

Preface



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The Chicago Studies Program works to join the College's undergraduate curriculum with the dynamic world of praxis in our city. It encourages students to develop their courses of study in dialogue with our city through facilitating internships, service opportunities, and other kinds of engagement, and through academic offerings like the Chicago Studies Quarter, thesis workshops, and the provision of excursions for courses. We believe that this produces not only richer, more deeply informed academic work, but also more thoughtful, humanistic interaction with the city and its most pressing questions. A complete listing of opportunities through Chicago Studies is available on the website: chicagostudies.uchicago.edu.

What kind of city is the Chicago that we ask our students to engage? How should we think about its flows of power and its trajectories? Especially since the great recession, the city has evolved in some paradoxical ways, inspiring a growing literature that sees Chicago as situated between its industrial past and the kind of high-end, postindustrial economy represented by Boston, San Francisco, and Washington, DC. The reports of fiscal crises, credit downgrades, and slow job growth contrast sharply with the lure of corporations to the Loop,¹ the growing influence of the

local creative economy, and a construction boom that consistently leads the nation in growth.² It is also noteworthy that, even as Chicago continues to lose residents to the suburbs, the population of the central city, comprising areas within three miles of city hall, continues to surge. Within this radius, Chicago has gained the second highest number of inhabitants of any city in the nation in the last decades, while neighborhoods in the far south, west, and north of the city continue to decline.³ All of these changes in demography and the economy are striking, but they do not point in one direction or fit cleanly with large processes based on the experience of other cities.⁴ Chicago, as ever, holds many stories in its present.

A strained dialogue about the city's future is evident in many places, from debates over the lack of affordable housing to clashes over the proposal to site the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art on public parkland. In the last year, Chicago has been much in the national news for its scenes of protest, particularly following the release of video in November 2015, showing the police shooting of teenager Laquan McDonald. Reflecting national debates, Chicago's protests have revolved around police accountability and suspected complicity in city hall, as well as

1. Greg Hinz, "The Conundrum of Chicago's Economy," *Crain's Chicago Business*, March 4, 2016, accessed November 17, 2016, chicagobusiness.com/article/20160304/BLOGS02/160309901/the-conundrum-of-chicagos-economy.

2. Jay Koziarz, "Report: Chicago's Construction Boom Leads Nation in Year-over-year Change," *Curbed Chicago*, October 28, 2016, accessed November 17, 2016, chicago.curbed.com/2016/10/28/13453878/chicago-real-estate-construction-spending-report-september-2016.

3. Yonah Freemark, "Reorienting Our Discussion of City Growth," *The Transport Politic*, July 6, 2016, accessed November 17, 2016, www.thetransportpolitic.com/2016/07/06/reorienting-our-discussion-of-city-growth.

4. Pete Saunders, "Something Strange Is Happening in Chicago," *Business Insider*, April 4, 2016, accessed November 17, 2016, mobile.businessinsider.com/something-strange-happening-chicago-economy-2016-4.

negotiations with public employee unions. But this sustained moment also calls into question how the city is run and who runs it. At issue is the relevance of a civic model based upon a Democratic machine, a strong mayor, and powerful aldermen, which is being challenged at many points by organizing from below. This push and pull between center and periphery, Loop and neighborhoods, city and community groups is a powerful theme in the city's history. These contests tell us much about the evolving shape of Chicago's public life.

When students engage academically and creatively with Chicago, they must grasp a city that defies easy generalizations and is certain, if we allow it to speak, to challenge expectations. This is one of the great opportunities of the Chicago Studies Program. Put the city in a theoretical box, uncultivated by experience, and we are unlikely to read it fruitfully or learn much ourselves. But if we see the city as an evolving landscape, to be approached with elucidating questions, it can enrich our reflections on the world and inspire thought in every field of study and practice. An internship, a social advocacy, or a research project can reveal unexpected things and train us to observe our environments, foreign and familiar, with greater awareness.

This is what it means to use Chicago as an urban, academic laboratory, and that ambition is captured in the *Chicago Studies Annual*. The essays, selected from all the disciplines represented in the College, show the very best academic work about the city produced by undergraduate students in research seminars and BA thesis colloquia. Each one explores with a creative lens a problem, institution, or episode in the life of the region and is informed by interactions with the city beyond the compilation of data sets and interviews or the study of archival records.

One theme of the present volume is alternative visions of public life, that is, efforts to bring about a world of participation quite different from those that historical actors experienced during the twentieth century. William Fernandez, AB '15 (History), mines the Julius Rosenwald Papers at the Special Collections Research Center to understand the

background of Rosenwald's 1913 gift to construct the first all-black YMCA. At one level this is a story of philanthropy, but the focus on motivations leads to a complex story about alliances, the pursuit of influence, and integration. The provision of funds by a capitalist of Jewish faith and ancestry to a Christian charitable organization for the construction of a recreational facility for African American men held risks and rewards for each of these groups. In the case of Rosenwald, the donation spoke to his ambitions and principles: support for African American causes resonated with his religious commitments and his family's reverence for Abraham Lincoln. It also eased his acceptance into the commercial elite of the city and had clear benefits for his business interests. Rather than reduce these motivations to self-interest, however, Fernandez argues that they fit into a cycle of economic, social, and cultural capital of giving and receiving.

Melissa High, AB '14 (History), investigates the civic activities of Chicago clubwomen during World War II and, in doing so, discovers a similar commitment to shift the margins of inclusion in a highly stressed environment. The wartime ideology of womanhood emphasized sacrifice and unity on behalf of the nation, and High is attuned to the ways in which two associations—the Chicago Woman's Aid Society and the Woman's City Club of Chicago—appropriated this ideology to address traditional, local concerns, from public sanitation and nutrition to education. Given that civic welfare had been the mission of women's clubs for a century, one could hardly expect them to rechannel this activity toward national projects. Instead, clubwomen picked up on expanded opportunities for women's leadership and tolerance for sacrifice during the war to advance a more inclusive vision for healthy local communities. In this way, High shows that Chicago's clubwomen forged their own, locally based strategy for participation in the war effort.

The next two essays consider political alliances in the last decades of the twentieth century. Both use deep empirical research and shrewd

analysis to historicize a very contemporary moment when divestment, a weakening of the civic and federal safety net, and rapid changes in the city's demography all converged to destabilize relationships that had governed the city since the 1950s. Michael McCown, AB' 14 (History), guides us through the political dimensions of a gang truce that briefly arrested the city's spiking rates of murder and violent crime in 1992. The truce sought to mobilize the black community to address the underlying causes of communal decline, under resourcing, and manipulation from without, beginning with a cessation of internal violence. McCown shows how a broad spectrum of actors, from gang leaders to community organizers and politicians, attempted to shape and then capitalize on the truce for an equally broad spectrum of admirable and not-so-admirable reasons. McCown embeds these motivations in the larger world of black cultural and communal nationalism of the 1980s and 1990s, with its emphases on economic bootstrapping, spiritual-moral renewal, self-reliance, and patriarchy as means to material and political progress. Ultimately, this context allows him to distinguish between authentic communal stirrings and exogenous grabs for power and influence by many of the truce brokers.

Jaime Sánchez Jr., AB '15 (History, Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies), considers electoral politics in his study of Latino engagement in the 1983 mayoral election and Harold Washington's campaign in particular. From today's vantage point, it is easy to imagine a Black-Latino alliance founded upon racial and ethnic inclusion and opposition to the Democratic machine—to say nothing of aversion to voting for Washington's Republican opponent. The problem with this, Sánchez demonstrates, is that it assumes a unity that did not exist among voters of Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Mexican descent and other groups. The Democratic primary, when Chicago Latinos voted for Daley, Byrne, and Washington in roughly equal numbers, revealed that there was no cohesive "Latino vote" to be courted. Sánchez argues that the general election,

when the Washington campaign deployed a skillful media strategy to Latino voters, was a key moment in the forging of a cohesive Latino constituency. There were admittedly deep historical and structural forces at play that elided the divisions between Latinos. But the campaign gave these groups common cause along with unifying symbols and narratives. This helped to articulate an identity that was already taking shape at a national level.

A final pair of contributions address current policy challenges in Chicago. Erin Simpson, AB '15 (Public Policy), analyzes data from a survey she created to explore the user experience at Chicago's Public Computer Centers (PCC). These PCCs sit at the heart of recent government programs implemented to reduce digital inequality, which is in turn strongly linked to income level and other measures of prosperity. Simpson designed her survey to evaluate the efficacy of Chicago's PCCs, which offer services from digital literacy courses to personal-computing assistance. A striking finding of her analysis is that, while these centers are an effective resource for economic and skill development, they also fill a range of social functions by helping users with job searches, homework, and access to government resources. They merit continued support.

Rachel Whaley, AB '15 (Public Policy), turns to a more material problem in Chicago's low recycling rates, which fall well below the level required to make residential recycling programs sustainable. Her essay considers prospects for reversing these trends through pro-environmental programming in Chicago Public Schools, since schools have shown a remarkable power to shape behavior in ways that resist demographic predictors. To evaluate this hypothesis, Whaley contrasts data on recycling from neighborhood schools with city census-tract data and statistics from the city's "Blue Cart" recycling zones. The picture that emerges is encouraging: schools not only out recycle their surrounding zones, but also recycle at much higher rates than would be indicated by the income and educational levels of their census tracts. Schools, Whaley concludes, can play an important role in cultivating pro-environmental behavior.

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Assistant Dean of the College

Acknowledgments



WILLIAM FERNANDEZ | Since graduating with an AB in history in 2015 Will has gone on to work as a youth development volunteer with the Peace Corps, based in Guadalupe de Cartago, Costa Rica, and served as a member of the Youth Working Group to the U.S. Commission for UNESCO. He wishes to thank his thesis advisor, Amy Dru Stanley, and his graduate-student preceptor, Guy Emerson Mount, for their guidance and support throughout the research and writing of this thesis. Without their support and incisive criticism, he would not have been half the student he was and even less of the professional he currently is. He is also thankful to Jeanne Chauffour and Daniel Koehler for their patience and hard work in helping to prepare this submission for print.

MELISSA HIGH | Since graduating in 2014, Melissa High has earned a masters of arts in teaching through the University of Chicago Urban Teacher Education Program. She now teaches for Chicago Public Schools and loves working with her second-grade students. She would like to thank her history thesis advisor, Jane Dailey, and her preceptor, Sarah Weicksel, for their invaluable support, insight, and mentorship throughout the BA research process.

MICHAEL MCCOWN | I want to acknowledge Trudi Langendorf who encouraged my curiosity, showed me there was as much to learn off campus as on, and taught me the art and power of conversation. My advisor, Adam Green, talked through all my questions exhaustively and always engaged even my half-baked ideas seriously; our discussions were always worth the wait. I owe you both immensely, as well as all my comrades at Southside Together Organizing for Power. Since graduating I've had the great privilege to join the American labor movement as a union organizer on Staten Island, in San Francisco, and in the East Bay. It is my sincere belief that with radical analysis and collective action workers, public-housing residents, the incarcerated, and those surviving on the streets still have the world to inherit. My greatest hope for this work is that it can be useful to organizers who share that belief.

JAIME SÁNCHEZ JR. | My sincere thanks to Daniel Koehler, the editors, and the College for this wonderful honor and opportunity to publish my research. In addition, I must say that this work would not have been possible without the feedback and thoughtful guidance of my faculty mentors, Ramón Gutiérrez, Adam Green, and Susan Gzesh, for whom I am so grateful. After graduating from the College in 2015 with a history major, my passion for research has continued in my role as a research analyst for the Service Employees International Union in Washington, DC. In this capacity, I continue to address critically important research questions with an eye toward improving the lives of working families across the country. Today, I am proud to be a part of a movement that is fighting for the very social change and coalition building that Harold Washington envisioned so many years ago.

ERIN SIMPSON | A proud Wisconsin native, Erin Simpson, AB '15 with honors, is a civic technologist. She was the founding director of programs for the nonprofit Civic Hall Labs and has worked previously at Microsoft, the White House, and the Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago. Erin's career has focused on investigating bias in technology

and exploring technology's civic potential within a public-policy context. She is furthering this work at the University of Oxford as a Truman Scholar and a Marshall Scholar. She is working towards masters' degrees in the social science of the Internet (2017) and comparative social policy (2018). She expresses gratitude to her advisor Chad Broughton, the Smart Chicago Collaborative, Chicago Studies, the Laura Parks and Mildred Francis Center YWCA, and the Chicago Public Library for their support of her research.

RACHEL WHALEY | After graduating from the University of Chicago in 2015 with a major in public-policy studies, Rachel spent an AmeriCorps service year at Year Up, which is a workforce development organization that trains young adults for career paths and provides a talent pipeline for employers. In 2016, Rachel transitioned to a full-time role with Year Up, managing data analysis and staff training for Year Up sales teams across the Northeast. Rachel would like to thank Jaira Harrington for invaluable coaching through the writing process, her friends and family for their support, and her teachers, Chad Broughton, Ray Lodato, and Anne Rogers, whose courses sparked her interests in public policy, environmental justice, and the application of computer science to policy questions—all of which collide in this paper.