when analyzing park usage radii.⁶² It is significant that racial boundaries are grouped with physical barriers, such as busy streets, as policy considerations when planning parks.⁶³

Two points must be made here regarding the park district's consideration of racial boundary lines. First, the 1959 report includes racial differences as a factor only in "park" (over four acres) attendance, not in "playground" (under four acres) attendance. This suggests that they do not believe racial boundaries affect usage of smaller parks. Second, although the effects of race on park attendance was addressed three times in this section, the authors do not make any significant claims beyond the fact that racial differences must be considered. It is unclear why this distinction was made but could be explained by a number of factors, including an unwillingness to stake out politically risky positions, a lack of foresight regarding the extent to which parks would become a major axis of racial conflict, or a number of others. In any case, this very brief allusion to race by the policymakers in question is simultaneously enlightening and raises further questions.

Quantitative Results, 1960–65

To test the immediate effects of the late-1950s racial conflicts on park allocation, I chose preliminarily to separate the decade into two halves. If the violence of the 1950s were a recent major factor, then it should appear through this analysis. Unfortunately, I was unable to track down the 1960 volume of the Chicago Park District's *Table of Parks and Park Facilities and Programs*, on which this analysis is based, so this section analyzes

62. *Suggested Goals in Park and Recreation Planning*, 29.

63. *Suggested Goals in Park and Recreation Planning*, 29.

January 1, 1961, to January 1, 1965. Below are two regression analyses done on these years (tables 5–6).

The two most significant figures reported in these tables are the coefficients and P-values for the independent variables. The coefficient of each variable estimates the effect that the variable had on the dependent variable (change in park acreage) and the coefficient of the intercept estimates the value of the independent variable if each of the dependent variables were

Table 5: Park Acreage Change by Census Tract, 1961–65
Dependent Variable: Park Acreage Change

	OLS ESTIMATES	
Intercept	0.127	(0.120)
Black %	0.175	(0.167)
Change in Density (per mile sq ²), 1950–60	-7.50E-06	(7.12E-06)
1960 Population	-2.48E-06	(2.27E-05)
Boundary	-0.216	(0.138)
Observations	862	
R ²	0.004915	

Sources: 1950 and 1960 Census, Chicago Park District, HWLC MRC
*: P<0.1, **: P<0.05, ***: P<0.01

Table 6: Park Acreage Change by Census Tract, 1961–65
Dependent Variable: Park Acreage Change

	OLS ESTIMATES	
Intercept	0.338**	(0.140)
Race (Black = 1; White = -1; Mixed = 0)	0.120	(0.082)
1960 Density	-3.89E-06	(3.56E-06)
Boundary	-0.236*	(0.137)
Observations	862	
R ²	0.004915	

Sources: 1950 and 1960 Census, Chicago Park District, HWLC MRC
*: P<0.1, **: P<0.05, ***: P<0.01

zero. For our purposes, we care primarily about the signs (positive or negative) of the variables and their P-values, not their magnitudes. The P-value, essentially, estimates the likelihood that the *actual* coefficient is not zero or on the other side of zero from the estimate.

As a clarifying example, we add the variable that most interests us, “Boundary,” to regression table 5. The “Boundary” variable is binary, meaning I assigned it the value 1 for boundary tracts and 0 for non-boundary. By using this regression and controlling for Black population, change in density from 1950 to 1960, and 1960 total population, “Boundary” census tracts could be estimated to receive -0.216 fewer park acres (through less additions and/or more losses) than non-boundary tracts, all else being equal. The P-value for this variable is 0.119, which, simplified, means that there is an 11.9 percent chance that the “actual” value for this variable is 0 or positive. In other words, we estimate with 88.1 percent certainty that boundary tracts, all else equal, received less park acreage in 1961–65 than non-boundary tracts.

This analysis appears to be remarkably consistent with an intuition that racial boundary zones would be less likely to receive new park space in the first half of the 1960s due to the influence of the specter of interracial violence on officials’ decisions. This analysis controls for the Black share of the population, the increase in density from 1950 to 1960, and the 1960 population. The increase in density is a proportional approximation of the increase in population, necessary due to changes in census tract boundaries between the 1950 and 1960 censuses. As discussed above, the estimated coefficient for Boundary is negative with a P-value of 0.119. This does not meet the traditional statistical significance criteria of P<.10 or P<.05, but does indicate that there is a *likely* negative effect.⁶⁴

64. Traditional statistical analysis uses P-value cutoffs of P<.10 and P<.05 for statistical significance. Here I choose to report results that barely miss the P<.10 cutoff because I couple it with both other regressions and qualitative analysis in an attempt to paint a broader picture outside the limitations of quantitative analysis.

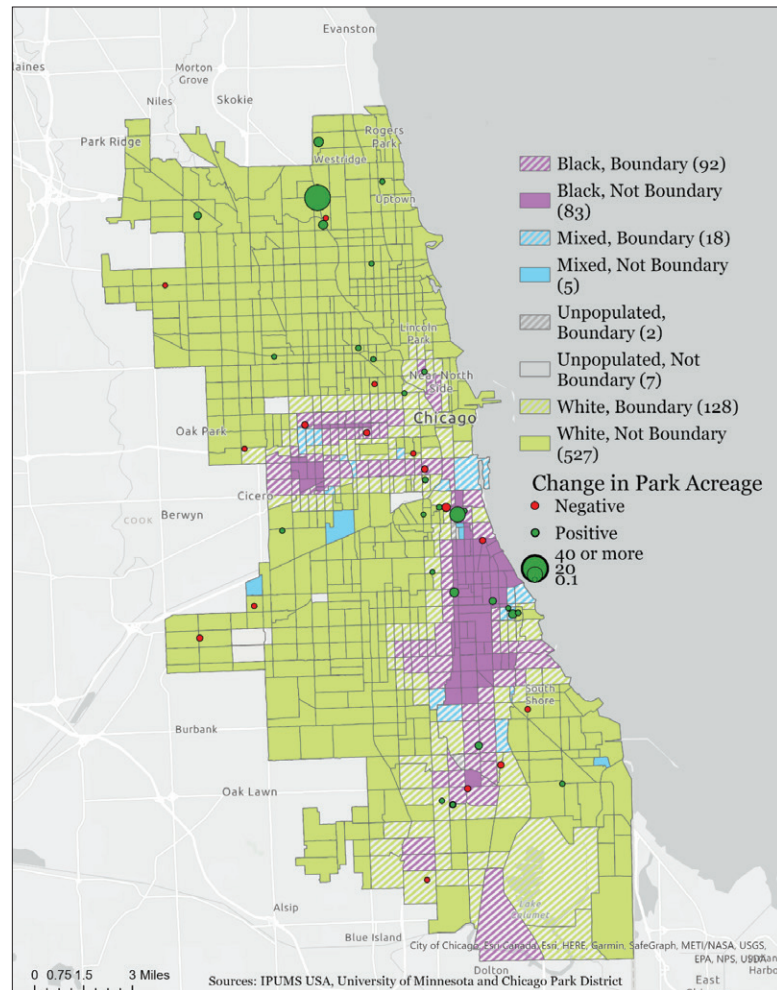


Figure 4: Changes in Park Acreage and Census Tracts by Race and Boundary, 1961–65.

IPUMS USA, Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota, usa.ipums.org/usa.

The second analysis attempts to simplify the variables used (table 6). Instead of using the Black share, the same 60 percent threshold racial classification described above is used. This may be a better approximation of the motivating factors at play, because policymakers likely would not differentiate between 80 percent and 95 percent Black tracts, for example. Additionally, instead of using change in density and total population, 1960 density is used to avoid excessive correlation between independent variables. In this regression, the boundary variable has a negative correlation with change in park acreage with a P-value of 0.087, meeting the $P < .10$ threshold. This means that, if these are the correct control variables to be employed, we can say with a 90 percent degree of confidence that being a boundary tract had a negative effect on change in park acreage in these years (fig. 4).

“Local parks serving local and neighborhood populations”: Parks and Segregation, 1960–65

The above analysis suggests that, regardless of any public statements or privately expressed viewpoints, boundary zones did receive fewer park acres from 1961 to 1965. Beyond this, however, we can try to glean meaning from the available documents and records in an attempt to examine to what extent this was a stated policy, or whether it was a subconscious or semiconscious reaction on the part of policymakers. Throughout the early 1960s, the district viewed even its largest parks as segregated and the locations of individual parks were significantly influenced by the district’s fear of interracial conflicts.

A handful of Chicago Park District documents from this era make clear that, explicitly or otherwise, staff viewed certain parks as White parks and others, to a lesser extent, as Black parks. This view extended to the largest citywide parks, such as Lincoln and Jackson Parks, even though

they were supposedly intended for citywide use. An especially striking example is the Lincoln Park Zoo, a free zoo intended for citywide use located in the city's largest park. In 1963, the district published, in conjunction with the nascent Lincoln Park Zoological Society, a sixty-four-page guidebook to the zoo, one of the crown jewels of the district's citywide system. Similar to some other publications of this era, as discussed below, the guidebook's six photographs depicted only White visitors out of approximately thirty-seven visibly photographed visitors.⁶⁵

Perhaps more crucially to the outcomes that actually affected people's lives, however, was the back page, entitled "How to get to the Zoo." The information on train travel is straightforward, but the bus route information is fascinating. The three suggested bus routes (numbers 76, 156, and 153) all stop directly in front of the zoo entrance and all serviced the overwhelmingly White North Side. The 76 Diversey serviced the Northwest Side along Diversey Parkway, and the 156 and 153 both ran from Ravenswood and Wilson Avenues along Wilson and Stockton to the zoo.⁶⁶ Less than two blocks from the zoo's entrance, however, were stops on four more lines: the 37 Taylor-Sedgwick-Sheffield, the 22 Clark, the 36 Broadway, and the 58A Ogden Extension. The 37 ran along Taylor Street on the Near West Side, which lay in a boundary zone within blocks of majority Black census tracts on either side. The 22 and 36 served similar routes to the 156 and 153, running all the way to the suburb of Evanston and to Devon Avenue respectively, but the 58A ran southwest from the zoo to Ogden and Ashland Avenues, a stop that lay in a majority Black (and boundary) census tract and connected to other buses such as the 58, which served the heart of the still-growing Black West Side.⁶⁷ In fig. 5, the three

65. *How to Enjoy Lincoln Park Zoo: Official Guidebook of the Lincoln Park Zoo* (Chicago: Chicago Park District, 1963).

66. Rand McNally & Co., *Chicago Transit Map* (Chicago: Chicago Transit Authority, 1965), www.chicago-l.org/maps/route/maps/1965map.jpg.

67. Rand McNally & Co.; Ruggles et al., "IPUMS USA: Version 11.0 [dataset]."

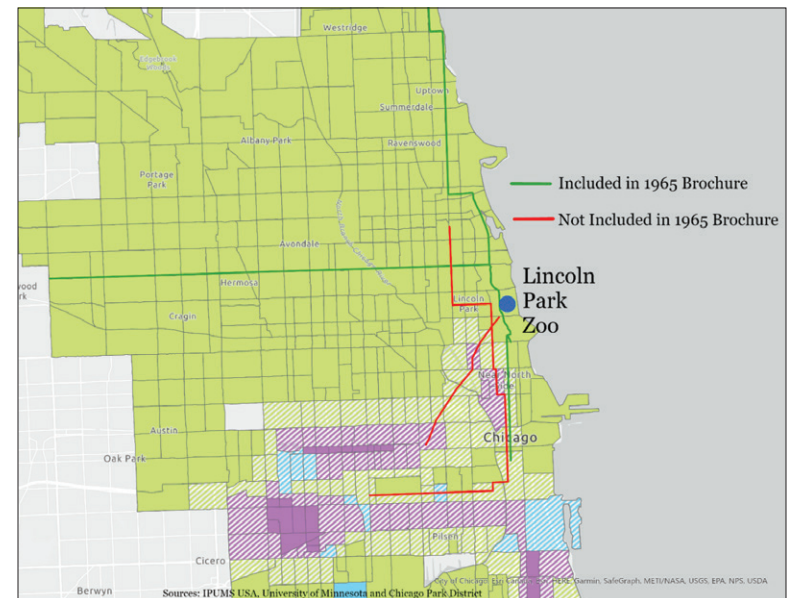


Figure 5: Selected Bus Routes Serving Lincoln Park Zoo, 1963.

IPUMS USA, Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota, usa.ipums.org/usa.

buses (the 76, 156, and 153) included in the zoo brochure are shown in green and the two excluded buses (the 37 and 58A) that served Black neighborhoods are shown in red.⁶⁸ The census tracts are colored yellow for White, purple for Black, and blue for mixed/other, and are striped if they are boundary tracts.

It is certainly possible that the omission of these routes was due to their distance from the zoo entrance, but that alone seems unlikely; the directions to visit by train, include a transfer to a bus with a final stop two

68. Note that the green spur that seems to serve the Black part of the Near North Side is the branch of the 156 that connects to the Loop (the central business district of Chicago). Otherwise, it would seem unlikely from the analysis above that it would serve that neighborhood.

blocks away—the same terminus as the 58A. Thus, the omissions suggest that the bus directions only included the absolutely most proximate routes, at least partially because of the populations they, and the possible additional routes, served. This supports the suggestion that the Chicago Park District shied away from promoting or facilitating interracial interactions in even the largest and most universal of its parks. In contrast, the Lincoln Park Zoo’s current website suggests “the 22, 36, 151, and 156 buses,” only two of which stop directly at the entrance.⁶⁹

In 1970, a consulting firm working for the park district found that “visiting the zoo” was one of five park-related activities with the highest discrepancy in popularity between non-Black and Black Chicagoans.⁷⁰ Based solely on one survey, the report went so far as to call visiting the zoo one of several “non-black oriented activities,” along with “visiting the lakefront” and “hanging around.”⁷¹ The flaws with this survey’s methodology seem clear: the city’s only zoo was located in Lincoln Park, far and largely inaccessible from the city’s Black neighborhoods (and Brookfield Zoo was located in suburban Brookfield, which had only ten Black residents in 1970), means visiting the zoo might have been far from the minds of Black Chicagoans.⁷² The guidebook’s exclusion of routes that would have been

69. “Hours & Location,” Lincoln Park Zoo, accessed Feb. 6, 2022, www.lpzoo.org/visit/hours-location/; “Bus Tracker,” Chicago Transit Authority, accessed Feb. 6, 2022, www.ctabustracker.com/bustime/map/displaymap.jsp.

70. “Background Section IIA: Population and Leisure Time Analysis,” in *Report on Policies for the Chicago Park District: Draft* (Chicago: Barton-Aschman Associates, 1970), 6.

71. “Background Section IIA,” 6.

72. United States Census Bureau, “Black Population, 1970,” Social Explorer, accessed Nov. 30, 2021, www.socialexplorer.com/home/dataset-entry/us-census-data. One analogous modern example of the interplay between residential segregation and zoo usage is the Easter Monday tradition of Black Washingtonians visiting the Smithsonian National Zoo. See Ian Shapira, “For African American Families, a Day of Tradition at the National Zoo,” *Washington Post*,

more used by Black patrons was one small part of the segregationist forces that kept parks, such as the Lincoln Park Zoo, all White in practice.

We can also see how other contemporary actors viewed the city’s parks in surviving written documents. In the face of the urban renewal during the early 1960s, particularly in the Loop and Hyde Park, a group of architects and architectural hobbyists organized themselves into the Chicago Heritage Committee. In the first years of the decade, the group fought to preserve historic buildings in Chicago, such as Frank Lloyd Wright’s Robie House and Burnham and Root’s Rookery Building.⁷³ Soon after, they branched out into other issues, particularly those affecting the lakeshore. In 1962, they directed their activism towards ensuring that Art Institute funds for lakefront sculptures were used properly and began activism around preserving the lakefront itself.⁷⁴ The committee’s work led to the publication of *The Issue of the Lakefront: An Historical Critical Survey* (1964) by architect Douglas Schroeder.⁷⁵ *The Issue of the Lakefront* does provide excellent historical context to the evolution of Chicago’s lakefront, but avoids any issues of race, a clear decision on the part of the author. Since the city’s founding, Chicago’s most valuable natural resource and most important recreational attraction has been mired in the city’s racial conflicts. The text recognizes “Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, a

Apr. 1, 2013. The zoo is located over two miles from the nearest majority Black census tract, in the midst of the wealthier and whiter part of Northwest DC; however, Black interest in visiting the zoo is seen in the large attendance on Easter Monday.

73. Elinor Richey, “What Chicago Could Be Proud of,” *Harper’s Magazine*, Dec. 1, 1961, harpers.org/archive/1961/12/what-chicago-could-be-proud-of.

74. “Ferguson Fund Profits to Buy More Statuary,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Dec. 1, 1962; “Dateline Chicago: ‘The Disappearing Lakefront,’” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 8, 1962.

75. Douglas Schroeder, *The Issue of the Lakefront: An Historical Critical Survey* (Chicago: Chicago Heritage Committee, 1964).

negro,” as “the first settler on the site of Chicago,” but otherwise does not discuss race.⁷⁶ Significantly, the text is silent about the 1919 Race Riot, which began at a lakefront beach and led to decades of de facto segregation of the lakefront, up to and including the time of the report’s publication.

The Issue of the Lakefront does, however, articulate a crucial point that seems to have been quietly followed but never published by park district officials in this era. “The inland parks with some exceptions,” Schroeder writes, “are local parks serving local and neighborhood populations. The lakefront parks serve two functions as both local parks for nearby residents and regional parks for the entire metropolitan area.”⁷⁷ In this analysis, he broke from the terminology used by parks officials. From at least the 1950s to the modern era, park district officials used the term “citywide parks” to describe major parks theoretically intended for use by residents from across the city and “magnet parks” for parks expected to draw visitors “from the entire metropolitan area and beyond.”⁷⁸ Schroeder, however, disputes that characterization by stating that inland parks primarily serve “local and neighborhood populations” and that lakefront parks at least partially do the same, without making a distinction between large citywide and magnet parks and smaller playgrounds and district parks. He acknowledges that the segregation of the city also segregates Chicago’s parks, including its biggest “citywide parks,” such as the Lincoln Park Zoo.

A study of Chicagoland’s recreation resources conducted in the 1970s reached a similar conclusion regarding the accessibility of lakefront citywide resources: “There is a need to explore convenient and reliable means

76. Schroeder, 2.

77. Schroeder, 28–29.

78. *Suggested Goals in Park and Recreation Planning*, 2; *The Power of Parks: An Assessment of Chicago Parks’ Economic Impact* (Chicago: Chicago Park District, 2014), 4, www.ccchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/The-Power-of-Park-Brochure-150713-2-.compressed.pdf.

of access to and within city and regional parks... For example, direct bus service could be provided from Lawndale, Garfield Park, Austin, and other West Side areas to lakefront recreational areas.”⁷⁹ This study indicates that “citywide” resources were not available to all due to segregation and less-than-perfect public transit.

In terms of evaluating the everyday effects of park district policies and practices, we also need to examine the employees who carried them out. As originally described by Michael Lipsky, the delivery of public services should be examined through “public service workers who interact directly with citizens through the course of their jobs and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work.”⁸⁰ While this paper primarily examines the distribution of park space rather than services, previous examples, such as the Calumet Park riot and the incidents at Rainbow Beach in the summer of 1959, demonstrate the important role that municipal employees (especially employees of the Park District and Chicago Police) played in carrying them out.

In this era, the employees of the Chicago Park District published a monthly newsletter entitled *Park Ways*, which explored not only the identities and priorities of the district’s employees, but other more loosely related topics such as the (publicized) political leanings of employees. In the February 1961 issue of *Park Ways*, the Chicago Park District Employees Association announced its newly elected thirty-seven-member Board of Directors. Though perhaps unsurprising, the uniform whiteness of those elected is a mildly arresting sight on first glance. Of the twenty-nine directors pictured, all but one are visibly White.⁸¹ The only racially ambiguous

79. *National Urban Recreation Study, Chicago/Gary* (Denver: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1977), 22–23.

80. Michael Lipsky, *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service*, 30th anniv. ed. (New York: Russell Sage, 2010), 3.

81. *Park Ways* (Chicago: Chicago Park District Employees Association, Feb. 1961), 1.

exception visible in the photograph is Albert McEvilla, an employee of the conservatory, but census records suggest that McEvilla was also White.⁸² The universally White board was likely linked to the ongoing influence of Mayor Daley's patronage-based machine, but it is still a striking image: the elected representatives of the employees shaping Chicagoans' park experiences did not reflect the neighborhood diversity around the district's parks, or even the diversity of its employees. The same 1961 issue of *Park Ways* "brags" about the many former members of the Park District Police who have achieved high ranks in the Chicago Police Department after the departments merged.⁸³

A unique episode in the history of the Chicago Park District—one that upon further inspection is revealed to be rooted in segregation—is the attempt to build an "adult beach" in Hyde Park. The beginning of this project is well documented. In August 1963, the Hyde Park–Kenwood Community Conference (HPKCC), a group founded by "middle-class Negroes, as well as whites" "to develop an interracial community of high standards," submitted a request to the Chicago Park District to construct a new beach at 53rd Street.⁸⁴ By January 1964, the district had acceded to the request of the powerful group, approving, among other sites, in Hyde Park "an adult swimming area in the cove just north of the Promontory

82. United States Census Bureau "1940 Census, Cook County, Illinois, Population Schedule, Enumeration District 103-2898, Sheet 13A, Line 39," Apr. 11, 1940, Ancestry.com, www.ancestry.com.

83. *Park Ways*, 3. The park district's role in policing the city would be an excellent topic for future research, especially in the immediate postwar years and following the merger of the park police with the citywide police, but it is unfortunately too extensive for the scope of this project.

84. "Committee Proposes Beach at 53d Street," *Chicago Tribune*, Aug. 29, 1963; Sol Tax, "Residential Integration: The Case of Hyde Park in Chicago," *Human Organization* 18, no. 1 (Spring 1959): 24, www.jstor.org/stable/44124474.

Point."⁸⁵ The selected location "would permit diving for older teen-agers and adults," which a HPKCC member said was necessary because "there was no place [on the South Side] for adults to swim" and that diving was illegal at the other beaches.⁸⁶ An additional benefit, HPKCC members said, was that the "new beach might also relieve crowding at the 57th street beach."⁸⁷ It is surprising that crowding wasn't a more pressing concern, given that photographs from as early as the 1920s show extremely crowded conditions at the beach.⁸⁸ However, a racial change presents a possible explanation for the elite and racially diverse HPKCC's request for a new beach. A 1949 image of the 57th Street Beach show an all-White crowd, consistent with the 98 percent White surrounding area reported by the 1950 Census (fig. 6), while an image of the beach from 1964 shows that a large majority of visitors were Black (fig. 7). That the 1964 image shows White and Black bathers next to one another is significant, as I discuss in the crisis and investment section, but more relevant for this discussion is the change in the bathers' races from 1949 to 1964.

Rather than the stated need for diving facilities and the euphemistic "crowding," I believe that the motivation for the HPKCC to request the new beach may have been the newly Black and likely working-class bathers of 57th Street Beach. Hyde Park's elite Black and White residents, many of whom were associated with the University of Chicago, may have wanted a separate swimming option from Black bathers from outside Hyde Park,

85. "New Adult Beach Approved by Park District," *Hyde Park Herald*, Jan. 15, 1964; "District Plans Six New Parks: Hyde Park, Kenwood Get Five Sites," *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 19, 1964.

86. "Committee Proposes Beach at 53d Street."

87. "Committee Proposes Beach at 53d Street."

88. Charles R. Childs, Jackson Park Beach, Chicago, Illinois, 1928 or 1929 (ICHi-095515), box 5, Charles R. Childs Collection of Postcards and Photographs, Abakanowicz Research Center, Chicago History Museum.



Figure 6: 57th Street Beach, 1949.
Photograph by Lil Bloom and Al Bloom, Chicago History Museum (ICHi-037328).



Figure 7: 57th Street Beach, 1964.
Chicago Park District Archives, Special Collections, Chicago Public Library (047-001-008).

particularly youth.⁸⁹ In many instances, “Black youths” are singled out in racist screeds (both overt and disguised). Sociologist John Solomos describes this international phenomenon, writing of “the supposed role of unemployed black youths in the ‘growing problem’ of crime and lawlessness,” the same “growing problem” HPKCC was founded to address; anthropologist Sol Tax writes of crime as a pressing concern in the very first paragraph of his study of Hyde Park organizing in the 1950s.⁹⁰

Placing the new beach north of the 57th Street Beach and south of Hyde Park Boulevard (51st Street) would locate the site in the only majority-White section of the lakeshore between 31st and 67th Streets, a clear sign that the beach was intended to be less Black, if not even majority White. Especially by 1970, when the entire lakefront between 47th and 60th was at least 75 percent White, a beach at 53rd would have been directly in the middle of the biggest White population cluster between the Loop and 79th Street. While there may be validity to HPKCC’s site selection based on water depth and diving safety, it seems not coincidental that the proposed site would be in the heart of the only possible White area.

Interestingly, the park district did not construct the new beach, despite the district’s Board of Commissioners authorizing a budget. A letter to the editor of the *Hyde Park Herald* in March 1964 explains that the proposed site had moved the two blocks north; the paper confirmed this fact in July 1964, reporting that the proposed site had been delayed and subsequently moved from 53rd Street to Hyde Park Boulevard, with a photograph that

89. Tax, “Residential Integration,” 22–23.

90. John Solomos, *Black Youth, Racism and the State: The Politics of Ideology and Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 131; Tax, “Residential Integration,” 22.

seemed to show work in progress.⁹¹ It is possible that the site was opened with little fanfare that summer or the next, but the *Herald* includes no further mention of the site by any of its names, and there is certainly no diving board there today. The only clue that I could find was a *Defender* article from four years later, in 1968, which implores city planners to “avoid a recurrence of the poor planning surrounding the park and beach areas from 47 st. to 53d st.”⁹² The failure to construct the adult beach was likely due to safety issues related to submerged rocks,⁹³ but the incident and site-selection process does shed light on the granular dynamics at play when deciding the locations of new parks, particularly in racially segregated areas such as Hyde Park and the South Side more broadly.

From these examples, we can conclude that the park district viewed parks largely from a segregationist viewpoint, that even the city’s largest parks were often segregated based on who had access to them, and that small parks and beaches had their locations determined by racial but idiosyncratic forces.

91. “New Beach Delayed,” *Hyde Park Herald*, July 1, 1964; “The Fish Won’t Bite, but Fishermen May,” *Hyde Park Herald*, July 22, 1964; Elizabeth Harris and E. Newton Elizabeth, letter to the editor, *Hyde Park Herald*, Mar. 4, 1964.

92. “Hyde Park–Kenwood Body Wants Park Unit’s Plans,” *Daily Defender*, Jan. 2, 1968.

93. “New Beach Delayed.”

Quantitative Results, 1965–70

Quantitative analysis of the second half of the decade presents several issues related to the era’s policies and trends, the main confounder being the Model Cities program created by the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Act of 1966.⁹⁴ As a relatively small and understudied part of this program, as will be discussed below, numerous small parks were established in the four target areas selected for Chicago’s Model Cities implementation: Uptown, Grand Boulevard, Woodlawn, and Lawndale.⁹⁵ This means that the previously used method of analyzing changes in parks—by examining change in acreage—returns extremely strange results. The only statistically significant variables were population (although it did not reach the more precise $P < .05$ significance threshold) and Black population, which was extremely significant, more than any other variable from any of the regressions run for this thesis, with a P-value below 0.001 (table 7).

This suggests that it would be worthwhile to explore additional variables, as there may be important forces shaping decisions not captured by the variables currently in use. The obvious variable would be whether a given census tract was within one of the four Model Cities target neighborhoods. I add this as a binary variable to the regression from table 6, which prioritizes simplicity and categorical variables (table 8).

These results are telling. When examining the change in acreage, we see that the main determinant was the majority race of the census tracts. This seems to have been primarily driven by the relatively lower change in acreage during this half of the decade (77.96 acres as opposed to 93.83

94. Ralph H. Metcalf, Jr. “Chicago Model Cities and Neocolonization,” *Black Scholar* 1, no. 6 (Apr. 1970): 24, www.jstor.org/stable/41163447.

95. Marcella A. Kirk, “An Examination and Analysis of the Chicago Model Cities Educational Project, from 1967 Through 1971” (EdD diss., Loyola University Chicago, 1973), 12, ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/1414.

in the first half) and the addition of the 13.3-acre Park Number 320 in 1969, now known as Robichaux Park, in a Black boundary tract in Washington Heights. It should be noted, however, that in the 1970 census it was no longer a boundary zone, as the Black Belt had expanded significantly south and west. This suggests that we should examine, in this half

Table 7: Park Acreage Change by Census Tract, 1965–70
Dependent Variable: Park Acreage Change

	OLS ESTIMATES	
Intercept	-0.026	(0.051)
Black %	0.241***	(0.070)
Change in Density, 1950–60	6.74E-06**	(3.00E-06)
1960 Population	1.66E-05*	(9.55E-06)
Boundary	0.0331	(0.058)
Observations	862	
R ²	0.0283	

Sources: 1950 and 1960 Census, Chicago Park District, HWLC MRC
*: P<0.1, **: P<0.05, ***: P<0.01

Table 8: Park Acreage Change by Census Tract, 1965–70, with Model Cities Variable
Dependent Variable: Park Acreage Change

	OLS ESTIMATES	
Intercept	0.202***	(0.059)
Race (Black = 1; White = -1; Mixed = 0)	0.122***	(0.035)
1960 Density	-1.94E-06	(1.56E-06)
Model Cities	-0.075	(0.116)
Boundary	0.0315	(0.058)
Observations	862	
R ²	0.0283	

Sources: 1950 and 1960 Census, Chicago Park District, HWLC MRC
*: P<0.1, **: P<0.05, ***: P<0.01

of the decade, primarily whether a census tract added or lost acreage, rather than the amount it added.

The regression adds Model Cities as a binary variable and uses the sign of park acreage as the independent variable: 1 for positive change, -1 for negative change, and 0 for no change (table 9). This regression returns fascinating results. With high significance, the estimated coefficients for the density and Model Cities variables are positive, both of which we would have expected due to the relevant policy considerations of the time. However, the variables boundary and Black percentage, both of which had negative estimated coefficients in the prior regression with total acre change as the dependent variable, are now estimated to be negative, with confidence levels above 99 percent. This is an important result. In a time when the vast majority of park district investments were new small parks (usually under 0.3 acres), this is the metric best suited to measure how the district made decisions. This regression shows that, with the proper controls, Black and boundary census tracts received fewer new parks than would have been expected (fig. 8).

Table 9: Sign of Park Acreage Change by Census Tract, 1965–70, with Model Cities Variable
Dependent Variable: Sign of Park Acreage Change

	OLS ESTIMATES	
Intercept	0.0528***	(0.017)
Black %	-0.1225***	(0.029)
1960 Density	1.916-06***	(5.90E-07)
Model Cities	0.0918**	(0.043)
Boundary	-0.0638***	(0.022)
Observations	862	
R ²	0.0507	

Sources: 1950 and 1960 Census, Chicago Park District, HWLC MRC
*: P<0.1, **: P<0.05, ***: P<0.01

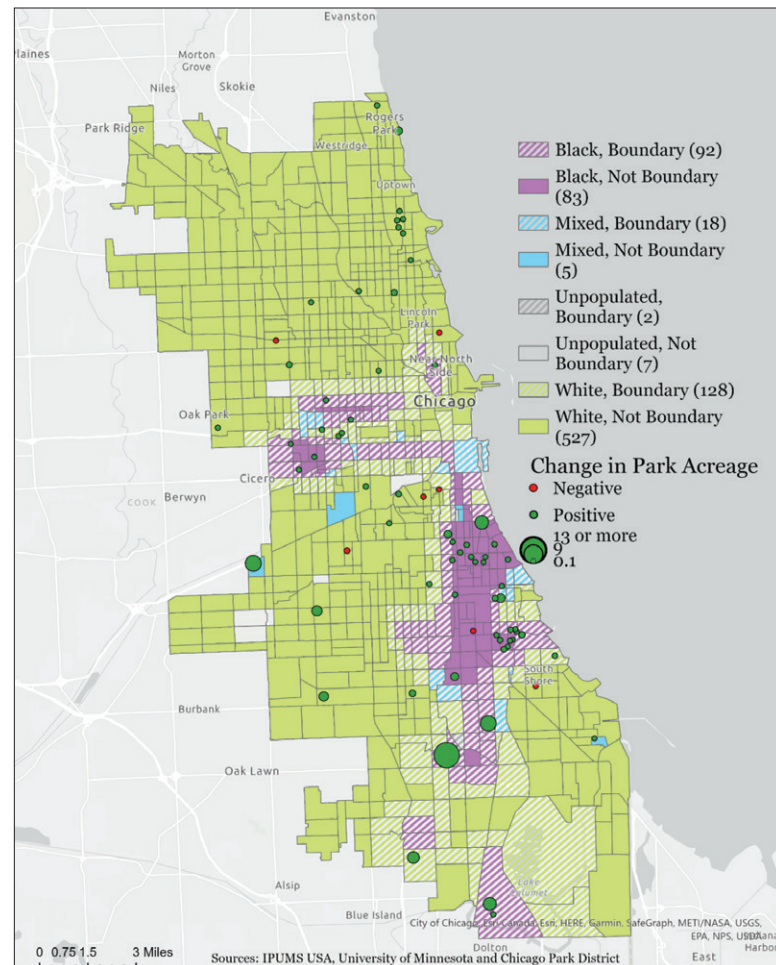


Figure 8: Changes in Park Acreage and Census Tracts by Race and Boundary, 1961–65. IPUM USA, Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota, usa.ipums.org/usa.

Crisis and Investment: Parks and Segregation, 1965–70

The years 1965 to 1970 included several watershed moments for the American civil rights movement, especially related to equality and investment in urban services, and even more so in Chicago. For the purposes of this study, the issues of de facto segregation and distribution of parks to boundary areas were to a large extent confounded by issues more at the forefront of the minds of decision makers in this era. These include the political pressure of the civil rights movement, the ongoing process of urban renewal, including the Model Cities program mentioned above, and the 1968 Chicago riots following the murder of Martin Luther King Jr.

Notably, the only significant primary sources from this era that I could find were a handful of brochures from 1965 to 1967 relevant to the issues of parks and segregation.⁹⁶ The two brochures, for the Lincoln Park Zoo and the Lincoln Park Conservatory, are a fascinating and enlightening contrast. The zoo's brochure listed the same three bus routes serving the zoo as the guidebook from two or three years previously.⁹⁷ The conservatory's brochure included nine routes, despite the entrances

96. I searched the following archives: Chicago Park District Collection, DePaul University; the ACLU Illinois Division Records, University of Chicago; Abakanowicz Research Center, Chicago History Museum; E. Winston and Ina D. Williams NAACP Papers, Newberry Library; and Chicago Department of Urban Renewal Records and Chicago Park District Records, Municipal Reference Collection, Harold Washington Library Center; and assorted other documents from these libraries.

97. *Lincoln Park Zoo Brochure* (Chicago: Chicago Park District, [1965 or 1966]), box 5, folder 30, CDUR. The library's Special Collections Division estimated these dates for the zoo and conservatory brochures.

of the zoo and the conservatory sitting only two standard Chicago blocks apart.⁹⁸ The brochure first listed the same three routes but also included the four excluded routes that pass within two blocks of the park, as well as route 11 Lincoln-Wabash and route 73 Armitage, both of which ran a few blocks (but not far) from the park.⁹⁹ By 1970, the 73 bus served a small 40 percent Black area of Lincoln Park bounded by Armitage on the north; when the brochure was published in the mid-1960s, Armitage Avenue may have been thought of as one edge of the city's expanding Black neighborhoods.¹⁰⁰ The additional bus routes suggest that the conservatory was for whatever reason not construed as a segregated all-White park in the minds of district officials in the way that the zoo was, although I would need to see other park district publications regarding the conservatory to confirm this. One hypothesis is that "conservatories" were conceived as a more integrated space than zoos. This could be related to the fact that the Garfield Park Conservatory, which was much larger and more renowned than the Lincoln Park Conservatory, had been located in a majority-Black census tract since 1960, while the ChicagoLand zoos in Lincoln Park and suburban Brookfield were still in very White areas.¹⁰¹

Finally, by looking at the district's portrayal of its own history and park usership, we can further examine their segregationist tendencies in the late 1960s. The third insightful document is a brochure entitled *Chicago Parks: General Information*.¹⁰² Subtitled "What to See and Do in Chicago's Parks,"

98. *Lincoln Park Conservatory Brochure* (Chicago: Chicago Park District, [1965 or 1966]), box 5, folder 30, CDUR.

99. Rand McNally & Co., *Chicago Transit Map*.

100. "White and Black Population, 1960"; "Black Population, 1970."

101. "White and Black Population, 1960."

102. *Chicago Parks: General Information Brochure* (Chicago: Chicago Park District, [1965]); *Table of Parks and Park Facilities and Programs* (Chicago: Chicago



Figure 9: 57th Street Beach.

Chicago Parks: General Information Brochure (Chicago: Chicago Park District, [1965]), 25.

the fifty-page document seems to have been the district's attempt to provide a comprehensive introduction to the parks system, with primary sections on the history of the department, the district's most prominent parks, and district programming. A quote from the end of the history section stands out: "Legislation and subsequent court rulings have often supported the principle that parks belong to all the people."¹⁰³

Park District, 1965), box 5 folder 30, CDUR. I estimate the *Chicago Parks* publication date as 1965 based on the brochure's list of the parks, which I cross-referenced to the 1965 *Table of Parks*.

103. *Chicago Parks: General Information Brochure*, 8.

Another informative aspect of this brochure is the photographs. Like the many other park district publications from this era that I have examined, the photographs of people enjoying parks and park programs (an art class, day camp, golf school, swim meet, and, predictably, the Lincoln Park Zoo) are almost exclusively White.¹⁰⁴ What was unique among all available park district publications from this era, as far as I can tell, is that the brochure features prominently a visibly integrated scene of recreation at the 57th Street Beach (fig. 9). The inclusion of this image was a significant deviation from what otherwise was a strong tendency to not show any integrated scenes in district publications. The significance of this image cannot be overstated. Since the 1919 race riot, and for years even beyond this brochure's publication, beaches were a major front of racial boundary conflicts. Historian Victoria Wolcott, author of *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters*, describes the significance of beaches' integration as more notable than integration in other recreation spaces:

White stereotypes of blacks as diseased and sexually threatening served as the foundation for this segregation [of beaches and pools]. ... These spaces provoked the most intense fears of racial mixing among young men and women. Scantly clad bathers flirting and playing raised the specter of interracial sex and some feared for young white women's safety.¹⁰⁵

The inclusion of this image is important, but what it says about the park district at this time is unclear. I propose three possible interpretations. First, it is possible that whoever was assembling the brochure included

104. *Chicago Parks: General Information Brochure*, 21, 23, 30–31.

105. Victoria W. Wolcott, "The Forgotten History of Segregated Swimming Pools and Amusement Parks," *The Conversation* (blog), July 9, 2019, theconversation.com/the-forgotten-history-of-segregated-swimming-pools-and-amusement-parks-119586.

it without looking closely enough to notice the White bathers; they are not necessarily the first thing you notice, and it is possible they wanted to simply include a popular beach which looks protected by the Promontory in the image's background. Second, its inclusion could be a subtle nod to the uniqueness of Hyde Park and even the political power held by the integrated HPKCC, as discussed above. As comedian Mike Nichols put it in the late 1950s, the new slogan of the neighborhood seemed to be "here we stand, black and white, shoulder to shoulder against the lower classes."¹⁰⁶ Third, it's a possibility that this was a conscious inclusion, an admittedly very small message affirming "the principle that parks belong to all the people" from page eight of the *Chicago Parks: General Information Brochure*.

These three theories could be better parsed using other sources from this era related to 57th Street Beach, but I have been unable to find others. My best theory is that reality is somewhere between the first and second possibilities. I suspect that, by the middle of the 1960s, Hyde Park was known citywide as rather unique in its racial makeup and class stratification. The name, 57th Street Beach, announces its location (as opposed to Rainbow Beach, for instance, at 75th Street); whoever compiled the document may have simply associated it with Hyde Park and not looked closely at the racial makeup of the photographed crowd. I suspect that the compiler would not have included a photograph of an all-Black beach, like 31st Street Beach, or an all-White beach, like North Avenue Beach near Lincoln Park, even if such a photo existed, due to the risk of causing controversy.

Throughout the 1960s and even before in the 1950s, the ongoing process of "urban renewal" was a major force in shaping the city of Chicago, particularly around issues of race and space. Especially in Hyde Park, as discussed here and the parks and segregation section, urban renewal's focus

106. Bruce Sagan, "The Last Word," *Hyde Park Herald*, Sept. 17, 1958.

on retaining and attracting White residents in the urban core meant that certain areas received investment while others did not. This effort came to a head in 1966 with the creation of the Model Cities program. The program provided federal funding as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty for geographically specific areas of cities across the country, including Chicago, to provide comprehensive public services from beautification to health services to citizen engagement in government.¹⁰⁷ One of the services financed by the federal government was the creation and renovation of public parks. The target areas selected, Uptown, Grand Boulevard, Woodlawn, and Lawndale, received a large amount of park investments in a very short period of time.¹⁰⁸ Despite representing just 5.7 percent of the total census tracts in the city, those four areas contained nearly 30 percent of the census tracts that gained park acreage between 1965 and 1970 and received 39.7 percent of the new parks and park expansions from the time the program was created to the end of the decade. Model Cities as a whole was a massive program; for the purposes of this thesis, I will focus on how the program affected park segregation and the placement of parks in racial boundary zones.¹⁰⁹

107. D. Bradford Hunt, "Model Cities," *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 538.

108. "In Chicago, Model Cities generated significant controversy, mostly over who would control the millions of new federal dollars." Mayor Daley selected the four neighborhoods and attempted to control neighborhood input with rubber-stamp advisory boards. Hunt, "Model Cities," 538.

109. For further study of the Model Cities program in Chicago, especially regarding civic participation, see David L. Protes, "Community Power and Social Policy: Citizen Participation in the Chicago Model Cities Program" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1974), www.proquest.com/docview/3027-31484/citation/74AFDE2CD2784A45PQ/1; Kirk, "An Examination and Analysis of the Chicago Model Cities Educational Project"; Sarah Rachel Siegel, "By the People Most Affected': Model Cities, Citizen Control, and the Broken

Even in the neighborhoods selected for the Model Cities program, fewer parks were placed in racial boundary zones. Although it is a small sample size, almost half (49 percent) of census tracts in the Model Cities target areas were boundary tracts, while only 28 percent of new parks and park expansions in the selected neighborhoods were placed in boundary tracts from 1967 to 1970. The small sample size (only seven new parks and park expansions were in boundary tracts in Model Cities target areas) and the fact that within specific neighborhoods decisions were likely made primarily based on available land and other idiosyncratic features means that limited conclusions can be drawn, but it does support the other findings of this paper.

Beyond the statistical descriptors of the areas in which parks were built, which can admittedly be a bit imprecise, we have contemporary descriptions of the areas selected. Particularly interesting is the case of Uptown. The only North Side area selected, Uptown was uniquely diverse, not just among the areas selected but perhaps among all of Chicago. A report by the Jewish Vocational Service of Chicago described the neighborhood as "'a port of entry' into Chicago for Southern whites and blacks, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and other Spanish-speaking groups and recently for an increasing number of Europeans ... [It is] the major center for day labor operations in greater Chicago."¹¹⁰ David Protes wrote that the neighborhood

is the kaleidoscopic image of life in Chicago. It is as if the community were planned to place every opposite known to the city dweller in a small geographic area. The rich and poor, elderly and

Promises of Urban Renewal" (PhD diss., St. Louis, MO, Washington University in St. Louis, 2019), doi.org/10.7936/0x01-ks37.

110. William Gellman, *Changing Career Patterns for the Vocationally Disadvantaged in a Polyethnic, Multicultural Model Cities Area: Final Report, June 15, 1970–May 31, 1973* (Chicago: Jewish Vocational Service of Chicago, Illinois, 1974), 2.

young, high rises and half-way houses, industry and small shops, and whites (Appalachian and otherwise), blacks, Latins, Japanese-Americans, and American Indians all within a territory of under three square miles.¹¹¹

Uptown stood in stark contrast to the other target areas. Protesse described Grand Boulevard as “a modern American slum. . . . Unlike Uptown, Grand Boulevard is a racially and economically homogeneous community,” and wrote, “on all indices, Woodlawn ranks among the most disadvantaged of the seventy-six community areas of Chicago.”¹¹² Protesse excludes Lawndale from the study for various reasons, including “its similarity to Grand Boulevard,” which indicated that Lawndale was also “racially and economically homogeneous” and with little political power.¹¹³

While the target areas did include a small section of the racially diverse North Kenwood, generally speaking the target areas other than Uptown were close to 100 percent Black. In Grand Boulevard, of the six new parks added from 1966 to 1970, not a single one was in a White, mixed, or boundary census tract; all were in the 99 percent or more Black neighborhoods in the target area. Urban renewal, more generally, was a significant force in creating new parks, particularly through the Model Cities program and specifically in Hyde Park. On the park district website today, the history section of eight parks lists urban renewal as the reason for their creation or the source of their funding between 1957 and 1970. Of the eight, seven are in Hyde Park.¹¹⁴ It is likely that the University of Chicago

111. Protesse, “Community Power and Social Policy.”

112. Protesse, 115, 154.

113. Protesse, 28, 115.

114. “Parks & Facilities,” Chicago Park District, accessed Mar. 1, 2022, www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities?title=&field_location_type_target_id%5B0%5D=381.

funded beautification purposes, such as park construction in Hyde Park. It is also worth noting that Hyde Park was Chicago’s biggest urban renewal project, when measured by families displaced: about 17 percent of all families displaced by urban renewal in Chicago from 1950 to 1966 were displaced from Hyde Park–Kenwood.¹¹⁵

The only other parks whose websites mention urban renewal are Boswell Park (then Number 340 Playlot)—a tiny park opened in Woodlawn as a direct investment from the Department of Housing and Urban Development during the Model Cities program—and Memorial Park, which grew by two acres in 1966 using land from the Department of Urban Renewal.¹¹⁶ Several parks in the Lincoln Park neighborhood and elsewhere also mention urban renewal as a source of funding in the 1970s, but that time period is outside the scope of this project.¹¹⁷ An interesting topic for future research would be the role that urban renewal, as a policy and as a concept, plays in public memory, public history, and official publications.

The final story of the late 1960s—the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, the resulting riots, the district’s response, and the segregation and discriminatory planning it employed—can be illustrated through

115. Digital Scholarship Lab, “Renewing Inequality,” in *American Panorama*, ed. Robert K. Nelson and Edward L. Ayers, accessed Mar. 1, 2022, dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/renewal/#view=0/0/1&viz=cartogram&city=chicagoIL&loc=11/41.86-40/-87.6340.

116. “Boswell (Arnita Young) Park,” Chicago Park District, accessed Feb. 23, 2022, www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/boswell-arnita-young-park; “Memorial Park,” Chicago Park District, accessed Mar. 2, 2022, www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/memorial-park.

117. “Oz Park,” Chicago Park District, accessed Mar. 2, 2022, www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/oz-park; “Hoard (Edison) Park,” Chicago Park District, accessed Mar. 2, 2022, www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks-facilities/hoard-edison-park.

the study of the *Weekly Administrative Bulletin* of the park district's Department of Recreation and Building & Facilities Operating Division. The bulletin served as a weekly update to street-level parks officials of policies and information deemed important by district leaders.

On April 1, 1968, just days before the assassination of King, we see the last example of how the bulletin discussed safety and race-related issues before the dynamic in the city shifted. Under the headline "Park Participation," the memo advised,

It is noted that in some dense areas park patrons are subject to intimidation and physical abuse, in some cases by undesirable gang elements outside the park area that bar many patrons from attending park programs. This should be brought to the attention of the proper authorities and some plans made to rectify this situation.¹¹⁸

Historian Andrew Diamond writes that, up to the 1950s, Chicago's gangs were largely White and perpetrated violence against Black and Latino Chicagoans. However, "gang violence occurred both within and across racial and ethnic lines," meaning that the "intimidation and physical abuse" mentioned in the bulletin could be either to intra-racial or interracial violence, or both.¹¹⁹ The bulletin's use of the euphemistic "dense areas" probably refers to Black neighborhoods. Whether the gangs in question were White, Black, or Latino is debatable, but given the past interracial gang violence at parks, I suspect that the document refers to the possibility of interracial, rather than intra-racial, intimidation and abuse.

118. P. J. McCarthy, *Weekly Administrative Bulletin* 13 (Chicago: Chicago Park District, Department of Recreation and Building & Facilities Operating Division, Apr. 1, 1968), 1, Abakanowicz Research Center, Chicago History Museum, JS712.P2 W4.

119. Andrew J. Diamond, "Gangs," *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. Ann Durkin Keating, Janice L. Reiff, and James R. Grossman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 324–25.

The riots that followed King's assassination occurred in the first week of April. The bulletin's first mention of potential violence in the parks was not until May 20. In the section on the transition to summertime policy, employees are told to notify supervisors immediately "in cases of special events, unusual incidents, turmoil or local disturbances."¹²⁰ Additionally, the same bulletin describes the reopening of beaches for the summer as "in restricted areas under supervision," a phrasing that suggests nervousness about racial conflicts in the aftermath of the riots, but could be a standard way of describing beach openings.¹²¹ I was unable to find similar phrasing in other years' bulletins.

In the June 17 bulletin, officials wrote under the headline "Commission on Human Relations," that "Park District personnel are requested to call [the Commission on Human Relations] and report racial disturbances, etc. Further instructions will be forthcoming."¹²² Further, the June 17 bulletin seems to have been where the dam broke in regards to racial incidents and parks after the April riots; immediately below the commission section was a section headlined "'Tension/Problem Areas' Meeting."¹²³ On June 6, Superintendent of the District Erwin Weiner chaired what the bulletin described as "the 1968 meeting on 'Tension/Problem Areas'" between officials from the Chicago Park District, Chicago Police, the Board of Education, and the Commission on Human Relations.

120. P. J. McCarthy, *Weekly Administrative Bulletin* 20 (Chicago: Chicago Park District, Department of Recreation and Building & Facilities Operating Division, May 20, 1968), 1, Abakanowicz Research Center, Chicago History Museum, JS712.P2 W4.

121. McCarthy, *Weekly Administrative Bulletin* 20, 1.

122. P. J. McCarthy, *Weekly Administrative Bulletin* 25 (Chicago: Chicago Park District Department of Recreation and Building & Facilities Operating Division, June 23, 1969), 2, Abakanowicz Research Center, Chicago History Museum, JS712.P2 W4.

123. McCarthy, *Weekly Administrative Bulletin* 25, 2.

This is a fascinating event due to its relevance to the topic of this paper, but I was unable to find documentation from the meeting itself. Additionally, it was described as “the 1968 meeting,” which suggests that it may have been an annual meeting.¹²⁴

It is significant that the framing of racial “problem areas” and “tension,” almost word for word, remained unchanged in the lexicon of parks officials from Lohman in 1947 to 1968. For two decades, park district officials never stopped conceptualizing racial boundary zones as places of conflict.

Conclusion

From 1947 into the 1970s, the Chicago Park District conceptualized interracial conflict as an inevitability. Decision-makers treated the areas of the city in proximity to both White and Black residents as “problem areas” and, as such, deprived these areas of equitable amounts of park space. This led to a disparate impact on Black residents, who were more likely than White residents to live in these boundary areas, and hampered the purported efforts of the late 1960s to invest in previously disinvested parts of the city.

Additionally, and perhaps equally importantly, the park district viewed and treated certain parks as White and others as Black, even if they were located in diverse neighborhoods and even if they were supposedly “city-wide” parks. This meant, in practice, that Black residents had less access to resources such as the lakefront and the Lincoln Park Zoo. This disparity is due in large part to the much more expansive forces of residential segregation, but it was exacerbated by individual decisions

124. The notes or minutes from this meeting would be invaluable. I did not submit an Illinois Freedom of Information Act request, because a response would have come after the deadline for this thesis; I hope future researchers will find records from this meeting or those in other years, if they exist.

by the park district, exemplified by the cases of the Hyde Park beaches and the Lincoln Park Zoo guidebook.

This thesis, limited to thirteen years, studied how the Chicago Park District participated in segregation, which scholars had not previously examined. I supported a historical analysis of primary sources with a quantitative analysis of park placements, which proved that Black neighborhoods, especially along racial boundaries, received less parkland than White neighborhoods. I hope that my thesis will provide information and provoke questions for future scholars who wish to expand this study in time or to address other aspects of segregationist policy taken by the district in order to understand the full sociocultural impacts of these policies. ○

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