RACE & PLACE: YOUNG ADULTS AND THE FUTURE OF CHICAGO

A Report by the **GenForward Team**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the summer and fall of 2017, researchers from the GenForward Project at the University of Chicago interviewed 200 young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 from across the city. The voices of young African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinxs, and whites were evenly represented. These young adults spoke about their experiences, opportunities, and challenges in the city, as well as their hopes and dreams for themselves, for their communities, and for Chicago.

Education

Navigating Educational Resources and Opportunities: Young adults in Chicago experience varying degrees of access to the district's most exclusive high schools. White young adults are much more likely to apply to and attend highly selective high schools. Latinx and Asian American young adults who gained access to these elite schools discussed the ways in which pursuing educational opportunities outside of their neighborhood led to trade-offs, including long commutes and feeling disconnected from their neighborhoods. Meanwhile, African American young adults discussed the lack of adequate funding for basic resources such as textbooks and technology within neighborhood schools.

School Closures: Young adults in Pilsen, Chinatown-Bridgeport, and Englewood felt that school closures reflected a lack of concern for communities of color from the city's leadership and Mayor Emanuel in particular. White young adults were also critical of the board's decision to close schools; however, they tended to discuss these policies in abstract terms, with many having avoided the negative consequences of school closures by enrolling in "choice schools." African American young adults in Englewood described the ways in which the consolidation of schools across neighborhood boundaries heightened the potential for violence on commutes to and from school and during the school day.

What Does a Better Education Look Like? Across neighborhoods, young adults in Chicago shared remarkably similar visions for how to improve education in the city. These solutions include reinvesting in neighborhood schools; adopting a more equitable approach to funding that takes preexisting racial, ethnic, and geographic inequalities into account; developing a pipeline to recruit and retain well-trained, culturally aware, and passionate educators who are invested in Chicago; and increasing access to free after-school programs that allow young people to explore their interests, obtain additional academic support, and prepare for college.

Economics

Employment Discrimination & Racism: Nearly all African American young adults from Englewood reported in their interviews that they were discriminated

against in the workplace on the basis of their race. They mentioned instances of equally qualified, non-black job candidates being hired over them. Those who were employed shared how they were unfairly surveilled by employers, and a few mentioned they were fired without cause. Some white and Latinx young adults from the North Side and Pilsen also mentioned witnessing these instances of employment discrimination toward African Americans.

Many Latinx and Asian American young adults across different neighborhoods did not have this experience with employment discrimination, especially those working for businesses in their local communities owned by employers who shared a similar racial and ethnic background. While Latinx and Asian American young adults working in these neighborhoods reported fewer incidents of employment discrimination, most did not feel they could access better-paying jobs with more benefits that were often located outside their neighborhood.

College Affordability & Economic Outcomes: College affordability was an issue often mentioned by Latinx young adults in Pilsen. These young adults explained in their interviews that they lacked financial support to attend college and, as a result, some did not start or complete their degrees. Those who were enrolled or did complete their education, explained the financial burden of a college degree made them reliant on low-wage jobs that, for many, stunted their economic mobility in the city. This is also an issue for the African American young adults we interviewed from Englewood, only 6% of whom were able to complete a bachelor's degree.

Economic Mobility: Most white young adults, regardless of their neighborhood of residence, socioeconomic status, educational credentials, and industry sector shared positive experiences navigating the workforce. Several white young adults explained that they were able to easily transition into new industries, move up in their respective careers, and pursue professional growth opportunities. They were the only racial/ethnic group who consistently mentioned experiencing these types of economic opportunities and mobility.

Reducing Economic Barriers: A large number of young adults of color, particularly those living in Pilsen, Englewood, and Chinatown-Bridgeport, mentioned that their socioeconomic status constrained their capacity to complete their higher education, achieve economic mobility, and reach financial stability. Of those who mentioned these types of constraints, many shared suggestions for improving their economic position. Several Asian Americans in Chinatown-Bridgeport explained how opportunities

to develop financial literacy—the skills to budget, manage their finances, invest in the market, and to finance their higher education—helped them improve their financial status. Some African Americans young adults from Englewood explained how nonprofit organizations that provide assistance and resources for applying to jobs have helped reduce some barriers for pursuing employment. While these young adults suggest that such resources improve their short-term financial status, they also insist that a more structural intervention is needed to change their economic positions.

Gentrification and Displacement

Spatial and Cultural Exclusion: Young Latinxs, Asian Americans, and African Americans on the Lower West, South, and North Sides often discussed gentrification and the influx of affluent newcomers and speculators to their neighborhoods as causes of exclusion, including displacement. Such exclusionary patterns made these young adults uncertain about whether or not they could stay in their neighborhoods and in Chicago at large.

The Insulation of White Young Adults: Few white young adults on the North Side discussed race as a factor in gentrification, choosing instead to talk about race and racism in their neighborhoods in terms of diversity. The small number of young whites who did talk about race and gentrification were themselves originally from Chicago. This is important to note, given city policymakers' attempts to recruit more affluent, young newcomers to the city.

Powerful Actors Undermining Community Influence: A large number of young adults of color, particularly young Latinxs in Pilsen, identified the economic behavior of real estate developers, corporations, city policymakers, and well-off homebuyers as an issue in their communities. To these young adults, these powerful actors capitalize on local property and cultural space, which undermines their community's capacity to influence decisions.

Justice and Policing

Failure to Serve and Needed Policy Alternatives: African American, Asian American, and Latinx young adults were particularly critical of the actions of police, but felt they had no other options but to call on them when in trouble. Yet, when they did call the police, young adults across race and ethnicity told recurring stories of police officers arriving late to scenes of assault, theft, and domestic violence, or otherwise responding inappropriately or insufficiently to emergencies. Roughly 1 in 3 young African Americans, 1 in 6 young Latinxs, and 1 in 10 young Asian Americans we interviewed reported that the police failed to address emergencies in a timely or appropriate manner. Perhaps for these reasons, 1 in

5 African Americans and 1 in 9 Latinx young adults we interviewed, mostly in Englewood and Pilsen, said they would not call the police if they were in trouble.

Policing and Racial Discrimination: Compared to young adults in other neighborhoods, young African Americans in Englewood reported the highest levels of police harassment and the harshest experiences of police treatment. A considerable number of young black men, in particular, recounted experiences of mistaken identity in which police detained, pinned down, and handcuffed them before determining that they were "clean." Likewise, various Asian American and Latinx respondents in Pilsen, Albany Park, and Chinatown-Bridgeport described experiencing harsh and discriminatory treatment by the police, especially based on language and presumed immigration status.

The Need to Reimagine Justice: When asked how to improve policing in the city, the young Chicagoans with whom we spoke typically suggested fundamental changes in the aims and operations of the Chicago Police Department. These suggested changes ranged from abolishing the police department to reforms like community policing. Across race and ethnicity, the vast majority of young adults we interviewed wanted fundamental change in the purpose and place of the police department—and a reimagining of how justice is conceived and carried out in Chicago.

Violence

Unequal Exposure to Violence: Exposure to violence was a part of growing up for a multitude of young African Americans in Englewood, Latinxs in Pilsen, and to a lesser degree, Asian Americans in Chinatown-Bridgeport. Most white young adults, however, lived a different reality on the North Side. Among the white young adults we interviewed, the most common form of direct experience with violence was muggings, while some others talked about having friends or acquaintances who experienced violent crime. In contrast, a number of young African Americans and Latinxs we interviewed reported firsthand encounters with violence and experiences of losing loved ones to gun violence.

Violent Trauma as a Public Health Concern: Across different neighborhoods in the city, and across race and ethnicity, young adults who had experienced violence repeatedly talked about the lasting psychological effects of such occurrences. Although these young adults drew on an array of resources to move forward with their lives following violent encounters, a number noted that they were still struggling mentally and emotionally and that needed supports are not equally available across Chicago.

Violence Against Women and Gender Nonconforming Individuals: Across race and ethnicity, young adults identified violence against cis and trans women and against gender nonconforming individuals as a highly prevalent problem in the city. Young adults, across genders and neighborhoods, also reported experiencing domestic violence firsthand or witnessing the women in their lives, cis and trans, deal with domestic abuse, primarily from cis men.

Addressing Violence Against Women and Gender Nonconforming Individuals: While some of the young adults who experienced or witnessed violence firsthand reported receiving counseling, many others did not. All, however, said that they were still dealing with the trauma of domestic and sexual violence. In the face of these challenges, the young women with whom we spoke, especially young African American women and Latinas, described efforts to cultivate networks of safety and support among their friends, mothers, and grandmothers.

Is Chicago a Violent City?: While many young adults across race, ethnicity, and place said they do think Chicago is violent, African American young adults in Englewood challenged the idea that Chicago is a violent city. As with Latinx young adults in Pilsen, African American young adults associated violence with particular actors, streets, and street corners rather than with the city or neighborhoods at large. This stands in contrast to many of the white and Asian American young adults we interviewed, who generally stated that Chicago was a violent city and who pointed to media and policy reports as evidence that the South Side was the most violent area.

Politics

Unequal Access to Politicians: Nearly all African Americans, Latinxs, and Asian Americans we interviewed reported that city politicians were unresponsive to their concerns. Latinxs from Pilsen and Asian Americans from Chinatown-Bridgeport explained that their local aldermen were reachable, but unresponsive to their issues and concerns. Most African American young adults from Englewood mentioned that their aldermanic representatives were absent and unavailable. In comparison, nearly all white young adults reported positive experiences reaching and influencing their local political representatives.

Counter Spaces for Democracy: In the absence of accessible and reliable local politicians, many African American young adults from Englewood turned to neighborhood-based organizations as counter spaces for democracy where they can engage in collective problem-solving and address immediate issues in

their community. Latinx young adults in Pilsen and Asian American young adults in Chinatown-Bridgeport also referenced these type of organizations as important spaces for political advocacy. They often mentioned relying on these organizations to protect the rights and interests of members of their communities.

Pipelines to Politics: Several Asian American young adults expressed frustration with a lack of political representation in the city. Many of them insisted that there need to be more support and opportunities for young adults of color, and especially Asian Americans, to run for local office in Chicago. Latinx young adults from Pilsen also advocated for additional pathways to politics; many mentioned wanting to build intergroup, political coalitions among young adults across neighborhoods.

Social Movements & Protest: Organizing and participating in political acts of resistance was often mentioned as an important political tool by Latinx and African American young adults in Pilsen and Englewood who feel the city and its political representatives are not paying attention to their issues and concerns. Several Latinx young adults, and many African American young adults, mentioned organizing, leading, and participating in grassroots organizing to advocate for political changes in the city.

Safety, Freedom, & Joy

Freedom: Young people across Chicago define and experience freedom differently. A plurality of white young adults claimed to feel free everywhere in Chicago, stressing the various opportunities provided by the city. Among African American young adults, freedom was frequently described as an attitude or an outlook that one chooses to adopt in order to navigate the city. Latinx young adults living in Pilsen discussed numerous conceptions of freedom, but consistently stressed a state of self-acceptance and appreciation. Meanwhile, Asian American young adults in Chinatown-Bridgeport associated freedom with economic prosperity.

Safety and Joy: While young people of color were more likely to express concerns about neighborhood safety than young whites, they were also more likely to specifically identify sources of joy within their neighborhoods. Individuals who expressed this strong sense of neighborhood connection were more likely to envision remaining in Chicago.

Chicago Outlook: One-third of our participants reported that they wanted to leave Chicago someday. This was especially pronounced in Englewood, where 43% of those we interviewed reported wanting to leave the city.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, we are grateful to the young adults who took time from their busy schedules to sit down with us and share their experiences, challenges, hopes, and visions for themselves and for Chicago. Without their graciousness and candor, this report would not have been possible. We also thank the young leaders at community-based organizations who supported our work and connected us to different stakeholders in the city.

We also thank our colleagues who helped us in different ways to recruit participants, conduct interviews, code and analyze data, and collect and analyze secondary data. These individuals include Benjamin Glover, Elsy González, Cosette Hampton, Jessica Law, Helen Lee, Hilary Tackie, Bri White, and Julie Xu. We are so grateful to have worked with and learned from them throughout this process! Their collective efforts were invaluable to this report. Our colleagues Genevieve Bates, Geneva Cole, and Shu Fu also helped us with some of the interviewee recruitment. Their support is much appreciated. We thank Natasha Brower, a free-lance graphic designer in Hyde Park, for her creativity in designing the graphics and layout of the report. Her design brought many of the stories young people shared with us to life in this report. We also thank Tonika Johnson for allowing us to use her wonderful photography.

Our colleagues at the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture at the University of Chicago steadfastly supported this work and graciously provided space for us to carry it out. For that and much more, we sincerely appreciate Trayce Matthews, Camille Morgan, and Sarah Tuohey. Our colleagues at GenForward—Elizabeth Jordan Davies, Matthew Fowler, Alfredo Gonzalez, Jenn M. Jackson, Vlad Medenica, and Jon Rogowski—gave us helpful and critical feedback. And a brilliant and resourceful team at the University of Chicago helped to make this work possible. We thank Laura Chávez, Latecia Green, Marco Leoni, Rose Lewis, and Sharonda Lewis for making the administrative processes so smooth and navigable. We also thank Anne Dodge, Chauncey Harrison, and Equan Burrows for supporting this project in different ways.

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About The Genforward Survey And Qualitative Research

The GenForward Survey is a project founded and directed by Professor Cathy J. Cohen at the University of Chicago. Interviews for the bimonthly survey are conducted with a nationally representative sample of adults, ages 18-34, administered by NORC at the University of Chicago.

With over 1,750 young adults in any given survey, GenForward pays special attention to how race and ethnicity influence how young adults, or millennials, experience and think about the world. Given the importance of race and ethnicity for shaping the diverse perspectives and lived experiences of young people, we believe researchers make a mistake when they present data on young adults in a manner that assumes a monolithic millennial generation and young adult vote.

In this report, we take GenForward in another direction, using in-depth interviews to delve into the lived experiences of young adults in our city: Chicago. These young adults' narratives contextualize and deepen the knowledge we gain from the bimonthly survey. We hope that the insights presented in this report will be useful to young adults in Chicago's communities and other stakeholders in developing more equitable and just policy for the city's young people.

INTRODUCTION

Cathy J. Cohen

In 2017, two energetic and smart Ph.D. students walked into my office with an idea. Margaret Brower and David Knight suggested that we launch a research project focused on young adults in Chicago. The proposed project would build on the work I was already doing through the GenForward Survey—a nationally representative, bimonthly survey of millennials, ages 18-34. But instead of having a national focus, this new research project would concentrate on young adults in Chicago. We wanted to explore how place, or one's neighborhood, interacts with important identities such as race, ethnicity, gender, and class to shape the experiences of young adults. What opportunities and resources were young people provided or denied just because they lived in certain parts of the city? How do young people process and explain the inequalities that exist throughout Chicago? And how are young adults reshaping the city and its politics to meet their needs and address the concerns of their communities? To answer these and other questions, we went into the field. Specifically, in the summer of 2017, a small group of graduate students—primarily from the University of Chicago—went out into several neighborhoods across the city to conduct in-depth interviews with 200 young adults ages 18-29. This GenForward Chicago report is the culmination of that research.

In many ways, the story of young adults in Chicago, at least as narrated by the mainstream media, is too often one of deficits centered around gun violence, the lack of quality education, the absence of investment and employment on the South and West sides of the city, and systemic police harassment and brutality. While these issues are part of the daily reality of far too many young adults in Chicago, these topics only tell part of their story. Every day, young people in this city engage in activities that support their families, enliven their neighborhoods, and sustain and serve the larger collective we call Chicago. In the pages of this report, we try to provide a more nuanced picture of the lives of young adults in Chicago, relaying their concerns and the inequities they face, but also describing their hopes, joys, and aspirations for themselves and the city they call home.

We recognize that, over the last few years, there have been numerous important reports published on the state of Chicago from a range of organizations and collectives such as the No Cop Academy, the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy, and the Great Cities Institute. More importantly, beyond reports, young people have built new organizations, mounted campaigns, and taken to the streets to move an agenda meant to improve their lives, transform their communities, and center those who are most marginal in this city. We applaud all these efforts. We believe our report adds to this important work in two meaningful ways. First, we center the voices, opinions, experiences and perspectives of young adults across the city. As we delve into crucial topics such as education, employment, gentrification, policing, violence, safety, politics, and joy, it is the stories and perspectives of young adults that frame these issues. Second, we explore how race, ethnicity, and racism work throughout the city to enhance the lives of some young adults while presenting seemingly insurmountable challenges to others.

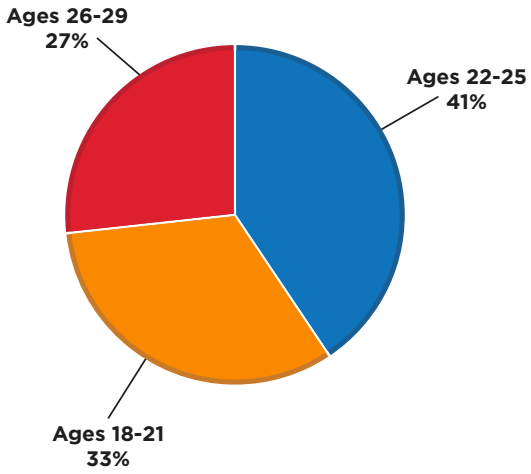
Our hope is that politicians, community leaders, educators, activists, artists, the media, and all those interested and invested in the future of Chicago will take to heart what the young adults in this

report have to say about their experiences in the city. Only by assessing how the city is meeting the needs of young people in every neighborhood, and addressing the deep structural inequalities that exist, can we begin to build the Chicago of the future we all want and deserve.

ABOUT THE STUDY & PARTICIPANTS

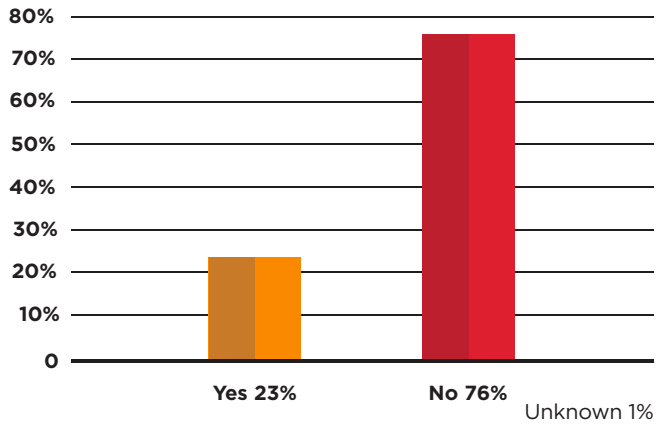
In the summer and fall of 2017, we interviewed 200 young adults in Chicago for approximately an hour and a half to learn about their experiences growing up in the city. We were interested in better understanding the overlapping influences of place and race that shape divergent experiences for young adults in Chicago. We interviewed young adults between ages 18 and 29, because in many ways

AGE RANGES OF PARTICIPANTS



they represent the present and future of Chicago. They are a diverse group with growing political power and influence. Yet young adults in this age range are also at a unique developmental period in their lives: their relationship to social institutions and government is changing as they become singularly enmeshed in a city through employment, the payment of taxes, home ownership and rental, and various other responsibilities that accompany formal adulthood. Once over 18 years old, most young people are no

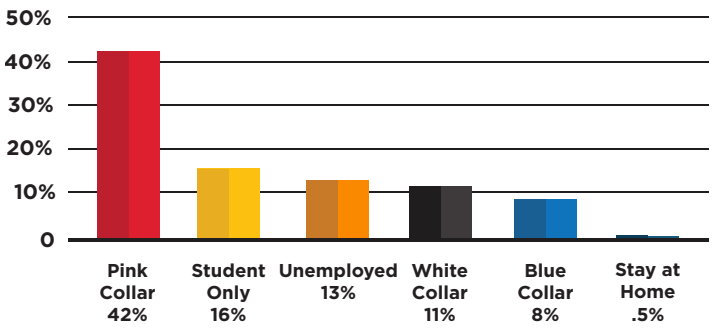
ARREST/INCARCERATION OF PARTICIPANTS



Unknown 1%

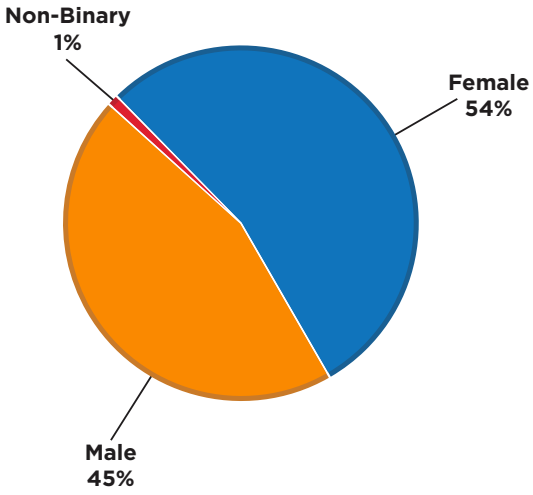
longer eligible for the ostensible resources and "protections" provided by social institutions like the public school. As many young adults become vulnerable to a range of adult penalties (e.g. incarceration, unemployment), they are at the same time sometimes "insufficiently incorporated in social arrangements that provide the training and support to sustain them."[1] This mismatch between the developmental needs of this age group and the resources available to assist them is also a likely reason for why inequality deepens during young adulthood.[2] This project investigates how, in a city like Chicago, age, place, and race determine the disparate needs

OCCUPATION TYPE OF PARTICIPANTS



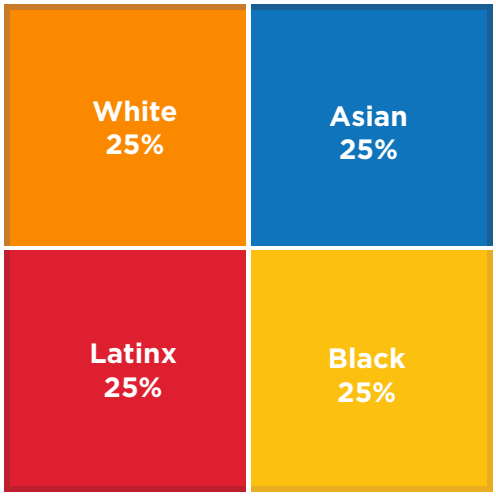
and resources available to young people differently located throughout the city—and how young adults subjectively make sense of this disparity.

GENDER SELF-IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS



Acknowledging the reality that Chicago is a hypersegregated city that often shapes these experiences,[3] we interviewed young adults from the city's largest racial/ethnic groups in communities where their racial/ethnic group predominated.[4] These neighborhoods are: Pilsen, Chinatown-Bridgeport, and Englewood, which have majority racial/ethnic communities of Latinx, Asian-American, and African American young adults, respectively. Unlike Asian American, Latinx, and African American young adults, white young adults who grew up in Chicago do not typically remain in one neighborhood; instead, they move often within a region of neighborhoods in northern Chicago. Therefore, to understand the experiences of white young adults, we interviewed adults living across the north side of Chicago in West Town, Near North Side, Lakeview, and Lincoln Park, and we refer to these neighborhoods collectively as the "North Side" in this report. Finally, we interviewed young adults living in Albany Park in order to represent a diverse group of adults living in one of the most racially diverse neighborhoods in Chicago.

RACE/ETHNIC BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPANTS

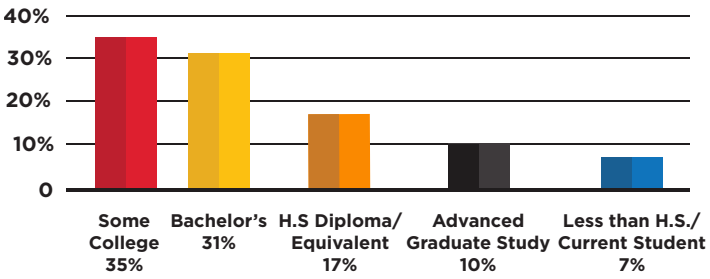


During our interviews with these 200 young adults, we asked them questions about their experiences with educational institutions, the economy and their finances, politics and elections, their local community, police, violence, and their expectations for their futures. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed by our research team.

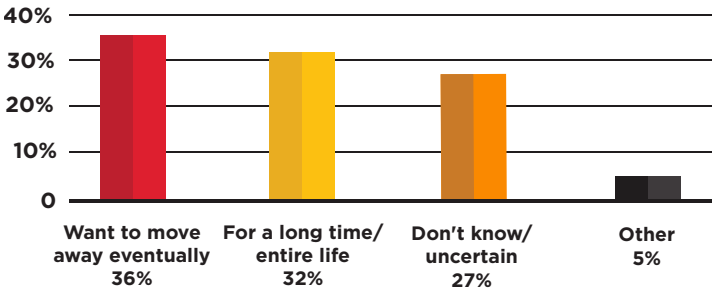
Interviews & Data

In this report we utilize secondary data to provide an overall picture of the political, economic and social landscape of Chicago. We then augment this data with an analysis of our qualitative interviews. These interviews provide us with a much-needed perspective of how young adults across very different geographic, racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds understand their experiences within this landscape. In some cases, interviews with young people augment secondary data and provide a deeper understanding of these statistics. In other cases, our conversations with young adults highlight interactions with government, the economy, schools, city bureaucrats, and systems of inequality that are underexamined by current research. The participants in this project do not represent all young adults in the city of Chicago; however, they do provide an important glimpse into the lives of many young adults throughout the city. Moreover, through their stories we are able to outline how race, ethnicity, and place-based experiences shape young adults' understandings of their circumstances, constraints, and possibilities in Chicago. By centering the voices of young adults in this report, we focus on a group often silenced in formal political discussions of policy and resource allocation. At the same time, by centering the voices of young adults we are also able to share the political strategies, types of resilience, and forms of resistance young adults rely on to make sense of and confront often unequal realities. Their stories are important because they provide a pathway to understanding what is needed in terms of future research, evolving forms of resistance, and new policy agendas.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF PARTICIPANTS



WILL PARTICIPANTS STAY IN CHICAGO?



ABOUT OUR PARTICIPANTS' NEIGHBORHOODS [A]

NORTH SIDE

LINCOLN PARK

White (80.2%), Black (4.8%), Latinx (6.6%), Asian (5.7%)

Median Income: $95,416
Bachelor Degree +: 82.8%
Owner-Occupied: 42.2%
Vacant Housing Units: 9%

LAKEVIEW

White (79.9%), Black (3.5%), Latinx (7.4%), Asian (6.7%)

Median Income: $82,254
Bachelor Degree +: 79.2%
Owner-Occupied: 36.3%
Vacant Housing Units: 9%

WEST TOWN

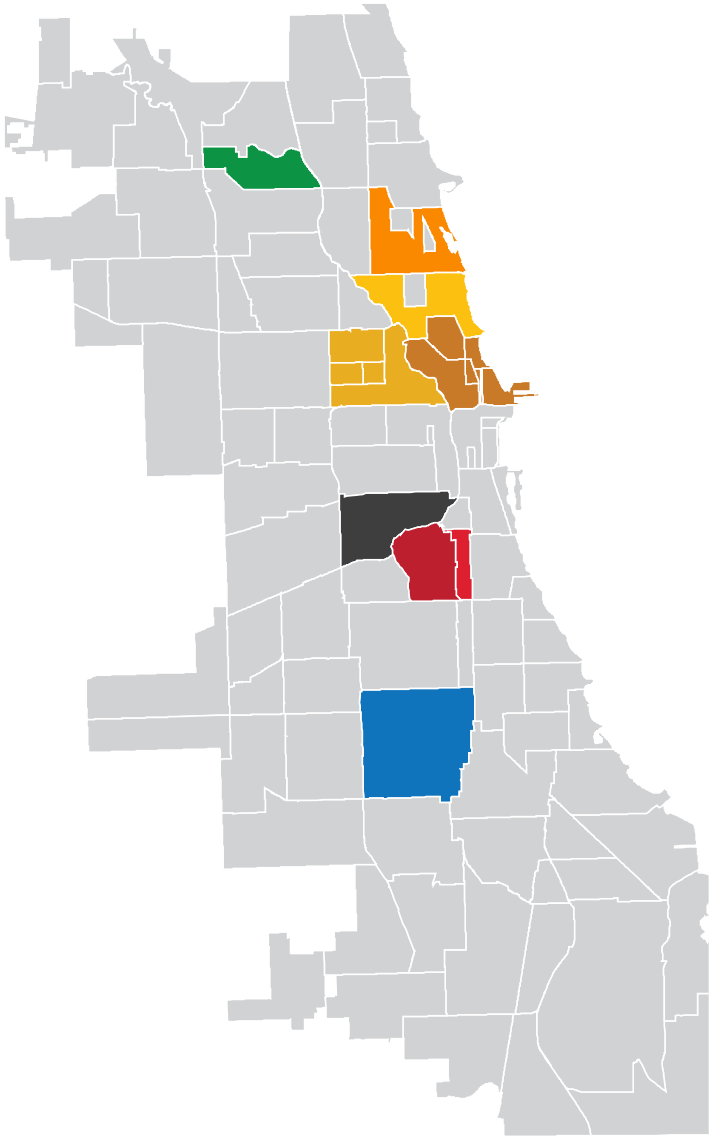
White (48.5%), Black (7.5%), Latinx (27%), Asian (4.1%)

Median Income: $80,896
Bachelor Degree +: 63.6%
Owner-Occupied: 37.7%
Vacant Housing Units: 8%

NEAR NORTH SIDE

White (71.6%), Black (9.2%), Latinx (5.3%), Asian (11.3%)

Median Income: $88,651
Bachelor Degree +: 78.8%
Owner-Occupied: 40.9%
Vacant Housing Units: 15%



CHINATOWN-BRIDGEPORT

CHINATOWN

White (11%), Black (9.6%), Latinx (3.1%), Asian (73.4%)

Median Income: $26,543
Bachelor Degree +: 22.1%
Owner-Occupied: 37%
Vacant Housing Units: 9%

BRIDGEPORT

White (31.9%), Black (2.8%), Latinx (28.2%), Asian (34.5%)

Median Income: $42,630
Bachelor Degree +: 26.8%
Owner-Occupied: 44.4%
Vacant Housing Units: 9%

ALBANY PARK

White (29.5%), Black (4.3%), Latinx (48%), Asian (15.8%)

Median Income: $55,561
Bachelor Degree +: 33.4%
Owner-Occupied: 39.1%
Vacant Housing Units: 9%

ENGLEWOOD

White (0.8%), Black (95%), Latinx (2.6%), Asian (0.3%)

Median Income: $20,112
Bachelor Degree +: 7.4%
Owner-Occupied: 25.7%
Vacant Housing Units: 35%

WEST ENGLEWOOD

White (0.8%), Black (91.7%), Latinx (6.1%), Asian (0.0%)

Median Income: $27, 223
Bachelor Degree +: 7.6%
Owner-Occupied: 48%
Vacant Housing Units: 26%

PILSEN

White (13.4%), Black (3.2%), Latinx (80.5%), Asian (1.7%)

Median Income: $39,020
Bachelor Degree +: 6.9%
Owner-Occupied: 26.5%
Vacant Housing Units: 13%

RACE, RACISM, AND YOUNG ADULTHOOD IN CHICAGO

David J. Knight

To fully understand the experiences and prospects of young adults in Chicago, we must reckon with the city's history of racial exclusion and institutional racism. These histories come together to make Chicago an epicenter for the study of race and inequality in the United States. As will be shown in this section, race—the idea that people are members of distinct groups based on differences in skin color, hair texture, and other features—is among the most powerful concepts shaping American society.[5] Race, of course, has no biological basis. But systems and institutions use race to sort and confer differing levels of advantage and disadvantage. In doing so, systems and institutions give the idea of race social meaning and unimaginable influence over social, political, and economic outcomes.[6]

The way most of us think about racism, however, is extraordinarily narrow and limited. People typically think of racism as interpersonal prejudice or individual beliefs about the superiority of one racial group over another.[7] But this individualized view of racism as prejudice is woefully insufficient for understanding how racism shapes material conditions and functions in our nation's schools, courts, hospitals, neighborhoods, and other systems.[8] To address this reality, we instead view racism as including those *institutions*, *structures*, and *practices* that justify, validate, and reproduce the advantages of one racial group over another.[9] By maintaining racial disparities in access to healthcare, quality schooling, decent employment, and other important domains, our institutions, structures, and practices continue to perpetuate race as an organizing concept and racial inequality as a social fact.

Race and racial inequality are also deeply spatialized in the United States, shaping where people live, work, and attend school.[10] A city of neighborhoods, Chicago exemplifies this geographic division and the increasing spatial concentrations of wealth and poverty.[11] White, African American, and Latinx Chicagoans, on average, live in neighborhoods where the majority of the neighborhood population is of their same race or ethnicity.[12] Asian Americans, concentrated in particular areas around downtown and the Southwest and North Sides, also experience moderate levels of segregation from whites and high levels of segregation from African Americans and Latinxs.[13] Moreover, people are less or more vulnerable to health problems, exposure to violence, and contact with the criminal justice system depending on where they live in the city.[14] Some researchers refer to this as the "racial-spatial divide"—the overlapping inequalities of race and place in cities like Chicago that determine the disparate needs, vulnerabilities, and resources available to different young adults.[15]

Why Focus on Race and Racism in Chicago?

Many Americans believe that the United States is post-racial (beyond race) and that we should be colorblind. For instance, a 2013 poll of the Wall Street Journal/NBC News found that a majority of whites and Latinxs agreed that "America is a nation where people are not judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character," compared to less than 20% of African Americans who said the same.[16] Some point to "millennials"—young adults in their twenties and thirties—as forerunners of a new, progressive America where race and color will not matter.[17] Millennials are the most racially diverse and reportedly liberal and racially progressive adult generation.[18] According to one assessment by the Pew Research Center, a majority of millennials have interracial friendships and nearly all support interracial dating and marriage.[19] In short, some data indicate that Americans in general, and young adults in particular, are eager for race to matter less than it did in the past.

But based on evidence from our nationally representative GenForward Survey of millennials, important racial disparities exist among young adults on government and policy, including the issue of policing

which profoundly affects the young adult demographic. While nearly 75% of young whites, ages 18-30, say they always or often trust the police, around 50% of Asian American and Latinx young adults report similar levels of trust. African American young adults, however, report the lowest levels of trust, with 26% always or often trusting the police.[20]

In our bi-monthly surveys, we at GenForward have also found that African American and (to a lesser degree) Asian American young adults consistently name racism as one of the three most important problems facing America. Latinx young adults repeatedly list immigration as the most important issue to them, whereas young whites consistently cite terrorism and homeland security as among the most important issues.[21] These differences in public opinion are important to note because they often reflect disparities in lived experiences.

Historical and present-day evidence also challenges the colorblind narrative. Consider racial segregation. One of the most powerful forces shaping social life and opportunity in Chicago, racial segregation is neither an accident of history nor an unintended consequence of individual decision-making. For decades, racial segregation has been reinforced and exacerbated by public policies made by city, state, and federal governments and supported by private investors. Many of these policies explicitly excluded African Americans and other marginalized groups. For example, during the second Great Migration, from roughly 1940-1960, African Americans were primarily limited to the segregated "Black Belt" on the South Side of Chicago.[22] Legally binding contracts called "restrictive covenants" were used by whites to prevent home owners from renting or selling to black people.[23] And while the Supreme Court declared restrictive covenants unconstitutional in 1948, real estate speculators took advantage of practices such as block busting and redlining to upcharge African American families.[24] Simply put, the deep, historical legacy of housing discrimination and segregation necessarily fortified racial segregation and distrust in the public schools, in addition to limiting access to jobs and public goods.[25]

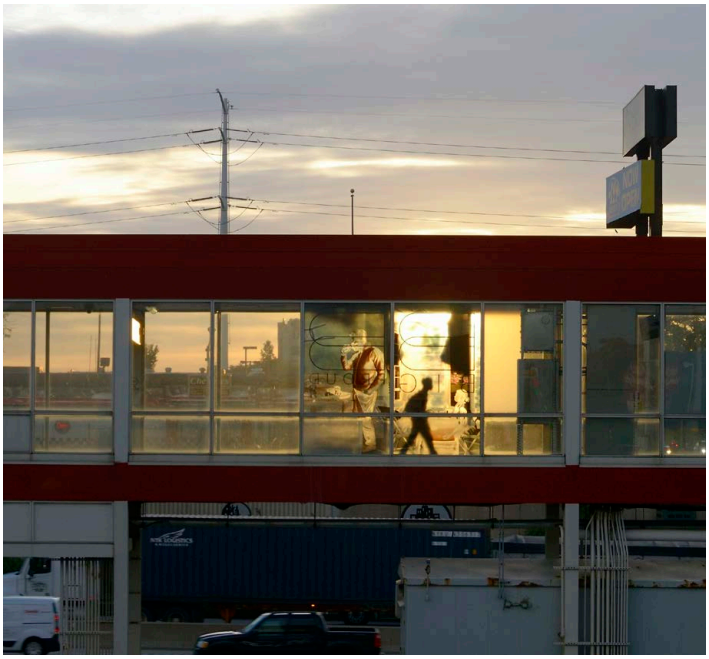


Photo by Tonika Johnson

Asian Americans and Latinxs have also faced discrimination and exclusion in housing and employment. Anti-Chinese legislation and exclusion in the 1870s and 1880s, alongside heavy unemployment and harassment, compelled Chinese migrants in California to look for opportunities in cities like Chicago.[26] Many worked in laundry and restaurant businesses not by choice, but because of racial discrimination, hostility, and a sense of competition from other groups. The first Chinese community was located at Clark and Van Buren streets, but high and discriminatory renting practices forced many in the Chinese community to move further south to Cermak Road and Wentworth Avenues—an area in the vicinity of what we know as Chinatown-Bridgeport.[27] But, as with African Americans, the extension of the expressway and the building of a federal prison in Chicago unsettled the Chinatown community and again forced many Chinese Americans to relocate.[28] Discrimination from landlords, banks, businesses, and city government made finding secure, affordable housing—including public housing—a continual struggle for the Chinese community, in addition to isolating many in the community to particular types of employment.[29]

Latinxs, including Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, also faced severe barriers. For example, Mexican newcomers in the early- to mid-20th century were usually offered temporary rather than long-term work. And, like African Americans, Mexican newcomers also faced residential restrictions, segregation, and barriers to receiving social welfare benefits, in addition to cultural discrimination in schools and exclusion from the Catholic Church because they were Spanish-speaking.[30] Puerto Ricans, who came to Chicago for economic opportunity in the 1940s-1960s, were also relegated to menial, poorly paid jobs and segregated housing.[31] Housing discrimination and police brutality have been persistent issues for Puerto Ricans since they first arrived in Chicago.[32] With limited housing options, Puerto Ricans were forced to pay higher rent and live in "barrios" that were subject to inadequate services and high levels of police harassment.[33] As with Asian Americans and African Americans, conditions compelled Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and others to create their own institutions to serve the needs of their communities.

We should note that current discriminatory policies and practices also divide the city's population by race and ethnicity. For example, predatory lending, reverse redlining, land use restrictions, and crime-free rental ordinances were observed in the housing bubble and subsequent foreclosure crisis.[34] These types of racial inequities in housing combine with inequities in other areas that we detail in this report—such as education, violence, and politics—and

continue to shape segregation and human potential in Chicago.

Multiple Domains of Racial Inequality

Race, therefore, remains a defining force in the lives of people in Chicago and across the nation. The evidence is incontrovertible. Consider the persistent, deeply entrenched patterns of racial inequity in the following domains:

Wealth

Chicago is divided into very wealthy and very poor areas. By 2010, the number of wealthy census tracts had increased four-fold in Chicago's predominately white North Side, while tracts with high rates of poverty expanded on the predominately black and Latinx South and far West Sides.[35]

Poverty

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than one-third of African Americans and about one-fifth of Asian Americans and Latinxs in Chicago live in poverty, compared to about one in seven whites.[36]

Public Housing

Nearly 16,000 families who live or lived in public housing have been displaced by the Chicago Housing Authority's (CHA) Plan for Transformation, a reform launched two decades ago which demolished or renovated Chicago's 25,000 public housing units in favor of mixed-income[37] housing.[38] About 95% of the displaced public housing tenants were African American, and nearly half were under 15 years old.[39] To date, only 8% of those displaced are living in intended mixed-income housing. Instead, 12% of the displaced population were evicted, and 34% are currently living without government subsidy.[40]

Education

Over 150 of Chicago's public schools have been closed or completely re-staffed since 2002.[41] African Americans make up around 90% of the students displaced by these school actions.[42] The 2013 decision to shutter nearly 50 public schools in Chicago accounted for one-tenth of the total number of schools in the city and affected 47,000 students, including nearly one in four black public school students in Chicago.[43]

Even though Mayor Rahm Emanuel recently pledged nearly $1 billion in repairs, renovation, or new construction for Chicago Public Schools, a *WBEZ* analysis shows that, relative to the number of students enrolled, the budget disproportionately funds schools located on the North Side. Students enrolled in the South Side are thus projected to receive fewer dollars for repairs, renovation, or new construction.[44] Likewise, compared to majority black or Latinx schools, schools with more white students (i.e. schools that are racially

mixed and majority white) received more than double the amount of money per student than the other schools.[45]

Population Change

Although Chicago has faced a widely reported 6% decrease in its population, the net decline in its inhabitants has been concentrated among African Americans and Native Americans. Since 2000, Chicago's black population has declined by 21%—over 225,000 people.[46] One-fourth of its Native American population has also declined during that time.[47] As whites are moving back to the city, African Americans are departing the city, not only to the suburbs but also to southern states.[48]

Segregation

Most of the neighborhoods in Chicago are racially segregated; 61 of the 77 neighborhoods in Chicago feature a racial or ethnic group that is the majority of its residential population.[49] This is particularly the case for whites and African Americans in the city: the average white resident in Chicago lives in a neighborhood that is 72% white.[50] The average black resident in the city lives in a neighborhood that is 66% black.[51] Asian Americans and Latinxs also experience moderate to very high levels of segregation. Latinxs tend to reside in census tracts with few Asian Americans and whites, and far fewer African Americans.[52] Asian Americans—including those who identify as Indian, Chinese American, and Filipino—also tend to reside in areas with few Latinxs and even fewer African Americans.[53]

Policing

Chicago's struggles with racist and racially violent policing practices have played out on the national stage. For example, following the police shooting of Laquan McDonald in 2014, and months of protests thereafter, the U.S. Department of Justice initiated an investigation into problems of police supervision, accountability,

Photo by Tonika Johnson

and unconstitutional excessive force in the city. For many, the Justice Department's findings were not surprising but still disturbing: The Chicago Police Department uses force *about 10 times more often* against African Americans than against whites.[54] Between January 2011 and April 2018, 76% of the incidents involving use of force were against African Americans compared to 8% against whites.[55]

The UIC Policing in Chicago Research Group also found that more than 128,000 individuals' information is stored and tracked in the Chicago Police Department's gang database. Seventy-five percent of those labeled as "gang-affiliated" are black, while 21% are Latinx; 61% are under 30 years old.[56] The vast majority of these individuals have no documented arrests for violent offenses.[57] These kinds of gang databases arguably reinforce the long-term criminalization of young African Americans and Latinxs.

Victimization

According to a 2016 survey of the *New York Times*/Kaiser Family Foundation, 49% of African Americans and 42% of Latinx Chicagoans report that it is very likely that a young person in their neighborhoods would fall victim to a violent crime, compared to 19% of whites in the city.[58] Moreover, nearly half of African Americans personally know someone who was a victim of gun violence in the past few years, compared to about one-third of whites and Latinxs.[59]

Mass Incarceration

In Chicago, mass incarceration is deeply concentrated by place. Data from the Cook County Circuit Court and the U.S. Census Bureau show that rates of imprisonment are highest in predominately black and Latinx areas of the South and West Sides, and below the national average in the predominately white North Side.[60] While most of the North Side has incarceration rates of nearly zero to less than 500 per 100,000 residents, some South and West Side areas of the city have incarceration rates eight times higher.[61]

As shown in these statistics, race and racism play central roles in Chicago's social, economic, and political organization. What is more, young adults are particularly exposed to the effects of racism because they are at an age when wealth, poverty, and education can have particularly strong effects on upward mobility. Additionally, young adulthood is a period when people's contact with law enforcement skyrockets.[62] Young adults are therefore a miner's canary[63] for understanding the effects of race and racism on life outcomes in Chicago.[64] Their experiences alert us to how race continues to matter in the city and how racism continues to take shape in the 21st century.

Photo by Tonika Johnson

Centering the Voices of Young Adults

As we shall see in this report, race is a social force that shapes young people's access to jobs and education, how they experience gender, their exposure to poverty and violence, and their own sense of power, possibility, and value in the city. It affects the lives of young people who are poor and middle class, immigrants and native-born, LGBTQIA and straight, documented and without papers. Even in the face of these challenges, however, many young Chicagoans and their communities have pulled together to support each other, strengthen their community, and take positive steps toward an equitable future for themselves and others. Young adults play a central role in this work, which stretches across different neighborhoods and different cultural and ethnic communities in the city. They are teachers, fast food workers, artists, social service providers, activists, engineers, students, day laborers, health professionals, entrepreneurs—the list goes on. Many of these individuals are working collectively in organizations, associations, clubs, and groups to demand a better future for young people in their neighborhoods.

In this report, we endeavor to provide readers with a glimpse into the complexity of the lives of young people who face many challenges, structural and personal, but who also practice important collective and individual strategies for problem-solving. By centering their experiences, we hope readers will gain a more nuanced understanding of what is wrong, what is good, and what is possible in Chicago.

RECOMMENDED CITATION

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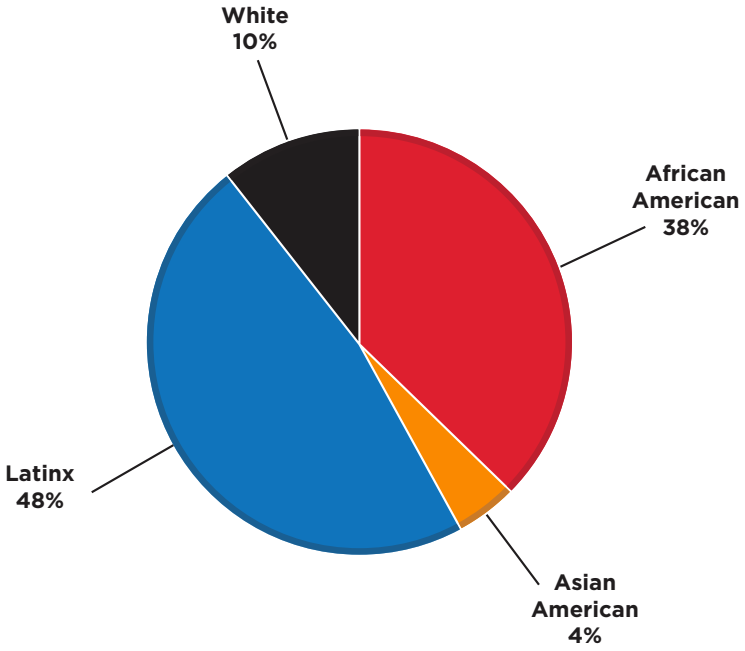
EDUCATION, UNEQUAL POLICY, AND VISIONS FOR EQUITY[65]

Matthew D. Nelsen

EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS IN THE CITY

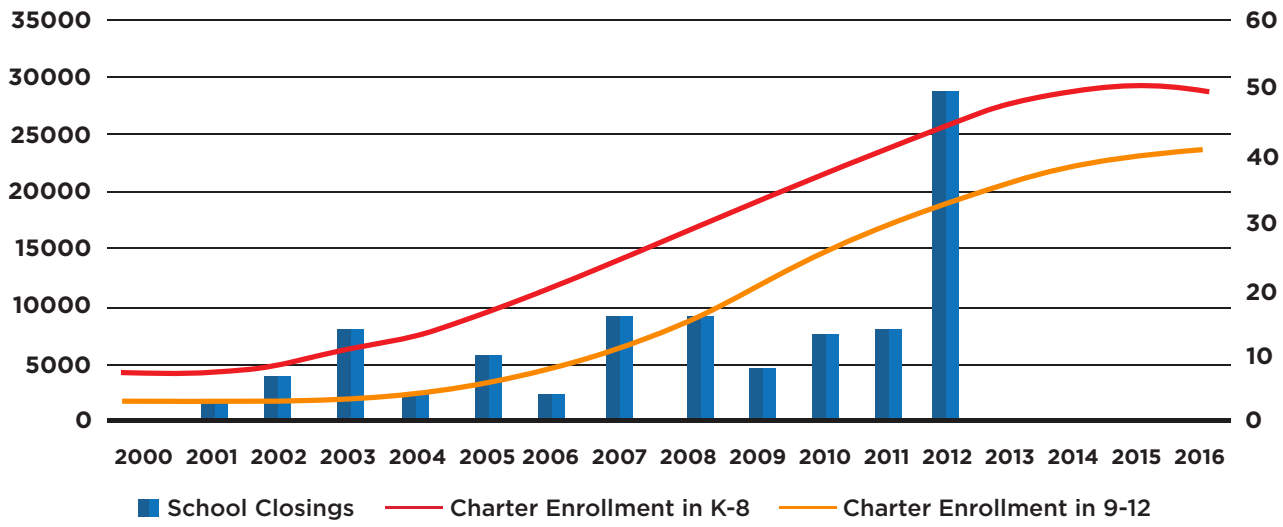
[66]Geography is an important factor in understanding the varying degrees of access to quality schools in Chicago. While a variety of school types comprise the educational landscape of the city, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) plays a formative role in structuring educational opportunities across neighborhoods. The district currently serves over 360,000 students, 86% of which are African American and Latinx. The number of students enrolled in CPS has decreased significantly over the past two decades. Just 10 years ago, for example, district enrollment hovered above 400,000 students.[67] Population loss and the corresponding decline in enrollment has been used to justify school closures that have disproportionally affected South and West Side communities in the city.

FIGURE 1: CPS ENROLLMENT BY RACE AND ETHNICITY [B]



At present, Chicago Public Schools operates 421 elementary schools (K-8th grade) and 92 high schools (9th-12th grade).[68] These numbers include the district's 38 elementary school magnet programs and 11 selective enrollment

FIGURE 2: CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND SCHOOL CLOSINGS [C]



high schools, both of which require parents and students to participate in a competitive admissions process in which students are awarded points based on achievement test scores.[69] Thirty percent of available seats in magnet and selective enrollment schools are awarded to the highest-performing students regardless of where they live in the city. The remaining 70% of applicants are admitted using a tier system that considers applicants based on the socioeconomic status of their neighborhood.[70] Still, less than 30% of the 16,500 8th graders who applied to a CPS selective enrollment high school in 2018 were admitted.[71] The high-stakes associated with gaining access to a quality education reflects city-level policy initiatives that have decreased access to and funding for neighborhood schools, especially on the city's South and West sides.[72]

Over the past 15 years, Chicago has experienced multiple waves of school closures.[73] The first of these waves began in the early 2000s with the implementation of the district's Renaissance 2010 initiative. Started in 2004, Renaissance 2010 called for the closure of 60 to 70 neighborhood schools and the opening of 100 "choice schools." As a result of these policies, an increasing amount of the city's young people began to enroll in charter schools, and a significant portion of the district's funding followed. Today, charter schools in Chicago receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as traditional public schools, as well as additional funds for office expenses, security, and subsidies to pay for facilities.[74] In 2018, Chicago Public Schools allocated an estimated $37 million to charter schools.[75]

By 2009, the district had eliminated 73 neighborhood schools while adding 87 new "choice schools," 70% of which were charters.[76] Ninety percent of these school closures affected low-income and working-class African American communities on the city's South and West Sides.[77] Many of the black young adults whom we spoke to were affected by this first wave of closures.

A second wave of closures was unanimously approved by the Chicago Board of Education in May of 2013, resulting in the elimination of an additional 47 elementary schools.[78] Of the 10,708 students affected by this second wave of school closures, 88% were African American, and 10% were Latinx.[79] A third wave of closures was announced in February 2018 when the Chicago Board of Education voted unanimously to close four Englewood high schools over the next three years.[80] Once again, these closures would have disproportionately affected Black students. However, these plans were postponed after community members protested the proposal.[81] It seems that rather than ensuring that all children have access to an excellent education within their neighborhood, the city's policies reflect unequal educational investment in the city's young people.

Navigating Education Resources and Opportunities

For many young people of color, educational opportunities in the city are seriously constrained by policies that have contributed to funding disparities along racial, ethnic, and geographic lines. One study identified Illinois as a particularly troubling case for inequity in educational funding, concluding that the "highest poverty districts receive nearly 20 percent less state and local funding than the lowest poverty districts."[82] In fact, Illinois has the biggest funding gap between low- and high-poverty school districts of any state in the nation by a wide margin.[83]

City-level policies contribute to these inequalities as well. In July 2018, for example, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel

FIGURE 3: PER PUPIL FUNDING BY RACIAL MAKEUP OF SCHOOL [D]

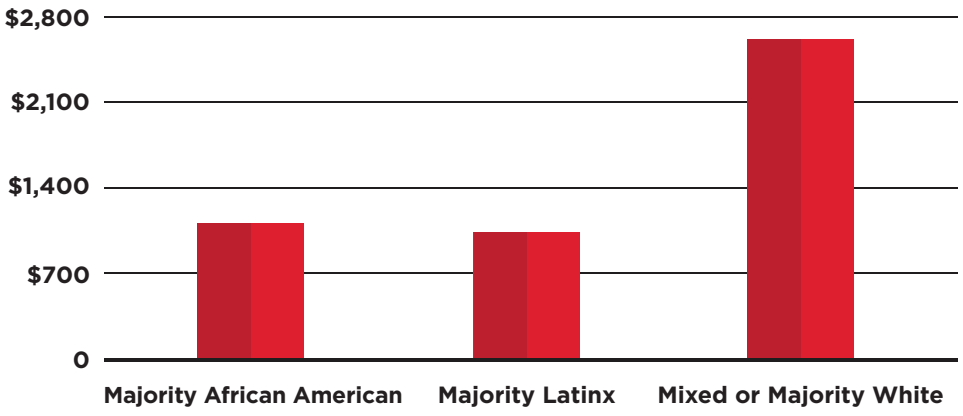
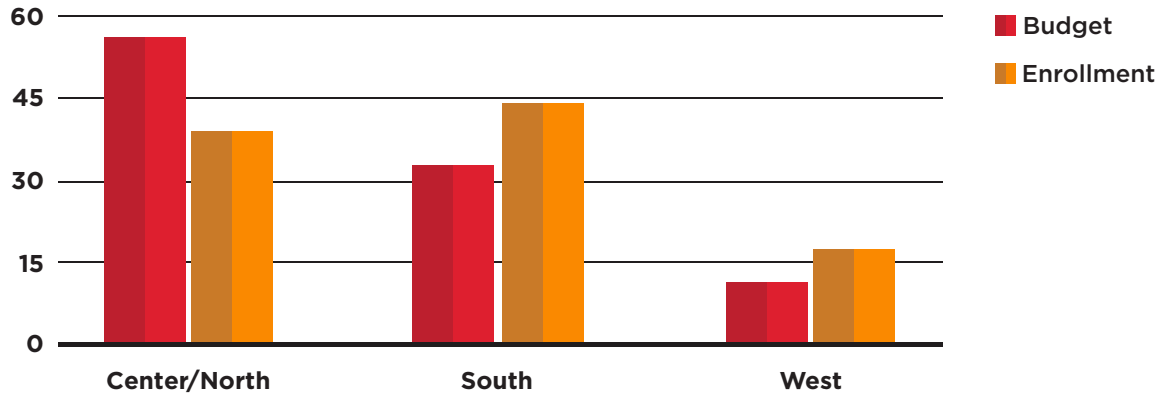


FIGURE 4: PERCENTAGE OF SPENDING BY SIDE OF CITY [D]

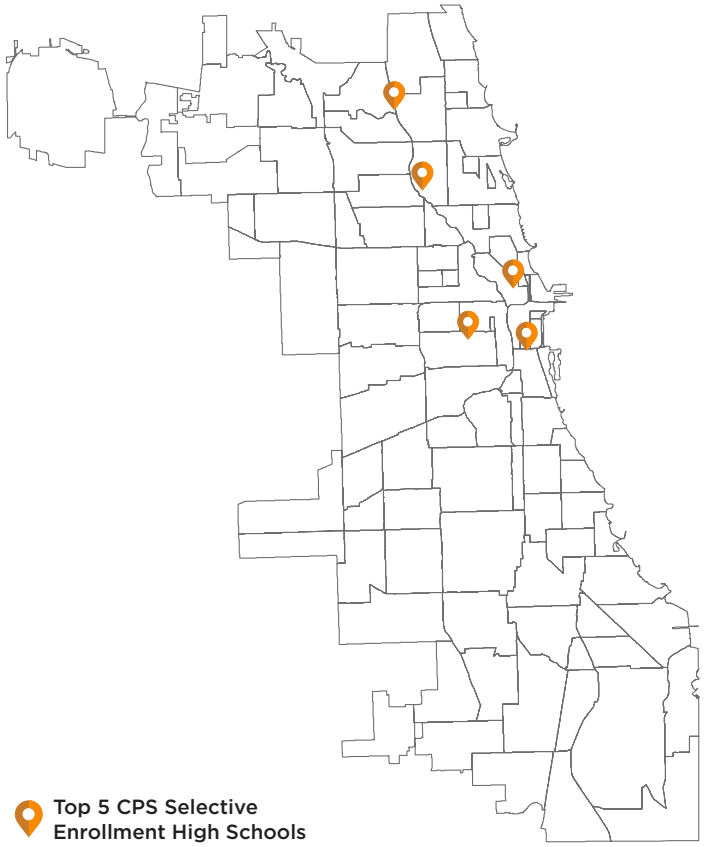


announced a new $989 million capital budget for school repairs, renovations, and new construction for CPS. However, relative to the number of students enrolled, the budget disproportionately funds North Side schools. Though more students are enrolled in CPS schools on the city's South Side, these campuses were promised less money for educational improvements.[84] Furthermore, the figures above indicate that mixed or majority-white schools received more than double the amount of money per student from the district than majority-black and majority-Latinx schools.[85] While city leaders attempt to address educational challenges by stressing the realities of population loss and low standardized test scores, these conversations seldom consult the voices of the students most affected by their decisions. In our conversations with young adults, we found that race, ethnicity, and geographic positioning in the city shape their ability to access educational opportunities. These conversations provided us with new understandings of how the city influences the educational experiences and corresponding perceptions of inequity among young adults in Chicago.

Black youth in particular discussed the lack of adequate funding for basic resources such as textbooks and technology. An African American man, Noah, 24, explained how the lack of resources at his high school contributed to his sense of educational inequity in the city. *"I remember from my own school experience, there had been times when our water was cut off and we had no lunch and our principal bought us Burger King out of her own pocket. We used old textbooks from years ago. I know in the … I don't want to just say white communities, but communities that's more funded. You can tell where the money being put. They don't have to deal with that. They got laptops in their class, they got new books and new supplies and everything. A lot of teachers [here] have to fund stuff out of their pocket or raise money to do stuff like that. You got to think it*

is worse." For young African Americans like Noah, limited access to well-funded neighborhood schools represents one critical manifestation of community disinvestment that is especially salient

FIGURE 5:

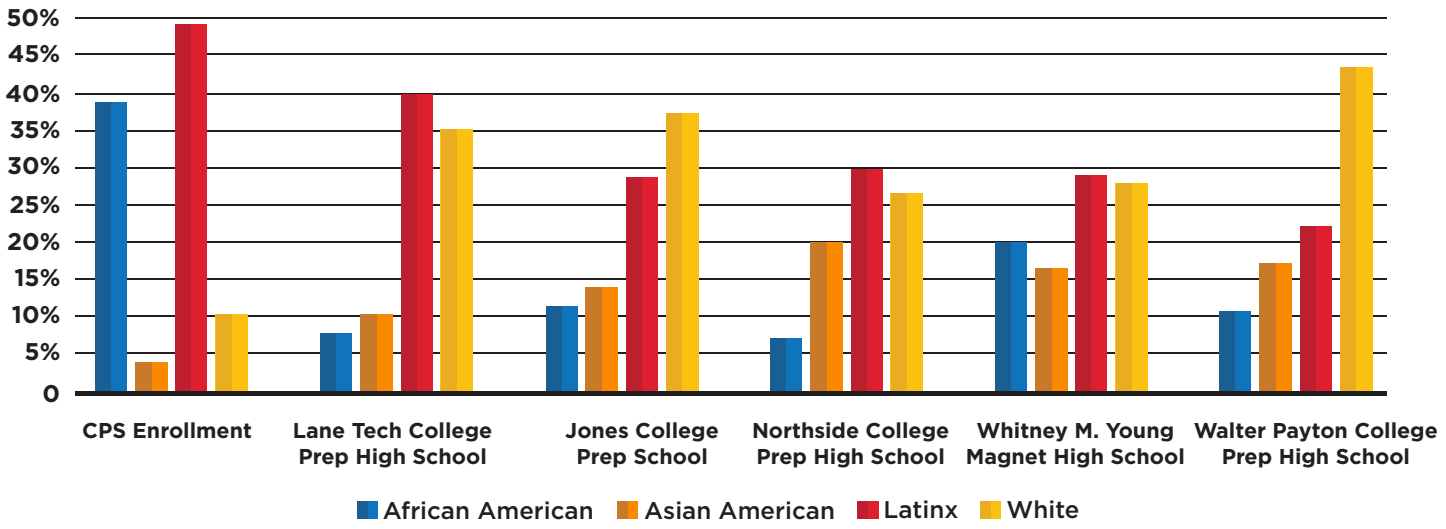


when compared to the educational opportunities afforded to students on Chicago's North Side.

Young people in Chicago also experience varying degrees of access to the district's most exclusive high schools. While Chicago Public Schools operates 11 selective enrollment high schools located throughout the city, the most exclusive and high-performing of these schools (Jones College Prep, Lane Tech, Northside College Prep, Walter Payton, and Whitney Young) are concentrated on the city's North Side.[86] This trend is reflected in the racial and ethnic makeup of these schools as well. White youth in particular are overrepresented within the district's most exclusive high schools, while black and Latinx students are underrepresented relative to the district's overall racial and ethnic makeup. Most strikingly, while white students only comprise 10% of the district's students, they represent 44% of enrolled students at Walter Payton, the highest ranked Illinois high school in 2018.[87] Contrastingly, Latinx students make up 48% of the district's students, but only comprise 22% of Payton's student population.[88]

Our conversations with young Chicagoans also touch upon enrollment disparities across groups. Young whites are much more likely to apply to and attend highly selective high schools. While there may be many reasons for making such a choice, one is the belief that neighborhood schools will not provide students with a quality education.[89] One white Chicagoan, Sydney, 21, shared why she decided to apply to a selective enrollment school: *"**I remember my mom saying that I wasn't allowed to go to my neighborhood school … because I was smarter than that. I didn't perceive that as racist or classist at the time.** I just thought, 'Well, I can't go [there], because I don't want to be dumb, and I want to*

FIGURE 3: PER PUPIL FUNDING BY RACIAL MAKEUP OF SCHOOL [E]

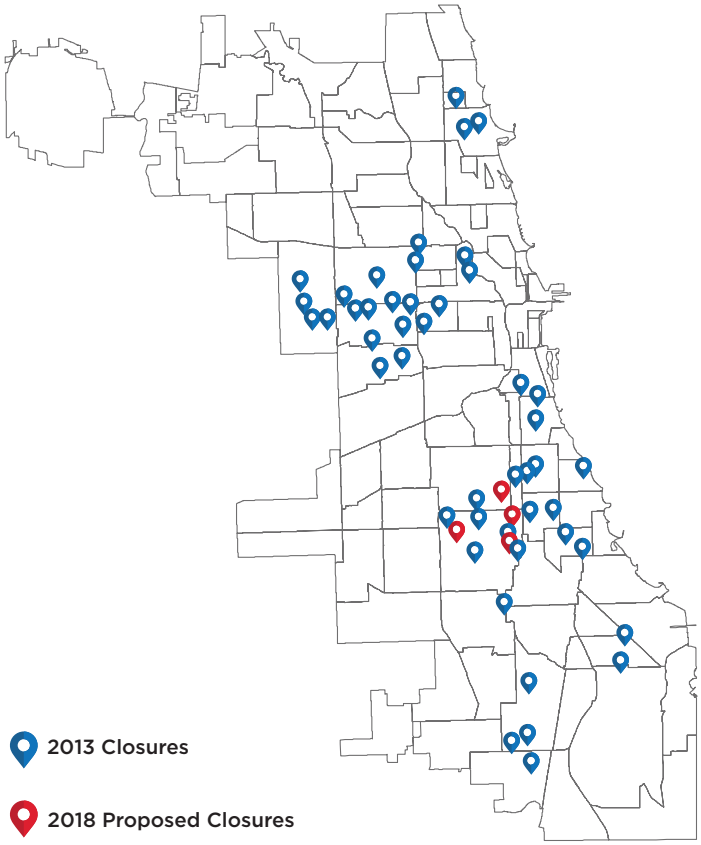


go to a good college." While white youth sometimes described the challenges associated with gaining admission at exclusive schools, they also mention that they were able to navigate these hurdles with the help of parents, private tutors, and teachers.

Many of the Asian American and Latinx young adults we interviewed pursued educational opportunities outside of their communities as well, but experienced a different set of challenges than those described by young whites. These individuals emphasized the importance of pursuing educational opportunities while highlighting the trade-offs that come with attending schools in different parts of the city. Camila, a Latina, 24, shared this sentiment. After receiving a scholarship to attend a private school, she began to feel more distant from her life in Pilsen: *"I would come to Pilsen and I could barely recognize people and it was horrible. I just completely disconnected from my community when I left to another high school. I had to leave my community to get a better education"* Similarly, one Chinese American, Amy, 25, shared the ways in which educational spaces outside of her neighborhood affected her sense of identity. *"I think when I was growing up and changing schools so much, I kind of wished I was at [a predominantly Asian American neighborhood school in Chinatown-Bridgeport] because I felt so not Asian ... I tried to push away my Chinese American identity. ... In fourth grade, I didn't speak Chinese. I just refused to be Chinese at*

"I remember my mom saying that I wasn't allowed to go to my neighborhood school ... because I was smarter than that. I didn't perceive that as racist or classist at the time."

FIGURE 7:



home for an entire year—stuff like that. There was stuff where I didn't want to be a 'typical Asian American."

Still others discussed logistical challenges that arise from attending a school outside of their neighborhood. Alma, a 28-year-old Latina, decided to leave her selective enrollment high school due to long commutes and went on to attend a charter school closer to home. *"When I went to Lane Tech, I went there for two years, and it was a great opportunity. Unfortunately, because of the distance from here to there, it was a lot for me. A little bit more than I could personally handle, so I changed schools to a charter school. That one was also a really great school. [There are] instructors there that I still connect with, that I still admire, and help me."* The experiences of individuals such as Camila, Amy, and Alma suggest that policymakers should be more attuned to the tradeoffs that come with attending school outside of one's neighborhood.[90]

School Closures

In May 2013, the six-person, Mayor-appointed Chicago Board of Education voted unanimously to follow the Mayor's and district's recommendation to close 47 elementary schools and one high school.[91] Like previous school closures, low-income communities of color on the South and West Sides of the city were disproportionately affected by this decision.[92] Parents, students, and teachers protested the closures, arguing that children should have access to quality public schools within their own neighborhood.[93]

In our conversations, we found that young adults across Chicago shared these sentiments. Young people in Pilsen, Chinatown-Bridgeport, and Englewood felt that school closures reflected a lack of concern for their communities from the city's leadership and from Mayor Emanuel in particular. White youth were also critical of the board's decision; however, they tended to discuss these policies in abstract terms, with many having avoided the negative consequences of school closures by enrolling in "choice schools."

Young Latinxs living in Pilsen tended to view the concentration of school closures as a testament to the lack of value Chicago's policymakers ascribe to their community. One Mexican American, Ricardo, 23, shared his reasoning regarding why Chicago's South and West Sides were most heavily affected by school closures: *"**I mean, racism, capitalism, greedy people, and politics in this particular city, because white students' educations are more valued than black and brown.** Their lives are more valued than us."* For young Latinos like Ricardo, school closures fuel distrust in government and heighten racial inequalities that exist across neighborhoods.

Similarly, young adults living in Chinatown-Bridgeport viewed school closures as a signal that city leaders did not value their community. While many Asian Americans felt that they benefited from access to the various magnet programs promoted by CPS, they were frustrated by the lack of a neighborhood high school. Like young Latinxs in Pilsen, young Asian Americans scrutinized the city's leadership. One Chinese American, Jason, 24, identified the role of the mayor specifically: *"I have heard a lot of things about Rahm Emanuel. He's been pushing education [funding] towards richer neighborhoods as opposed to poorer neighborhoods. And because of that, the poor neighborhoods are losing schools where the richer neighborhoods are gaining schools. … That causes a disparity. … If you don't have an option for school, how are you supposed to be able to get an education?"*

"I mean racism, capitalism, greedy people, and politics in this particular city because white students' educations are more valued than black and brown."

In Englewood, young African Americans were also frustrated by the city's shortsightedness regarding school closures, and they discussed the effects of these policies on their daily lives. In particular, they described the ways in which the consolidation of schools across neighborhood boundaries heightened the potential for violence on commutes to and from school and during the school day. One young man, David, 22, described this trend: *"In high school they made five schools into one. That made it worse. That's why I couldn't really go to school. I almost had to drop out because they put them all together. People from different neighborhoods had to come together and every day it was shootings. We had to fight every day. That actually makes it worse in Chicago, putting all the schools inside of one. I just seen four months ago*

they were trying to do the same thing to some schools in Englewood, put them all inside one." While city leaders frequently suggest that consolidating limited resources into fewer schools increases opportunities for students,[94] young people in Englewood see these policies as short-sighted and a source of violence.

Young white Chicagoans living throughout the North Side discussed school closures from a more distant perspective. White Chicago transplants tended to be aware of school closures through their consumption of news or from their educational experiences, but they did not experience the repercussions first-hand. They were critical of closing schools in the abstract, yet were quick to invoke the language of the city's policymakers to rationalize these policies. These discussions focused more on the academic performance of students and the district's limited resources, rather than systemic inequality. One white Chicagoan, Shane, 24, exemplified this fact: *"**I think that closing the schools—I don't wanna say needed to be done, but like, if you're got very few students in the schools, you can't effectively run a school that's built for 2,000 people with 400 people.** It's just not providing the quality of education that you need … you need to provide that quality of education for those neighborhood schools."* Unlike young people of color in the city, school closures were less personal for the young white Chicagoans we interviewed. These conversations highlight the ways in which race, ethnicity, and neighborhood boundaries shape how individuals experience and evaluate public policy decisions.

What Does a Better Education Look Like?

Young people in the city are well aware of the challenges related to educational access in Chicago. While millennials are frequently cast as apathetic observers of local politics, our conversations suggested the opposite: young Chicagoans possess nuanced and highly developed ideas regarding how to improve the city's educational conditions. Many of these individuals experienced the effects of school closures and the day-to-day realities of inequitable access to educational resources first-hand, and they are uniquely equipped to provide useful insights to the city's education policymakers. While their experiences were different across neighborhoods, young Chicagoans shared remarkably similar visions for education in the city.

"I think that closing the schools—I don't wanna say needed to be done, but like, if you're got very few students in the schools, you can't effectively run a school that's built for 2000 people with 400 people."

They desire a more equitable funding structure that reinvests in communities most affected by school closures, well-trained and culturally aware teachers that are committed to the well-being of their students, and educational resources that better prepare young people for college and the workforce.

Developing a more equitable school funding structure was the policy intervention suggested most often by young adults across the city. Young Chicagoans felt that a larger portion of the city's resources should be allocated to fund public schools, and that these resources should be distributed in a way that takes preexisting inequalities into account. Alexa, a 20-year-old African American resident of Albany Park articulated her vision for educational funding, *"I think schools just need equal funding. I know they say they all get the same amount. But then at Payton—we called it 'Friends of Payton'—there were outside people who sponsored us, who gave us more money. People are more willing to do that for North Side schools.* ***I just feel like all schools need equal attention. People need to be more compassionate about people who grew up with not much.*** *I don't know what people can do to improve education in the city, really, other than actually caring about people and providing them what they need."* Manuela, a 22-year-old Latina in Pilsen shared a similar sentiment: *"I received a great education from Walter Payton College Prep, but I don't think that there's equity in the education. I don't think other high schools [received] the same amount of funding, or attention, or access that selective-enrollment schools receive, specifically Walter Payton. So even though I think I received an awesome education, I am supercritical about its existence."* Alexa and Manuela articulated a theme shared by many young Chicagoans: educational funding must be more equitable across neighborhoods.

"I just feel like all schools need equal attention. People need to be more compassionate about people who grew up with not much."

Young Chicagoans also placed a great deal of value in teachers who are invested in the well-being of their students. These educators are culturally aware, build meaningful relationships with their students, create engaging lessons, and are connected to the communities in which they teach. Robert, a 20-year-old Asian American resident of Chinatown-Bridgeport highlighted the role of cultural competence in building meaningful relationships with his teachers: *"I took this class [that explored cultures like mine]. And that's how I formed a bond with [my*

teacher], and we just kept talking about all things [related to our culture] because she is actually from the neighborhood that I grew up in, too. And so, I really resonated with her story and she resonated with mine." Similarly, Destiny, a 25-year-old African American resident of Englewood, explained the impact of teachers who are able to make learning accessible for their students. *"My [high school math] teacher. He made learning, like, put a whole 'nother twist to it. He made it interesting. He made it fun. That's a way of him catching our attention, you know.* ***If a lot of teachers made learning fun and made things a little bit more interesting for the younger crowd, I think education would be a little bit better."*** How can Chicago Public Schools identify teachers of this kind? Across neighborhoods, young people stressed that recruitment strategies must prioritize hiring teachers who are properly trained, engaging, and care about the communities in which they teach. However, they also stressed that teachers of this kind require fair compensation. The district must commit to investing in educational professionals who are passionate about educating young people all across Chicago.

Finally, young people across the city stressed that more resources must be allocated to free after-school programs that better address the unique needs of the district's students. This is especially important to take into consideration in light of state and federal-level budget cuts that have decreased funding to youth programs across Chicago.[95] While young adults across neighborhoods discussed the importance of extracurricular activities, such as visual and performing arts and athletics, young people of color tended to emphasize the need for additional academic support. In Pilsen and in Chinatown-Bridgeport, for example, a number of respondents suggested that more must be done to invest in after school programs that provide resources such as tutors and additional support for English-language learners. Gabriella, a 22-year-old Latina and resident of Pilsen, captured a sentiment shared by many of the bilingual participants with whom we spoke: *"I know going into third grade, I really didn't know any English at all, and my parents had to go hunting for a private tutor to teach me English, like the vowels, everything that had to be learned. I was a third grader, not knowing anything, I was confused during the whole class … I'm like, 'I'm here. Yes, I'm here, but I don't know anything you're saying, anything.' And there would be times where I come*

"If a lot of teachers made learning fun and made things a little bit more interesting for the younger crowd, I think education would be a little bit better."

home crying because I didn't understand anything." Given the unique educational challenges that emerge across Chicago's neighborhoods, increased access to after-school programs that provide additional support offers one avenue for investing in the future of the city's young people.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Neighborhoods play a formative role in shaping the educational opportunities available to young adults in Chicago's educational landscape. The white Chicago natives in our study overwhelmingly attended exclusive, selective enrollment, and private schools located on the city's North Side. As a result, these young people discussed the challenges facing Chicago Public Schools from a more abstract perspective, having benefited from funding policies that prioritize mixed or majority-white, North Side schools.[96] While some of the young people of color we interviewed also gained access to exclusive schools, they tended to discuss the ways in which pursuing educational opportunities outside of their neighborhoods created a sense of distance between them and the communities in which they grew up. Still, many young people of color, especially African Americans in Englewood, experienced the day-to-day challenges of educational disinvestment in Chicago's neighborhood schools first-hand. Faced with geographical isolation and limited educational mobility, young people of color, and Black youth in particular, possessed a deep sense of distrust in local government and a sense that city leadership does not care about communities of color. While many of our interviews with young adults about education in Chicago were critical in nature, interviewees also pushed back against the notion that young people are apathetic about local politics. Young adults across Chicago articulated tangible policy solutions that should be considered by city leadership in order to address the educational challenges facing the city. These solutions include reinvesting in neighborhood schools; adopting a more equitable approach to funding that takes preexisting racial, ethnic, and geographic inequalities into account; developing a pipeline to recruit and retain well-trained, culturally aware, and passionate educators who are invested in Chicago; and increasing access to free after-school programs that allow young people to explore their interests, obtain additional academic support, and prepare for college.

RECOMMENDED CITATION

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CHICAGO'S RACIAL ECONOMY

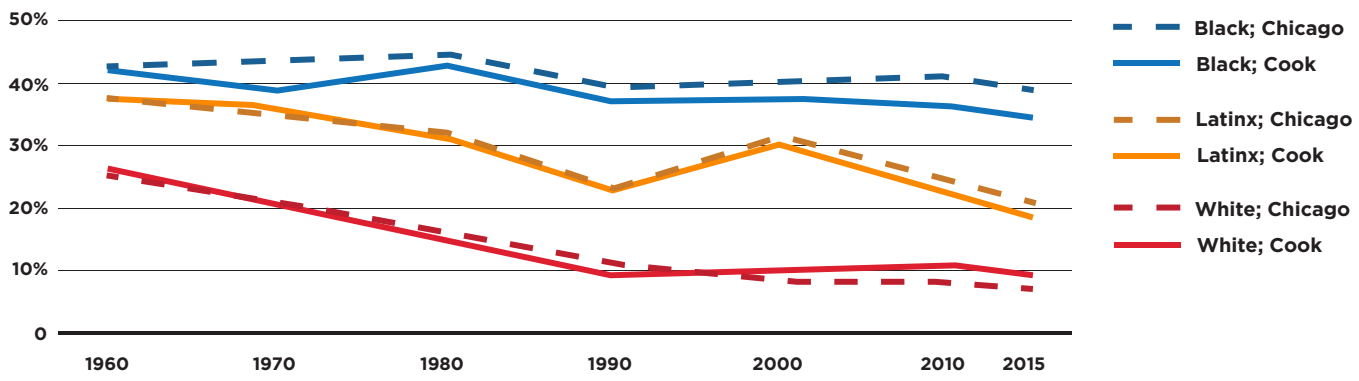
Margaret Teresa Brower

Race and the Economy

Chicago is a city of precarious economic circumstances. Although the city has one of the largest metropolitan economies in the United States,[97] it also has high, outstanding long-term debt,[98] the highest per-person pension debt among the nation's largest cities,[99] and high outflows of high-income taxpayers leaving the city.[100] While Chicago's many economic opportunities and amenities are attracting a migration of young adults to the city,[101] this debt and loss of income tax requires Chicagoans to pay more fees and taxes than any other city in the United States.[102] Young adults are impacted differently by this paradox of economic opportunity and debt in the city.

For many, this impact is dependent on the availability of jobs, which constantly changes in Chicago based on the capitalistic economic structure of the city often controlled by private, for-profit industries. Over the last few decades,

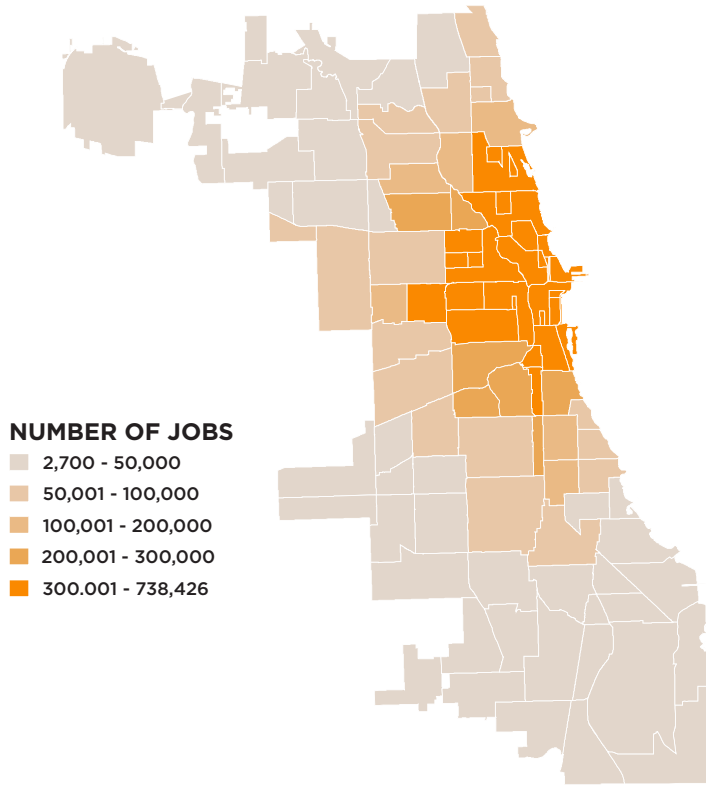
FIGURE 1: PERCENT OF 20-24 YEAR OLDS WHO WERE OUT OF SCHOOL AND OUT OF WORK IN COOK COUNTY BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 1960-2015 [F]



young adults have been impacted very differently by these changes. From 1960 to 2015, the out of college and out of work rate for white adults ages 20-24 in Chicago has steadily decreased from 28% to 9%. Over this same time period, this rate has also decreased for Latinx young adults, though not as consistently and not at the same rate as for white youth: for example, the out of college and work rate for Latinx young adults in 2015 was 20%. Black adults in this age range experienced the smallest decrease in out of college and unemployment rates over time: in 1960 it was 42%, and by 2015 it had only dropped to 40% **(see Figure 1)**.

Unemployment rates for young adults in Chicago also vary by geographic region. The highest concentration of young adult unemployment occurs in the neighborhoods on the city's South and West Sides, especially Fuller Park, Englewood, East Garfield Park, and North Lawndale, all which are more than 90% African American. The neighborhood areas with the lowest unemployment rates are located on the northern and northwestern neighborhoods, such as the Gold Coast, Lakeview, and Lincoln Park, where predominantly white residents live.[103] Job availability corresponds to these unemployment rates—with jobs being heavily concentrated in the Loop, and northwestern areas of Chicago **(see Figure 3)**. Although Chicago residents can access different areas of the city using

FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF JOBS ACCESSIBLE VIA 30 MINUTES ON PUBLIC TRANSIT IN CHICAGO BY CHICAGO COMMUNITY AREAS, 2014 [G]



public transportation, for those who lived in the western and southern regions of the city in 2014, only 50,001 to 100,000 job were accessible within 30 minutes via public transit. Meanwhile, for those who lived on the northern and northwestern parts of the city, 300,001 to 738,426 jobs were accessible within 30 minutes via public transit **(see Figure 2)**.[104]

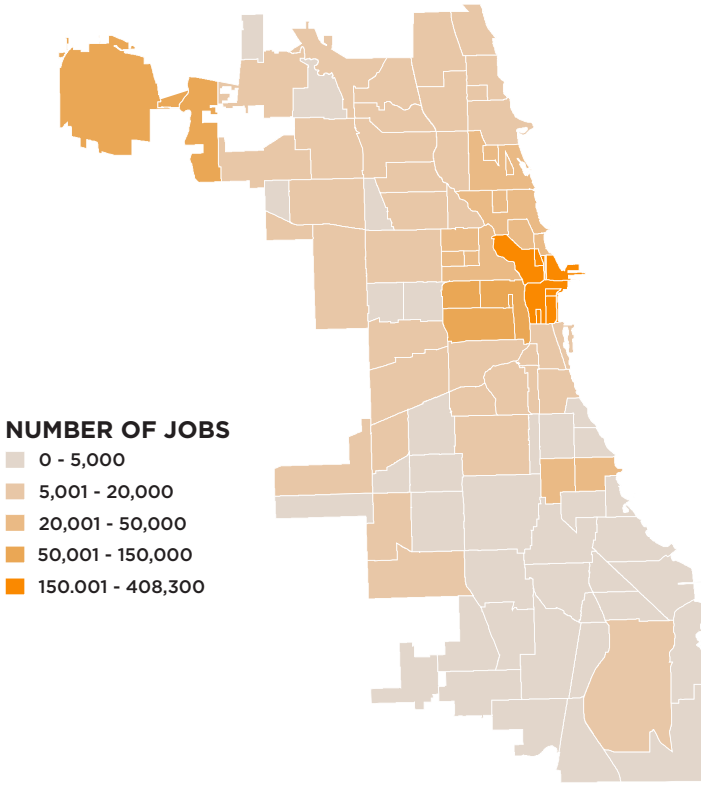
Geography, age, race, and ethnicity are important differences to take into account when trying to understand the economic circumstances of young adults in Chicago. Our interviews with 200 young adults across different neighborhoods

illustrate how the Chicago economy and employment opportunities all shape the economic positioning of young people differently in the city. Their stories provide much-needed context for understanding how young adults are navigating these citywide trends in joblessness, unemployment, and job availability as they attempt to survive and thrive in an unequal city.

Economic Systems of Opportunities and Disadvantages

Our conversations with young adults in Chicago suggested that they were experiencing the economy very differently from one another. For many, these experiences varied considerably by neighborhood, race, ethnicity, and class. Most of the white young adults we spoke to who live in Albany Park or the North Side, discussed entering the workforce with educational credentials, financial and emotional support, and expectations that jobs would be both accessible and available. They often mentioned that the economic system is built to accommodate them, and they are equipped with the resources to move throughout the workplace as it aligns with their personal goals. They also referred to how their family's income and their own individual income impacted their financial goals and economic circumstances. For example, many of the white young adults living on the North Side explained in their interviews that they had financial resources and support from their families to pursue professions and interests for personal happiness and fulfillment. Travis, a white Chicagoan, age 24, described his financial trajectory as "standard." "*I kind of feel like I've followed a very safe, standard path so far. Completed high school, went to a four-year university, got a job, studied, reasonably well-paying job, able to save enough, put enough away for the time and all that kind of stuff and also have a little bit of spending money on the side to pursue things that are interesting to me, as well, that make me happy*."

FIGURE 3: NUMBER OF JOBS IN CHICAGO COMMUNITY AREA, 2014 [G]



Travis's expectations for college completion and white-collar employment were reflected in many of the other

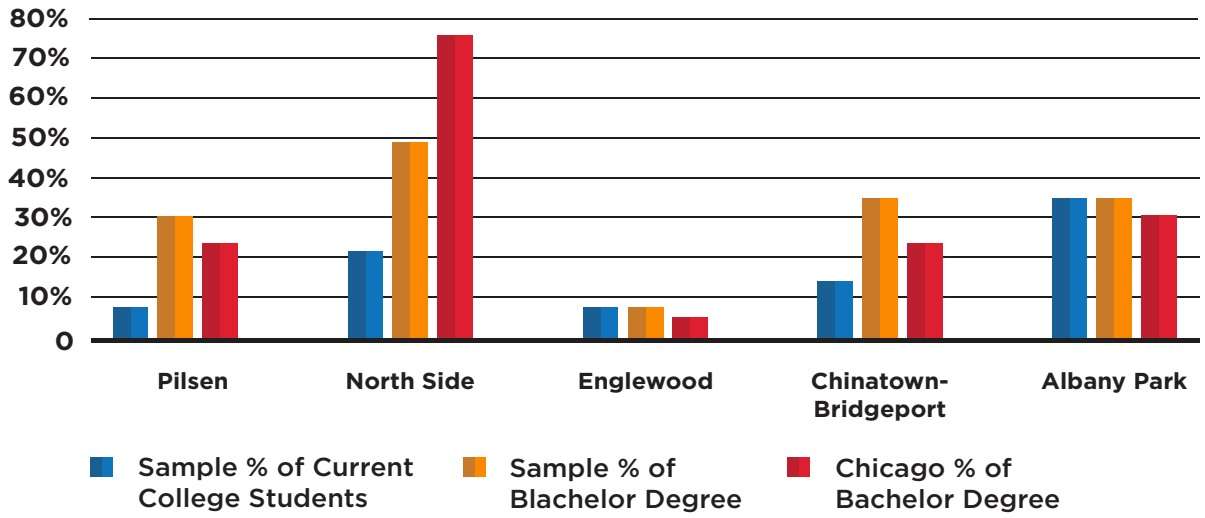
TABLE 1. MILLENNIALS WITH BACHELOR DEGREES POPULATION GROWTH LARGEST RATES BY U.S. METRO AREA, 2010-15 [H]

	Millennials with a B.A. Core City Population Percentage Growth, 2010-15	Millennials with a B.A. Metro Area (excl. core city) Percentage Growth, 2010-15	Ratio of Core City Growth to Metro Area Growth, 2010-15
Chicago	15.27%	0.98%	15.62
Austin	50.33%	5.59%	9.01
St. Louis	33.69%	3.97%	8.49
Detroit	78.29%	10.88%	7.19
Riverside/San Bernardino	31.68%	4.42%	7.16

interviews with white North Siders. Many of the white young adults we spoke with, like Travis, view their work lives within an economic system that serves their individual goals and ambitions. Many of them received financial and personal support early from their parents, teachers, and social networks. They explained they entered the workforce with credentials, support systems, and previous experiences that provided them with the luxury of selecting careers and affording hobbies that allowed them to prioritize individual goals such as personal growth. These experiences were mentioned both by white Chicagoans who grew up in the city and those who migrated there as adults. It is not surprising that the white transplants we spoke with were highly educated; in the last decade, Chicago has experienced a large increase in millenials with a college degree entering and settling into the city **(see Table 1)**. In their interviews, white transplants explained that despite lacking many of the networks long-time Chicagoans had, they felt they could easily integrate into the economic market, in part because their educational credentials made the transition possible. Most of the white young adults we interviewed were college educated: 71% had a bachelor's degree or were currently enrolled in college **(See Figure 4)**. These percentages align with the broader adult population living on the North Side of which 76% of whom have a bachelor's degree.

Not all of the white young adults we spoke with had these resources or educational degrees. Yet even those who lacked these assets similarly believed Chicago's economic system worked for them. For instance, those without a college degree said they were able to move into new careers and move up quickly without previous experience. Sydney, a 21-year-old white woman who was still completing her degree, explained her ease finding a more fulfilling summer job. She shared, "*when I decided to*

FIGURE 4: BACHELOR DEGREE OBTAINMENT BY NEIGHBORHOOD IN CHICAGO AND INTERVIEW SAMPLE [1]



drop from the education department, I frantically looked for a bunch of summer jobs that weren't in food service—things that could further my career. I found [a business]. They were looking for a development intern, which is fundraising, administrative services—the whole lot of that. I applied, and I got accepted with very little fundraising experience."

Similar to Sydney, many other white young adults across educational and income levels shared stories of professional mobility, describing it as a fluid process in which they could transition in and out of careers with ease. They talked about these experiences using phrases such as "it was the right time for me" or "I expected opportunities." Leah, a white woman, age 28, used these types of phrases in her interview to explain her decision to move up in her career. She said that after receiving lots of other opportunities, "*Something presented itself and I was like actually, I'm actually interested in moving and switching things up. Yeah, I don't know. Just right time, right place. I went and met this new team that I'm working with now, and I thought they were really cool and had a good opportunity for me, so I switched over.*" Jack, also a white young adult, age 28, explained that he often expected to "***[take] advantage of opportunity, not necessarily being entitled and expecting opportunity, but the drive to have opportunity has been something that I follow.*** *I think that stems from my experience when I was young which was instilled in us, no matter what part of the city you came from.*"

"[take] advantage of opportunity, not necessarily being entitled and expecting opportunity, but the drive to have opportunity has been something that I follow."

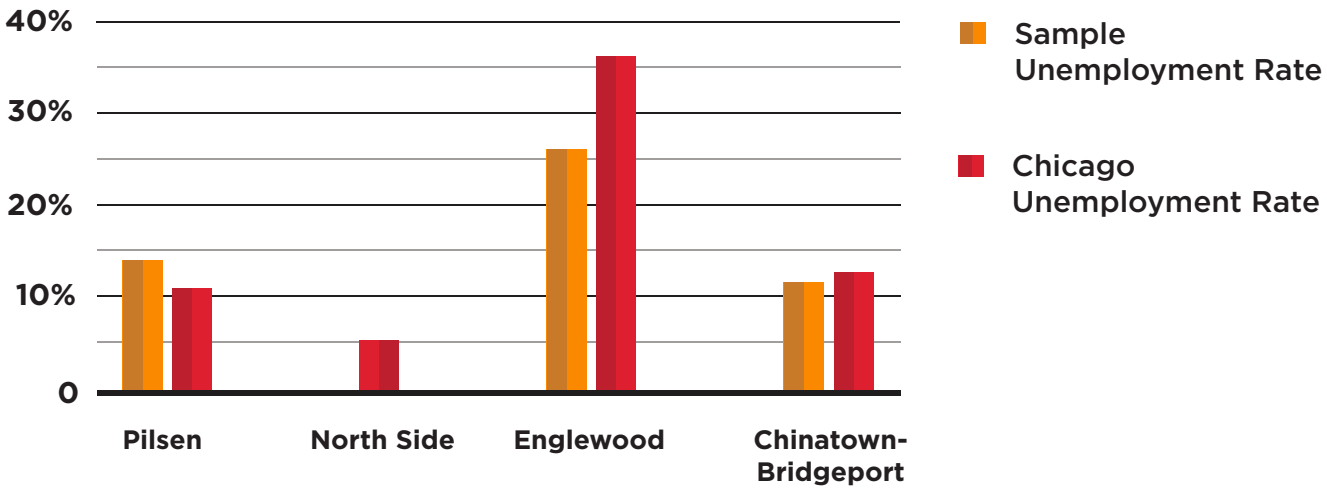
Leah is a Chicago transplant and Jack is a longtime Chicago resident. While we might expect young adults in Chicago to have different levels of ease navigating the job market based on their time in Chicago—because they have networks of different strengths, for example—based on our interviews with white young adults there does not seem to be a qualitative difference between the two. Indeed, Leah's and Jack's experiences illustrate a general pattern we found while talking to white young adults: regardless of their length of time in Chicago, they voiced very similar expectations of securing a job and had opportunities to change their professional status to match their goals and needs.

White young adults we interviewed who were not working in the white-collar sector voiced similar expectations in their interviews. Vanessa, age 22, explained her ability to navigate the job market with ease. In her interview, she explained, "*It's just all about the money for me right now. If I want to live on my own I have to be able to afford it. … It's not hard to find the jobs, you just have to go on Craigslist or call places or just walk into restaurants. If you have a good personality, it's not hard*." Although we did not speak to many white young adults who worked in service jobs, those we did interview explained their economic situations using similar phrasing as Vanessa to express their ability to navigate the workforce.

"I can count on one hand the people in the service staff that are not white… I know that when I started there were more servers of color and they ended up getting fired."

Of course, not all young adults in the city described securing employment with such ease. For some, maintaining a job is almost as hard as acquiring one in the first place. Vanessa continues sharing her experience of working at a bar in Wicker Park: "***I can count on one hand the people in the service staff that are not white. …I know that when I started there were more servers of color and they ended up getting fired.***" Like Vanessa, other white young adults working in the service industry similarly noted that workers are

FIGURE 5: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY NEIGHBORHOOD IN CHICAGO AND INTERVIEW SAMPLE [1]



treated differently based on their race and ethnicity. Craig, a 25-year-old white man working in the service industry on the North Side explained: *"I can say working in a restaurant in the neighborhood, race is almost [defining] are you front-of-house, kind of middle-of-the-house, or back-of-house. And I noticed this almost immediately: if you are white, you are almost exclusive with front-of-house … generally speaking, they're people who very clearly present as having grown up middle class, or having a college education, or some professional. Middle-of-the-house, runners, it's a little bit more mixed, but I would say it's very dominated [by] Latino, and the back-of-house is almost exclusively African American and black. If you're a customer, you don't see back-of-house, you interact with front-of-house, and then middle-of-house is just floating in between."* White young adults such as Craig and Vanessa notice how the service economy is racially structured—providing better protections and job opportunities to some, while denying them to others.

When we spoke to African American young adults in Englewood, many of them confirmed that they had difficulty securing and maintaining employment. Unlike the white young adults we spoke to in Albany Park and the North Side neighborhoods, African Americans in Englewood explained to us that they were experiencing a very different economic system, which was neither accessible nor malleable. Instead, many of the young African American adults we spoke to referred to a system that was closed, rigid, and unreliable. Their experiences interacting with this type of an economic system resulted in very different financial outlooks than those of the white young adults we interviewed.

African American young adults from Englewood reported far fewer economic and educational resources. Of those we

interviewed, 36% were unemployed, and 6% had received a bachelor's degree. This group of African American young adults had an unemployment rate almost 10 percentage points below the average unemployment rate for all adults in Englewood **(see Figure 5)**, yet many of them referenced the difficulty they and many others in Englewood encounter as they try to secure employment. Englewood is approximately nine miles south of the loop where most of the jobs in Chicago are located.[105] Although, young adults in Englewood can access the loop via the Red Line train, many discussed the difficulty of having to move around the city to apply for jobs they did not believe they would get. For some, this belief had been reinforced by having gone through a daunting process of applying for jobs throughout the city that ultimately resulted in rejection. Gabriel, an African American, who at 23 years old is about the same age as Vanessa, the white woman referenced earlier, grew up in Englewood and also wanted to live alone and provide for himself. Yet Gabriel had a very different experience seeking employment opportunities in Chicago. He shared: "*Honestly, to keep it real with you, I've been looking for work for the last two years. I've been filling out so many applications, I've been on so many interviews, and nothing ever fell [came] through. It's kind of hard.* ***I feel like if I go outside of Chicago, I will be able to find better opportunities than in Chicago. And it's kind of crazy, but I guess that's how it is.***" Many of the young adults we interviewed in Englewood shared similar experiences of rejection as they sought employment in Chicago.

Moreover, this rejection was experienced by those with different levels of education in Englewood; young adults often reported that, regardless of their educational credentials and human capital, the city's economic system felt as if it was built against them. Indeed, Kevin, who is an African American 22-year-old,

"I feel like if I go outside of Chicago, I will be able to find better opportunities than in Chicago. And it's kind of crazy, but I guess that's how it is."

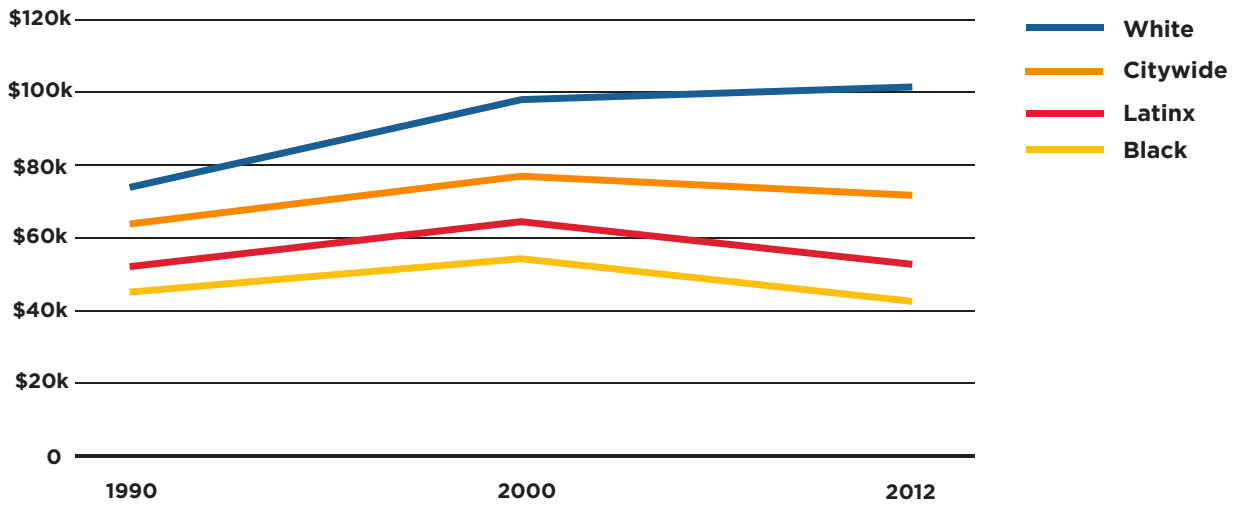
shared that even his peers in Englewood who completed their college degrees also had a hard time finding work in Chicago. *"Honestly, it's like they— I don't want to seem like the person that wants to tie everything to race, but that's really, really what it seems like. Not just me, but a lot of my friends trying to find jobs and it's really hard. Not even just people that I know from the streets, I know people that went to college, came back to find jobs, and it's just hard. I want to say it's just in the city of Chicago, period, it's hard to find a job. Because if you leave and go somewhere*

else you could do it. My brother and his girlfriend left and went to Alabama; found a job that same week. I think it's just like you got to deal with the city of Chicago."

For the African American young adults we interviewed in Englewood, Chicago was a nearly impossible place to find employment, and many mentioned that they needed to leave the city in order to find a job. Kevin's and Gabriel's experiences are consistent with other Chicago-based data: African American youth ages 20-24 are out of school and work at higher rates compared to other metropolitan areas where there are more economic opportunities.[106] Moreover, higher levels of education do not eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in joblessness for African Americans in Chicago. Research indicates that African Americans in Chicago with advanced degrees have higher rates of unemployment than whites in the city with only a bachelor's degree.[107] These disparities are reflected in many of the stories young adults shared in their interviews. Unlike white young adults on the North Side who mentioned that their educational credentials allowed them to access opportunities in an open and inviting economic system, many African Americans in Englewood with similar educational credentials reported that they did not experience the same treatment.

The young African American adults we spoke with in Englewood believed they are experiencing an economic system that is unfairly closed to them, and they shared suggestions for how to work around this system. Many of them advocated for work assistance programs that would provide Englewood residents with more skills, opportunities, and resources to navigate an economy that feels as if it is leaving them behind. They suggested that nonprofits in their neighborhood could be important spaces for facilitating the dissemination of these resources. For example, Jasmine, a 24-year-old African American, explained how a local nonprofit currently supports her and others: "*You*

FIGURE 6: CHICAGO'S GROWING RACE GAP IN HOUSEHOLD INCOME [G]



got people there that helps you. They let you come in, make your resume, make a purchase. You got the people that are going to help you. It's up to you whether you want to get the help or not. Some people are going to give up on it. But you got a lot of sources and a lot of places that will help you get a job." Jasmine was one of the few young adults in Englewood who expressed some hopefulness about the job market, and for her, nonprofits in Englewood are one institution that can change access to jobs. There is a consensus among the African American young adults we spoke to in Englewood that, to improve their current positioning in the economy, they require more institutional support and resources.

"I really want to own something. I don't want to work for somebody, I want to be my own boss."

Other African American young adults we interviewed in Englewood mentioned a need for opportunities to learn more about entrepreneurship. As Kayla, age 25 explained, "*there ain't really no black owned stores in our communities*;" and as Gabrielle insisted, "***I really want to own something. I don't want to work for somebody, I want to be my own boss.***" Others also mentioned their frustration that businesses in their community are rarely owned by African Americans. Some young adults, such as Gabrielle, believe that African Americans cannot improve their economic circumstances without opportunities for capital, collateral, employment networks, and educational credentials. Although some young African American adults in Englewood have ideas about how to change their access to jobs and their economic prosperity, many explain that unless the system itself changes, no matter how many resources they have or how persistent they are, they will continue to be discriminated against on the basis of their race.

Constrained Economic Choices & Resource Pathways

Latinxs and African Americans in Chicago experienced a decrease in their household income between 2000 and 2012 **(see Figure 6)**, and these income levels have not risen in the last five years.[108] These economic realities were often described in interviews by young Latinx adults who mentioned their family income was a constant constraint for them. Douglas, a Latino from Pilsen, age 23, shared how his family's economic status was a persistent source of anxiety for him as he tried to balance paying for school and taking care of his mom. He said, *"I haven't had like the best financial backing or even family backing, so that's made school a lot harder. And now I'm at the point where I'm like paying for school and looking for*

scholarships after I transfer out. So that's the biggest worry on my mind … and I'm kind of anxious about it. Yeah, I've had to [do it all on my own]. And that's because my mother can't really work, and my father's not really in the picture. So, I've kind of had [to] be the person that dives in and figures things out."

Other Latinx young adults like Douglas, with limited resources and college funding, explained that they cannot plan their economic future without considering these types of family obligations. Many of them mentioned not being able to go to college full time because they needed to work part-time jobs to pay their family's utility bills, rent, and groceries. Some Latinx young adults we spoke to said they lived at home with their parents in order to pool financial resources among the family. Others shared sacrifices they had to make to take care of their families, such as not attending or dropping out of college. For example, Sofía, a Latina, age 26 dropped out of college to help her sick father with his restaurant. She said, "*I [left] school when my father got sick; so, I'm helping them out with his restaurant business. So, that is my plan, right now. I work every single day; I do whatever is needed, what he would do*." She gave up the opportunity to pursue a college degree and a career she was interested in to take over the family business.

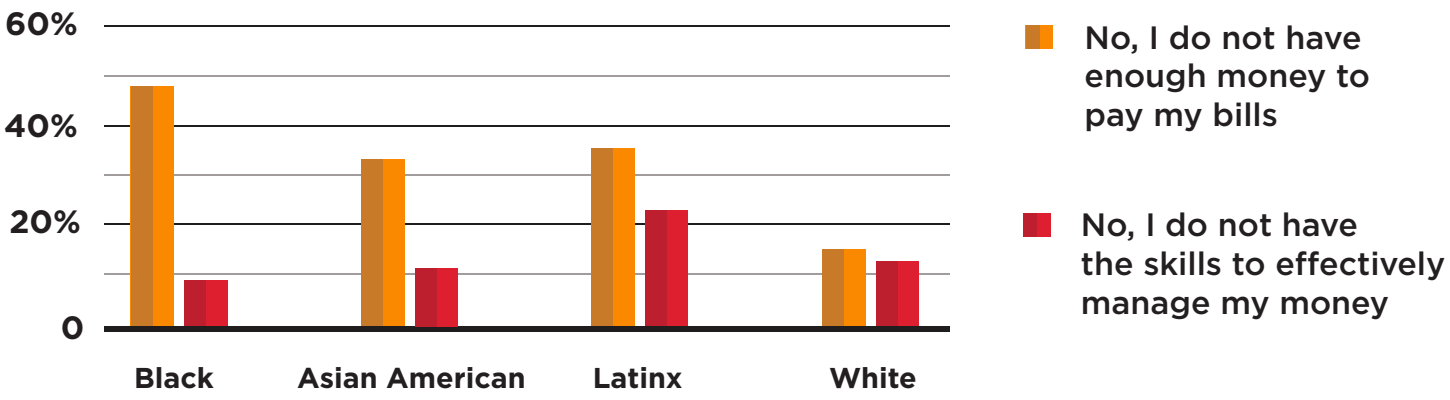
Sofía's situation is not unique. These are the types of sacrifices and limited choices Latinx young adults often shared they needed to make; many explained in their interviews that they needed to take care of their family over their own personal goals for fulfillment. The economic hardship their family experienced was often an impediment to their personal opportunities for wealth and job mobility. For example, many Latinx young adults did not believe they could take risks that could often result in job mobility, such as enrolling full time in college, being unemployed for a period of time to secure a job in a white-collar industry, or accepting unpaid internships to develop professional skills. For most Latinx young adults from low-income households, it was difficult to take advantage of professional and educational opportunities they needed in order to improve their economic circumstances. Instead, many Latinx young adults expressed needing to choose between completing higher education or working more shifts in service jobs to temporarily take care of their families.

"[My parents] help me out with whatever I need. I'm starting college in [the] spring and they told me they're going to help me [in] whatever way I need with school."

In addition to their difficulties making ends meet, young adults in Pilsen we spoke to also expressed concerns about having the skills to manage their income. Among all young adults we interviewed, Latinxs in Pilsen felt the least able to manage their finances effectively: 22% believed they did not have these skills and 36% felt they did not have enough money to pay their bills **(see Figure 7)**. The constrained economic choices that many Latinx adults in Pilsen faced as a result of their socioeconomic status, their lack of financial resources and money management skills, and their obligations to their family, all limited their capacity to afford college, save income, or accumulate assets.

Interestingly, in their interviews, Latinx young adults in Albany Park mentioned their families as a source of economic anxiety far less than Latinx young adults in Pilsen. It seems that many of the Latinx young adults in Albany Park had more resources to complete their higher education and pursue jobs outside of the service sector. These resources were evident when Latinx young adults from Albany Park explained their ability to enroll in college full-time, work in white-collar professions, and save their income. For example, Carla, age 24, a Latina from Albany Park, explained her parents can afford to help her through college: ***"[My parents] help me out with whatever I need. I'm starting college in [the] spring and they told me they're going to help me [in] whatever way I need with school."*** In contrast, many Latinx young adults in Pilsen, who are in a different economic position, felt they have a binary choice: to either work long hours in service industries or complete their education at their family's expense. This set of financial circumstances imposed onto them as a consequence of their socioeconomic status created a particular type of economic anxiety for Latinx young adults that limited their capacity to prosper in the economic market.

FIGURE 7: REPORTED FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND SKILLS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY FOR THE INTERVIEW SAMPLE



We should note that taking care of one's family is an economic anxiety that African American and Asian American young adults also mentioned in their interviews, but not to the same extent nor in the same ways as Latinxs in Pilsen. Young Asian American adults we spoke with in Chinatown-Bridgeport also shared the goal of taking care of their families financially but, unlike Latinx young adults, they felt they had more resources and support to do so. One reason for this difference is that several Asian American young adults reported having financial literacy—the skills, knowledge, and experience of learning how to manage their personal finances. In discussing financial literacy, across different economic backgrounds, Asian Americans often mentioned that their parents provided them with some of these resources and skills. For example, Zoe, a 19-year-old Chinese American, shared that her parents taught her at a young age the habit of saving her money and the concept of compound interest—that her investments in a college account would increase in value over time. She shared: "*When I was younger, I entered a lot of competitions, and I won scholarship money from that as well. So my parents took that money and put it in a college savings [account], for it to accumulate and gain interest. … [Later on] I offered my parents my first paycheck; they're like, 'No. You should keep the money for whatever you need.' My parents have this mentality of, 'We are your parents; we are here to provide for you … our job is to teach you how to be a better person, because you have the capability of making money and going out there on your own. So, you keep your own money, and be wise with it.'*"

"I've been working throughout high school. And in college, I got through college through a financial aid because I had enough need where they pretty much paid all my tuition."

Neither of Zoe's parents finished high school and both are first-generation immigrants; her father is a chef at a restaurant and her mother stays at home taking care of the family. Zoe, from Chinatown-Bridgeport and Sofia, from Pilsen, are very similar in terms of their economic backgrounds: their parents are immigrants and their fathers work in the service industry as single-income providers—but they face a different set of economic choices. Zoe entered college with a savings account that had accumulated value over the course of high school, and her parents were able to manage the family business without her help.

Knowledge about scholarships can also change college affordability for those in low-income households. More often than

Latinx young adults, Asian American young adults from Chinatown-Bridgeport mentioned taking advantage of financial aid and receiving full scholarships for college. Many of these resources are restricted to full-time enrollment, an enrollment status few Latinx young adults reported because many were enrolled part-time. For example, Brendan, a 26-year-old Asian American from Chinatown-Bridgeport, shared how a full-time university scholarship allowed him to complete his degree and still take care of his family, "*For at least half of my life it's been a single-parent household.* ***I've been working throughout high school. And in college, I got through college through a financial aid because I had enough need where they pretty much paid all my tuition. And then I was still working full-time while doing school, but that was to help pay for my sister's tuition.*** *To make it work, we eat a lot of food at home so we're not going out and spending money. I'm the most frugal of the family. So, I make things work just by being really low maintenance pretty much*."

"Every month I have to pay gas bills and then have to pay Internet, pay my phone, and then pay my tuition fee. It's a lot; that's why I need two jobs."

Many Asian American young adults shared similar background characteristics to the young Latinx adults we interviewed in Pilsen: parents who did not complete college and were foreign-born, single-parent-income households, and families that worked low-wage jobs in the service industry. These are not ideal economic conditions and each of these families are burdened by them; however, for some Asian American young adults, financial literacy and college affordability reduced some of this financial burden for them and their families. However, it is important to note that financial literacy alone did not transform the economic circumstances of all Asian American young adults in Chinatown-Bridgeport. Caitlyn, a 21-year-old first-generation immigrant from China, explained in her interview that despite all of her meticulous budgeting, saving, and financial planning, these skills are not enough to change an economic position determined by her immigrant and socioeconomic status. She explained, "*I have a car.* ***Every month I have to pay gas bills and then have to pay Internet, pay my phone, and then pay my tuition fee. It's a lot; that's why I need two jobs.*** *My first job, the retail store, they gave me $10 [per hour], and I have to pay tax. So after tax I only have maybe an $8 or $9 for each hour. And then every day I only work five or six hours, so it's not enough for me*." While financial literacy and college resources can help mitigate some of the

difficulties Asian Americans experience as a result of their overall positioning in the Chicago economy, these opportunities are not enough for young adults like Caitlyn and others living paycheck to paycheck.

Both Asian American and Latinx young adults we interviewed, in Chinatown-Bridgeport and Pilsen, respectively, often mentioned higher education in their interviews as a resource that has the potential to change their positioning in the current economic system. For those who worried about their household income, access to higher education is seen as an opportunity for some upward economic mobility. However, it is important to recognize that many Latinx and Asian American young adults are pursuing these opportunities while also being limited by the socioeconomic constraints that structure their decisions in the Chicago economy.

With African American young adults that we spoke to in Englewood, it is even more evident that higher education alone will not change their relationship to Chicago's economy or transform their economic status. As noted previously, African Americans with advanced degrees have higher unemployment rates than whites with bachelor's degrees. For many African American young adults from Englewood, the economic system they encounter is perceived as closed and inaccessible, regardless of their educational credentials. For many Latinx young adults from Pilsen, the economic system is accessible, but only insofar as it allows them to survive; for many of them, to thrive in this economic system involves sacrifices that most are not willing to make. For some Asian American young adults from Chinatown-Bridgeport, they can improve their economic circumstances with financial skills and educational resources, but not ultimately change a system in

FIGURE 8: CHICAGO'S GROWING RACE GAP IN PER CAPITA INCOME [G]

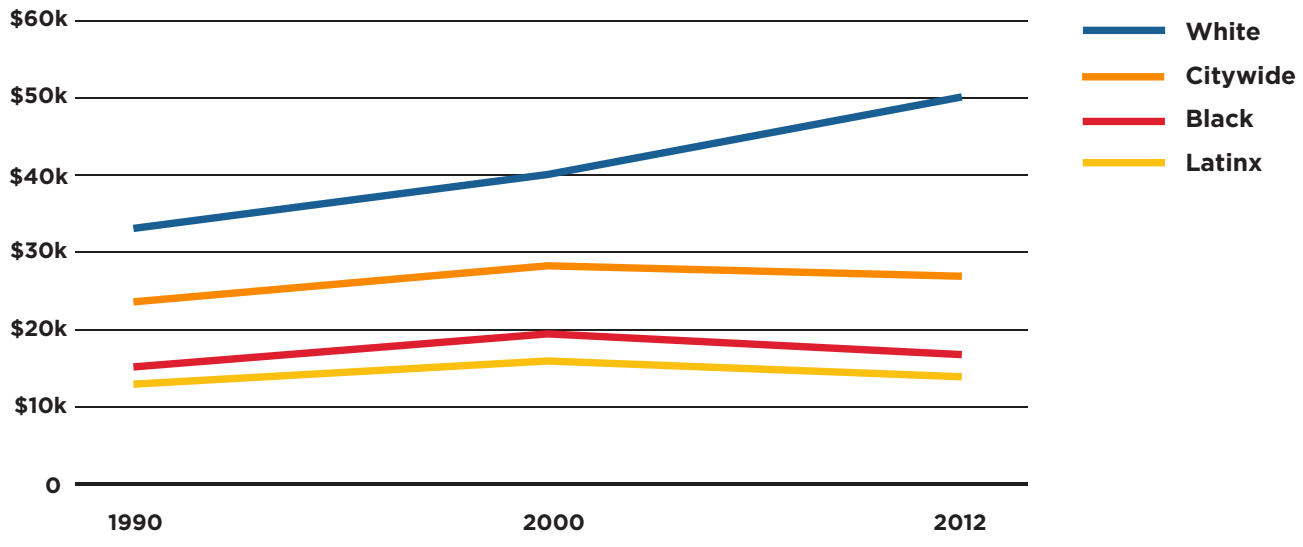


TABLE 2. TOP 3 EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRIES IN 2015 BY NEIGHBORHOOD [J]

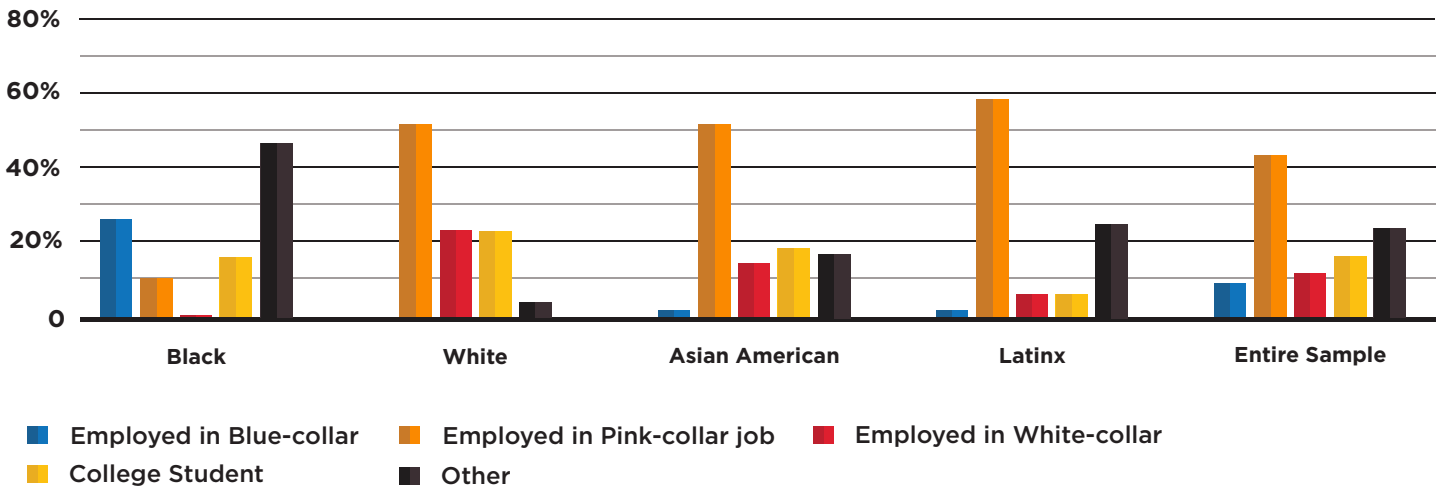
	Albany Park	Pilsen	Chinatown	Englewood	Northside
#1	Accommodation & Food Services **18.2%**	Accommodation & Food Services **17.8%**	Accommodation & Food Services **19.3%**	Retail Trade **22.7%**	Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services **19.9%**
#2	Retail Trade **18.1%**	Retail Trade **16.1%**	Retail Trade **15%**	Accommodation & Food Services **18.3%**	Accommodation & Food Services **13.14%**
#3	Health Care & Social Assistance **12.9%**	Administration & Support, Waste Management & Remediation **10.1%**	Health Care & Social Assistance **9.6%**	Administration & Support, Waste Management & Remediation **14.6%**	Finance & Insurance **8.89%**

which immigrants and young adults from low-income households are systematically disadvantaged. In contrast, many white young adults we interviewed from the North Side described the economic system they interact with as open and supportive of their financial goals; most feel they have easy access to resources, like a higher education, that will only improve their experiences within this economy. This is the economic system we would like to imagine is available for all young adults regardless of their race, ethnicity, and location in the city. Why is this economic system not a reality for young adults of color, and especially the African Americans in Englewood that we interviewed? The racialized experiences of young adults navigating the Chicago economy help us answer this question.

Racism & Economic Outcomes

Like other cities, Chicago has a long history of economic and racial inequality. One measure of this inequality is that the wage gap between black and white Chicago residents has consistently increased since the 1960s and compared to other cities this gap is largest in the country.[109] Today, the average white family earns 2.2 times more in income than black families, and 1.7 times more income than Latinx families in Chicago. Moreover, between 1990 and 2012, white adults in Chicago have experienced a steady increase in per capita income (the average income earned per person), while Blacks and Latinxs have had their per capita income remain mostly stagnant since 1990 **(see Figure 8)**. Even when controlling for education, work experiences, and area of residence, Chicago's racial wage gap persists, suggesting a fundamental racial component to income inequality.[110] The young adults we interviewed had different experiences with racial economic inequality in Chicago. Some of these experiences can be attributed to racial

FIGURE 9: EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRY BY RACE AND ETHNICITY FOR THE INTERVIEW SAMPLE



discrimination, while others are more related to the types of jobs available in individual neighborhoods.

During our interviews with Latinxs in Pilsen, and with Asian Americans in Chinatown-Bridgeport, young adults from both of these neighborhoods mentioned similar experiences and understandings of how race shaped their economic opportunities. They explained that most of the businesses in their neighborhood were owned by people of their ethnic background. Among the young adults we interviewed, those with a high school diploma or less educational attainment tended to be employed by these neighborhood businesses and explained they did not experience racism in the workplace because they were surrounded by people who were from a similar ethnic background. When we consider the industries that are concentrated in each of the neighborhoods where interview participants were from, in both Pilsen and Chinatown-Bridgeport the number one industry for employment is accommodations and food services, and the second most common industry is retail trade **(see Table 2)**. In comparison, on the North Side the number one industry for employment is professional and technical services.

Like young adults in Chinatown-Bridgeport and Pilsen who indicated that they did not experience high levels of racial discrimination in service industry employment, Asian American and Latinx young adults who worked in service jobs in Albany Park expressed similar experiences in their interviews. Hadi, an 18-year-old Asian American in Albany Park, explained how his ethnic identity made it easier for him to get a job in the service industry: "*I literally walked into the store and I asked for a job and they said no. But then I heard them speaking*

my language, I asked him again in my language and he said 'come back in an hour,' and I got the job. I started working that night." Albany Park has the same three top employment industries in as Pilsen and Chinatown-Bridgeport. Young adults working in service jobs in each of these neighborhoods explained in their interviews that they did not experience racial barriers to employment, though they admitted it was more difficult to get white-collar jobs outside of their neighborhoods.

In contrast, Latinxs and Asian Americans with a college education who predominantly had jobs outside their neighborhoods reported experiences with racism in the workplace more often. Amy, a 25-year-old Asian American, shared how choosing a white-collar job in the city meant accepting racism and sexism as a regular part of her life. She shared, "*I'm stuck in this cubicle job that I hate, and I'm dealing with a lot of [racial] microaggressions and sexism, but I'm also making money, and [so] I can also order a soda when I go out to eat. It's kind of like, choose one or the other.*" These young adults with access to higher education also noted the ways they perceived racism as just part of the city. Ricardo, a 23-year-old Latino, explained, "*Capitalism is made to benefit white supremacy, because capitalism, racism, and white supremacy go hand in hand. There's no racism without capitalism and there's no capitalism without racism. And only a certain group of people are meant to benefit from these systems. Some people are going to suffer, which is my friends, and my people. That's just the way it is now. It doesn't have to be.*" Generally, the Latinx and Asian American young adults we interviewed with jobs in the white-collar sector were more likely than those working in neighborhood businesses to report experiencing racial discrimination, microaggressions, and a broader institutional system of inequality.

African Americans we spoke to in Englewood had a different experience when it came to racism and jobs. African American young adults, in their interviews, often referenced racial discrimination as a frequent and unavoidable barrier when seeking and applying for a job. They also perceived there to be economic competition with Latinxs, specifically Mexicans. About a quarter of African American young adults from Englewood referenced Mexicans as taking job opportunities away from African Americans, and employers' tendency to hire Latinxs over African Americans. Kennedy, a 20-year-old African American, shared his experience of competing with Mexicans in Chicago and being discriminated against in comparison. *"They look at you, you try to get a job now at Chipotle or McDonald's, you'll see Mexicans there and you'll ask them,*

"'Can I fill out an application?' They'll tell you 'Give me your number, write it down, we'll call you back.' You know, a week has passed and they still haven't called you. ***That means they feel some type of way about the color of your skin, or they feel that you might hurt them or anything like that. So yeah, racism is a big, big issue.***" These feelings and perceptions captured in our interviews are consistent with other studies on intergroup competition in urban spaces. Specifically, when Latinx young adults appear to be more economically advantaged relative to their black neighbors, blacks are more likely to hold negative perceptions of Latinxs.[111]

"That means they feel some type of way about the color of your skin, or they feel that you might hurt them or anything like that. So yeah, racism is a big, big issue."

Those we spoke with who expressed these feelings of competition were often the same interview participants like Kennedy, who described an economic system that they believed was more open to Latinx than to African American young adults. A few of the Latinx young adults that we spoke with in Pilsen also witnessed these unequal outcomes and detailed experiences in which their African American peers were unfairly discriminated against by employers. Fernando, a Latino, age 25, shared a story about a manager that he knew explicitly discriminated against black job applicants. He explained, "*[There] was a manager from a restaurant … there would be people that would come to the job and ask for applications and by law you can't deny people applications because of sex, race, color, or whatsoever. So [the manager] would have black people come to the restaurant and ask for an application … they'd fill it out, they'd sit there, they'd talk to [him] as a manager, but obviously knowing that we're in a Mexican neighborhood, one of the requirements is speaking Spanish, and these people have a problem with black people. Once they would leave [the manager said he] would just set their application aside and forget about it. I was like wow, cold. Not even give them an opportunity? He said 'you have to know at least some Spanish.' I said 'that's your excuse for not giving them a job is because they don't speak Spanish.' That's what I thought in my head. I thought at least put them in the back in prep, or dishwasher, or something*." Thus, the experiences of racial discrimination detailed by young African American adults are corroborated by both white and Latinx young adults, who mentioned in their interviews that they witnessed moments when African Americans were racially discriminated against in the workplace.

Of course, African American young adults are not a monolithic group in Chicago, and our interviews with African Americans in Albany Park illustrate how a difference in geographic region of the city, and in access to higher education, can result in different experiences with racial discrimination. African Americans living in Albany Park spoke about racism differently in their interviews; they mentioned racial discrimination during the job application process as subtler and more difficult to detect. Some of them described how they believed their names were racial indicators that have prevented them from getting a job interview. Laquisha, a 19-year-old African American woman, explained that her name prevents her from getting jobs. She said, "*When I have applied to other jobs, which I feel like I have a decent resume, I feel like it's because of my name. I feel like that is 100% why I don't get called back. My brother, [with his non-sounding black name] they call him back but he has no experience. I have experience in things like that and they don't call me back*." Laquisha is not alone; a study conducted in Chicago determined that job candidates with "African American names" were less likely to get a job interview compared to candidates with "Anglo-Saxon names."[112]

Young African Americans we interviewed also mentioned that they experience racial microaggressions—a form of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group—and tokenism—the experience of being expected to represent an entire population as a minority in the workplace. Julie, an African American, age 23, explained: "*I'm like the only black person that works at the entire company, and there's like one other Latino person, so basically it's all white. I feel like I'm definitely a token person there, and like also sometimes I feel like my ... it's weird. Y**ou would think that people would focus on you a lot, but it's kind of like, 'Oh, you're not like those other black people,' kind of thing that makes me very uncomfortable.** So, yeah, it's kind of a toxic place to be sometimes*." African Americans we interviewed who were college students or working in white-collar jobs often referred to racism as an experience of racial microaggressions and tokenism.

"You would think that people would focus on you a lot, but it's kind of like, 'Oh, you're not like those other black people,' kind of thing that makes me very uncomfortable."

Our interviews across neighborhoods with young adults with different educational and job experiences illustrate how racism in the workplace can vary considerably

depending on a person's economic status and job industry. In interviews with white young adults who had different economic backgrounds and educational levels, many explained racism in the workplace similarly: as a systematic structure that results in unequal and unfair racial outcomes. Many of these interviewees also agreed in their belief that, despite racism being wrong, there was nothing they could do individually to change these circumstances. They often referenced this outcome as "an unfortunate event" that they cannot control. Jack, white and age 28, explained that he is aware of racial inequality and admitted that this was an outcome he understood by comparing his experiences with those of his sports teammates. He said, "*Yeah, the white people; they have degrees in computer science, or engineering, or whatever, and a lot of the black kids that I'm playing with are younger; most of them are teenagers. Yeah, a lot of them aren't going to college still; a lot of them, the ones that I'm interacting with, are particularly geared toward sports, so they're looking at playing college basketball, at Malcolm X College, or community college-type setting, and they work at Starbucks or whatever*." In their interviews, Jack and other white young adults were able to describe racial inequalities as outcomes they noticed, but they did not believe they had the ability to change these circumstances. They instead viewed these circumstances as part of a larger system of inequality operating outside of themselves.

How Place and Race Shape Economic Futures

Young adults we spoke with throughout the city were able to clearly articulate how race, economic status, and racism shaped their economic opportunities. Latinx and Asian Americans in Pilsen and Chinatown-Bridgeport with less educational attainment were sometimes isolated from many experiences with racism because they worked for employers from their neighborhood. However, it is important to note that while they were not experiencing direct forms of racism, in many ways they were experiencing structural inequality, since many of the service jobs available to them do not provide benefits such as health insurance, sick leave, stable work schedules, or long-term job security. Meanwhile others working in white-collar professions outside of their neighborhoods did have many of these benefits, but in those jobs they reported having more direct experiences of racism, particularly through tokenism

and microaggressions. African Americans in Englewood with less education and economic resources experienced racism differently than Latinx and Asian American young adults. Without a significant number of community-owned businesses in their neighborhoods, most were forced to go outside their neighborhood to look for work. In both searching for and obtaining employment, most African American young adults from Englewood we interviewed believed they had been racially discriminated against, unfairly monitored by employees, or unjustly fired from their jobs. All of these experiences made finding and maintaining employment that much more difficult.

Many of the African American young adults we interviewed commented that these consistent experiences navigating a racialized economy made it difficult to live in the city. Nearly all who had had these types of experiences stated that they wanted to leave Chicago one day. In contrast, African Americans in Albany Park, who had more physical mobility, greater access to higher education, and had experienced fairer treatment by their employers, expressed a desire to stay in the city. These Albany Park respondents experienced far fewer barriers seeking a job and did not report similar issues of competing with other racial and ethnic groups. Therefore, we should not underestimate the ways in which resources and mobility can change experiences in the workplace for African Americans, nor the impact of these experiences on their decisions to stay or leave Chicago.

As young adults from diverse backgrounds enter an economy that has fewer entry-level, living-wage jobs, their success in this economy is increasingly dependent on their socioeconomic status, physical location in the city, and their racial/ethnic identity. That said, we have also learned that resources such financial literacy, access to full financial aid at colleges and universities, and job availability in neighborhoods can intervene in changing some of these outcomes. However, it is also important to note that resources alone will not change the racial positionality of young adults in the Chicago economy—especially that of African Americans. A more structural intervention is necessary to fully open up the economy to all young adults in the city. We hope the stories shared by these youth will encourage all of us to reimagine and work to build new opportunity structures that will transform the Chicago economy to be accessible, just, and equitable for all young adults, regardless of their social and economic positions and racial and ethnic identities.

RECOMMENDED CITATION

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GENTRIFICATION, DISPLACEMENT, AND THE POLITICS OF PLACE

David J. Knight

Trends, Contexts, and Concepts

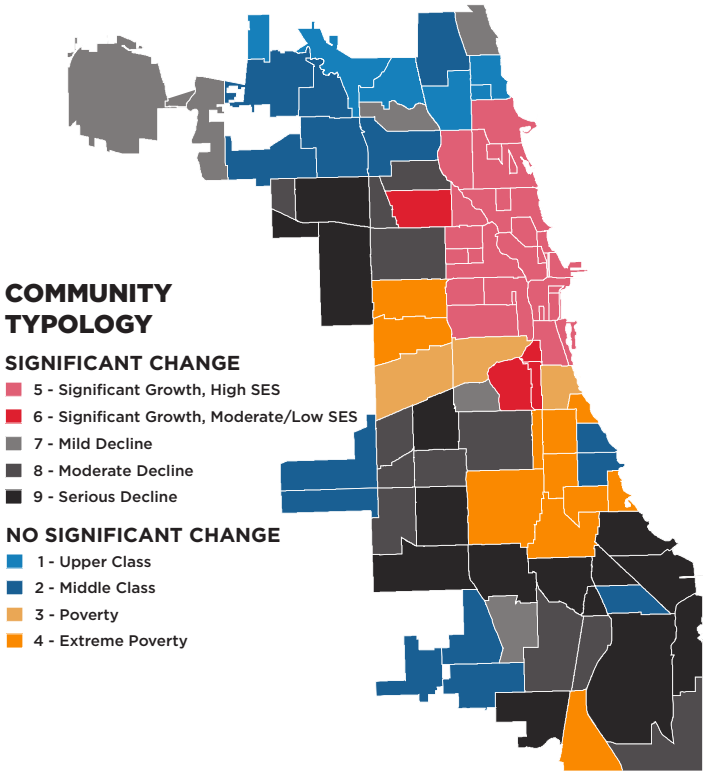
As in other major cities around the nation, Chicago's neighborhoods are changing—with important consequences for the demographic and political future of the city. Administrative and survey data provide a sobering description of these trends: Since the post-recession economy improved after 2012, the share of low-income renter households fell and then stabilized, while the share of high-income renter households in the Chicago area has continually increased.[113] Among low-income renters in the Chicago area, nearly 90% are rent-burdened, meaning that they pay 30% or more of their income on rent.[114] Nearly half of African Americans in Chicago have been evicted, foreclosed upon, or lost their housing—or know someone who has faced one of these situations—within the past five years, compared to 38% of Whites and 39% of Latinxs.[115] Over 113,000 applicants—about twice the total number of city households who receive government rental assistance—are on waiting lists for public housing or housing vouchers in Chicago.[116] In short, even as more affluent people move to Chicago, a number of others are living in vulnerable situations and in need of greater assistance.

Many of the young adults whom we interviewed regularly used two words to describe these trends. First, dozens specifically talked about gentrification—the influx of affluent or upwardly mobile newcomers into working-class neighborhoods, and the increased property value and cost of living in those neighborhoods. Second, an equal number of young adults discussed displacement—the involuntary movement or relocation of persons and communities by forces beyond their control[117]—as a counterpart

or outcome of gentrification, if not an independent force all its own. The regular use of these words by young Chicagoans is important to note because these words are fundamentally about power—who has it and who does not—and the ongoing debate over housing as a commodity or right.[118] Put more plainly, displacement for young adults in Pilsen, Chinatown-Bridgeport, and Englewood amounts to being "pushed out" from one's apartment or neighborhood, in addition to witnessing the forced relocation of one's friends and neighbors.

Young adults in Chicago experience gentrification and displacement in varying ways depending on where they live and on the type of exposure their racial and ethnic communities have to these forces. **Figures 1 and 2**, depicting recent demographic and socioeconomic changes at the community level, show that gentrification and displacement are highly racialized and class-based. While downtown Chicago and neighborhoods on the North Side generally experienced gentrification or remained middle or upper-class between 1970 and 2010, neighborhoods on the South and Southwest sides remained in poverty or experienced further socioeconomic decline during that same period **(see Figure 1)**. In particular, neighborhoods that have gentrified on the North and Northwest Sides have largely become whiter, while areas on the South Side that have experienced positive socioeconomic change were gentrified black **(see Figure 2)**. Given these disparities, the young adults we interviewed in Chicago associate gentrification with different types of experiences, including improvements in quality of life and access to community assets on one hand, and forces of exclusion and displacement on the other. These young adults' divergent attitudes are revealed in their accounts of how gentrification intersects with race; the use and treatment of neighborhood assets, spaces, and culture; and divestment, or the stripping of power, rights, and possessions from those with fewer resources.

FIGURE 1. CHANGES IN THE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF COMMUNITY AREAS IN CHICAGO, 1970-2010 [K]



Race and Gentrification

Consistent patterns in attitudes about gentrification emerged among young adults we interviewed on the South, North, and West sides of Chicago. Across Chinatown-Bridgeport, Albany Park, and Pilsen, for instance, young people repeatedly described gentrification and the demographic change often associated with it, not as positive outcomes, but as sources of exclusion. Xiaming, a 26-year-old Asian American man from Chinatown-Bridgeport, said, *"The rising cost of living, the increased rent, the influx of newer, younger money ... is forcing a lot of people to question if they want to stay here [in Chinatown] long-term."* This feeling of uncertainty about whether to stay in Chicago was a common emotion experienced by many of the young Asian Americans and Latinxs we interviewed.

FIGURE 2. GENTRIFICATION OUTCOMES BY RACE IN CHICAGO, 1980 TO 2010 [L]

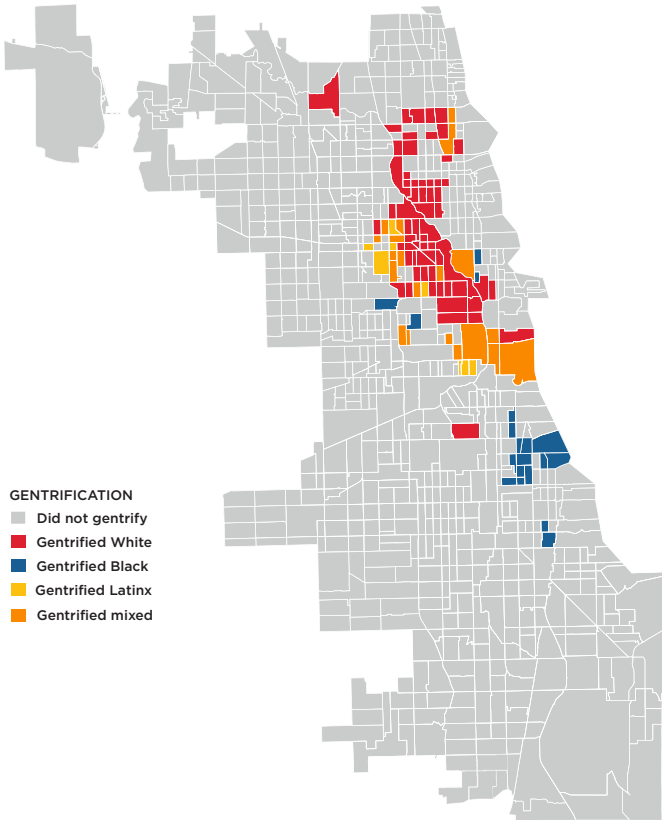


TABLE 1. POPULATION CHANGE IN MAJOR SECTIONS OF PILSEN (2000-2010) [M]

Population Change	Hispanic	White	Total Loss
East Pilsen	-1310	+153	-769
Center Pilsen	-4946	+998	-2522
West Pilsen	-3235	+24	-3176

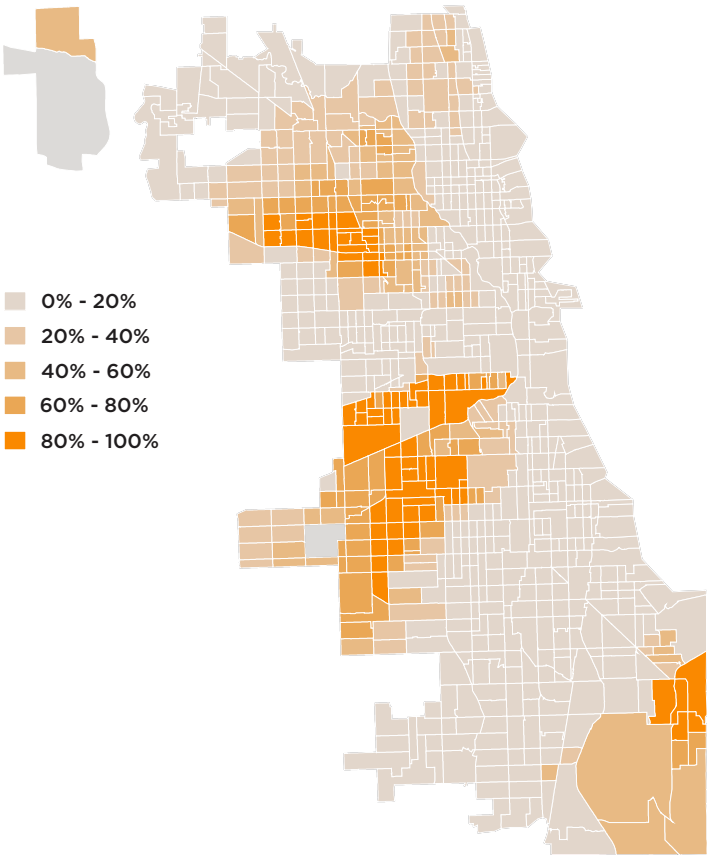
The traditionally Latinx neighborhood of Pilsen, for example, has been one of the Chicago areas most heavily affected by gentrification over the past several years. Specifically, gentrification has been occurring in the eastern and central sections of Pilsen, the two areas that now have the highest incomes and the greatest concentrations of white residents in the neighborhood.[119] Moreover, the number of building permits for new construction in Pilsen more than doubled from 2015 to 2016, increasing from 18 to 43.[120] These trends reveal a process of gentrification.[121] These trends are also occurring alongside population decline. Between 2000 and 2010, Pilsen lost 31% and 20% of its foreign-born and family households,[122] respectively, while the share of non-family households (single individuals and those most likely to be young gentrifiers) nearly doubled.[123]

In the wake of these patterns, Latinx young adults in Pilsen, as well as in Albany Park,

spoke often and with deep understanding of gentrification and displacement. Their experiences directly aligned with the statistics. As the cost of living increased in Pilsen, two flows in population change occurred: A wealthier and whiter group is moving in, while established members of the Latinx community are priced out of homes and businesses in the neighborhood **(see Table 1)**. These trends in population change are important to note because gentrification has especially affected some historically Latinx communities, and the Latinx population is highly concentrated on the West sides of Chicago **(see Figure 3)**. Gentrification and displacement in these areas, then, likely alter the feel and meaning of local community.

Young Latinx adults noted that equal treatment and respect do not follow the influx of diverse, well-resourced groups. Over and over, they shared their fears about losing housing and having to move away from their community. Several recounted incidents of class or cultural exclusion in Pilsen, an important shift in a historic community known as a safe space for Latinxs and immigrants—a neighborhood they once called home. María, age 23, recounted, *"I feel like Pilsen has been a safe space for undocumented people. Just people of color in general. But now I feel like there are little instances or occurrences that happen where you get knocked down to earth and realize 'Oh, I'm not white.' Because these people make you feel that way."* The combination of these experiences caused many in the community to feel what 22-year-old

FIGURE 3. THE CONCENTRATION OF LATINXS IN CHICAGO N



Manuela called the "de-civilization of people's sense of home." For example, Juanita, also 22 years old and a barista in Pilsen, described how big celebrations in places like Harrison Park no longer feel safe and comfortable because of the influx of unfamiliar faces. Juanita also described witnessing an incident of tension between a regular patron of hers and a retail worker in another shop in the community. According to her account, the retail workers in this new shop only spoke English, which made it

difficult to communicate and assist the patron, and the prices in the store were also unaffordable. Juanita recounted the incident and the man's response: *"I happen to be there, and he was just asking questions, asking the prices, and [then] he just told me, 'I want to get something for my girlfriend.' And everything was too expensive for him. He was like, 'Well, why is this store here? I can't afford anything.'"* In short, demographic and economic changes in areas like Pilsen can have an impact on how long-term residents feel about their own standing and familiarity with their neighborhoods.

White young adults, however, tended to have a different understanding of the effects of gentrification and neighborhood change. This perspective may in part be due to the racial wealth divide between white households and households in other racial and ethnic communities in the city.[124] Because those with more income and wealth (including a number of young Whites on the North Side) have more access to the affluent shops, restaurants, and real estate that tend to accompany gentrification, this population often talked about the access to affluent amenities that came with gentrification. Leah, a 28-year-old white woman in Wicker Park, offers one such description of gentrification in her neighborhood: *"A lot of new buildings [are] being reconstructed and demolished and built [in Wicker Park]. … Just the building down the street … which was empty for the last three years [and they] just converted it into a hotel. It's a really high-end hotel. The rooms are like $400 a night and they have a beautiful rooftop bar and restaurant. I think seeing that that's what was put into that space also shows you that the neighborhood is becoming more gentrified. There's more people over here willing to spend $25 on brunch and that type of thing."*

Few white young adults discussed facing personal consequences of gentrification, such as rent hikes or other increasing costs of living. Instead, when discussing gentrification, white young adults often talked about neighborhood improvements and changing demographics. Hunter, a 26-year-old white man in Wicker Park, drives home this point: When asked if his neighborhood has changed since moving to Wicker Park, Hunter notes, *"Not since I moved in, but having gone to school here, having gone to [a] Near North [school], I've seen this neighborhood come from a neighborhood that wasn't a great place to live.* ***I mean in terms of the racial and the ethnic background breakdown,***

"I mean in terms of the racial and the ethnic background breakdown, it's definitely moved away from being very heavily Hispanic to definitely more gentrified and Caucasian now."

it's definitely moved away from being very heavily Hispanic to definitely more gentrified and Caucasian now."

Hunter's story of neighborhood change in Wicker Park reflects the perspective a number of young Whites have toward gentrification. There is a level of awareness of the exclusionary effects of gentrification, but these issues are typically not a priority among white young adults. Rather, these issues play out as a backdrop of daily life for them.

When asked if race or racism play a role in recent neighborhood changes, nearly every white young adult we interviewed referred to racial and class diversity, and most underlined that racial and class diversity was lacking in their neighborhoods. For instance, 21-year-old Chase, a white man in Lincoln Park, echoed the sentiments of other young white adults by bemoaning the neighborhood's lack of diversity: wishing for any type of lasting diversity, he admits his perception that *"even if you take out race and ethnicity from the equation, you can't even get a diverse economic population in Lincoln Park. And at least from my perspective, I think that can kill an urban neighborhood. If you don't have some diversity. I don't care what kind of diversity it is, but if there's none, it can kill a neighborhood really quickly."*

This approach differs greatly from that of young Latinxs and Asian Americans, who talked repeatedly about the cultural and racial conflict they witnessed or experienced as their communities became more diverse. To these young adults, greater diversity can result in the loss of safe cultural spaces. For example, 27-year-old Allison, an Asian American woman in Chinatown-Bridgeport, emphasized that Chinatown in particular faces tough decisions as a community: *"**Do we welcome integration and gentrification potentially? And potentially displacing some families? Or, are we okay with this enclave of culture and tradition that you can't really find anywhere else?** ... And then how do we really make it a port of entry for new immigrants, [while also] really making it thriving for the second and the third generation that have lived here?"* Ramón, a Latinx man, age 22, made similar statements about Pilsen. While acknowledging that Pilsen has *"a lot more diversity,"* he maintained that *"there needs to be a balance, and people can't afford to be displaced. That's—Pilsen needs to be a harbor for Latino immigrants."* To

"Do we welcome integration and gentrification potentially? And potentially displacing some families? Or, are we okay with this enclave of culture and tradition that you can't really find anywhere else?"

TABLE 2. ETHNIC/RACIAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHANGE IN WICKER PARK, CHICAGO, CENSUS TRACT 2403 (1980-2010) ○

	1980	1990	2000	2010
% White	48.4%	59.1%	83.5%	88.2%
% Black	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
% Latino	48.5%	36.8%	9.9%	5.7%
Average Family Income (in Constant $2010)	$40,416	$63,537	$173,070	$257,700
% with College Degree or More	2.7%	27.2%	61.1%	81.0%
% with Professional or Technical Occupation	6.2%	24.1%	35.3%	66.2%

many young Asian American and Latinx adults, Chinatown and Pilsen signify cultural richness and safety for immigrant communities. They believe these assets are invaluable and should not be compromised by economic and demographic changes associated with gentrification.

Of course, young white Chicagoans are not a monolithic group. While only a minority of white young adults we interviewed discussed race/ethnicity and racism as factors shaping displacement white young adults who are originally from Chicago made up that minority. As with white young adults who had studied urban issues in school, these young white Chicagoans felt conflicted about gentrification and their potential role in it. Emma, a 27-year-old resident of West Town, expressed these mixed feelings succinctly: *"I feel uncomfortable sometimes with the prospect of moving to a neighborhood, like Logan Square, where there's a potential that you, as a white person, are displacing people of color... I may very well just stay here [her current neighborhood] because...**I am very mindful of the fact that my relocation to another place by virtue of wanting to have cheaper rent is going to make it so that other people wouldn't be able to live there.**"* Emma's concerns have arguably been borne out in other neighborhoods.

One case that exemplifies these dynamics is the dramatic ethnic/racial and socioeconomic change in Wicker Park, a neighborhood northwest of downtown that has experienced substantial increases in family income and socioeconomic status **(see Table 2)** in addition to demographic change, and is now known for its "hipster" scene. As shown in **Table 2**, between 1980 and 2010 Wicker Park transitioned from being a neighborhood that was nearly half Latinx and half white to a neighborhood that was 6% Latinx and nearly 90% white.

During that same time period, the average family income and the percentage of college graduates increased from about $40,000 to over $260,000, and from about 3% to 66%, respectively.

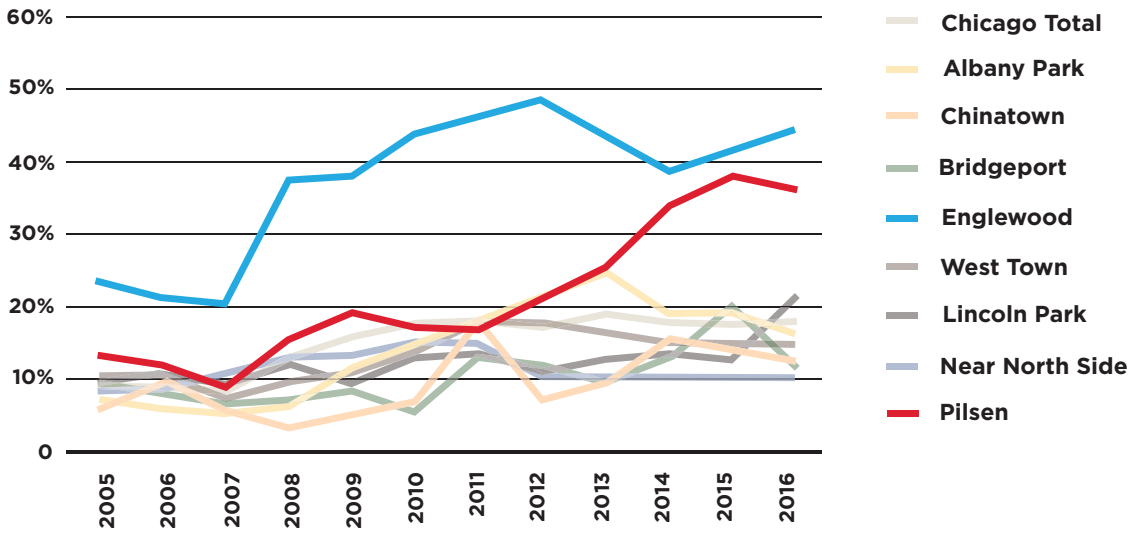
Somewhat unlike those originally from Chicago, young, affluent, White transplants (a substantial share of Chicago's population, and a group that Chicago policymakers especially want to grow in the city[125]) discussed gentrification as related to broad problems of diversity and class without explicitly naming racism. For example, 28-year-old Tara, like many other white transplants, stated that her North Side neighborhood *"lacks a lot of diversity income-wise, ethnic-wise, spiritual[ly]. I think it's lacking a lot of diversity."* This important difference is likely due to the different levels of local knowledge possessed by those originally from Chicago and by transplants to the city. Indeed, young adults who are lifelong Chicagoans may also enjoy more opportunities to learn over time about different populations, areas, and issues in the city compared to newcomers, many of whom develop tighter networks of similarly positioned peers.

"I am very mindful of the fact that my relocation to another place by virtue of wanting to have cheaper rent is going to make it so that other people wouldn't be able to live there."

Exploitation & the Ownership of Space and Culture

Another important concern among young Chicagoans involved the exploitation and use of community space and culture as commodities in the city. Across race, ethnicity, and place, these young people identified real estate developers, corporate businesses, city policymakers, and well-off homebuyers as active agents in gentrification, divestment, and displacement. Many argued that a fallout occurs when these stakeholders purchase and renovate property, or enable the purchase and renovation of such property. By doing so, developers and other new property owners not only enrich themselves, but they do so at the expense of others in the neighborhood with less capital and who are generally unable to buy property. But, according to a minority of the young adults with whom we spoke, this is how things work in the United States: Poor communities require investment, and the poor simply need to acquire the resources to buy property and gain a feeling of investment in their communities. For example, 22-year-old Jared, a white man on the North Side, said gentrification made Wicker Park better and has benefited many people: *"Overall it's gotten a lot better … I have a strong*

FIGURE 4. SHARE OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES PURCHASED BY BUSINESSES P



opinion that the only way [development] is going to happen is, rather than giving out housing vouchers, to incentivize people to buy homes, so that when their neighborhood does get better, they reap the benefits. I can't think of another situation that is sustainable. Other than that, I think if you own a home, you're going to invest in your community." Accordingly, one of the things Jared wants to do is buy, renovate, and "flip" properties in areas on the far West and South Sides.

A far larger share of young Chicagoans had a more complicated view of gentrification, stating that the value of community ownership is undercut when outsiders seek to capitalize on local property. African American young adults, largely from Englewood, brought up the history of unfair racial advantage in Chicago, which they said can now be observed in who is buying and losing property in their community **(see Figures 4 and 5)**.

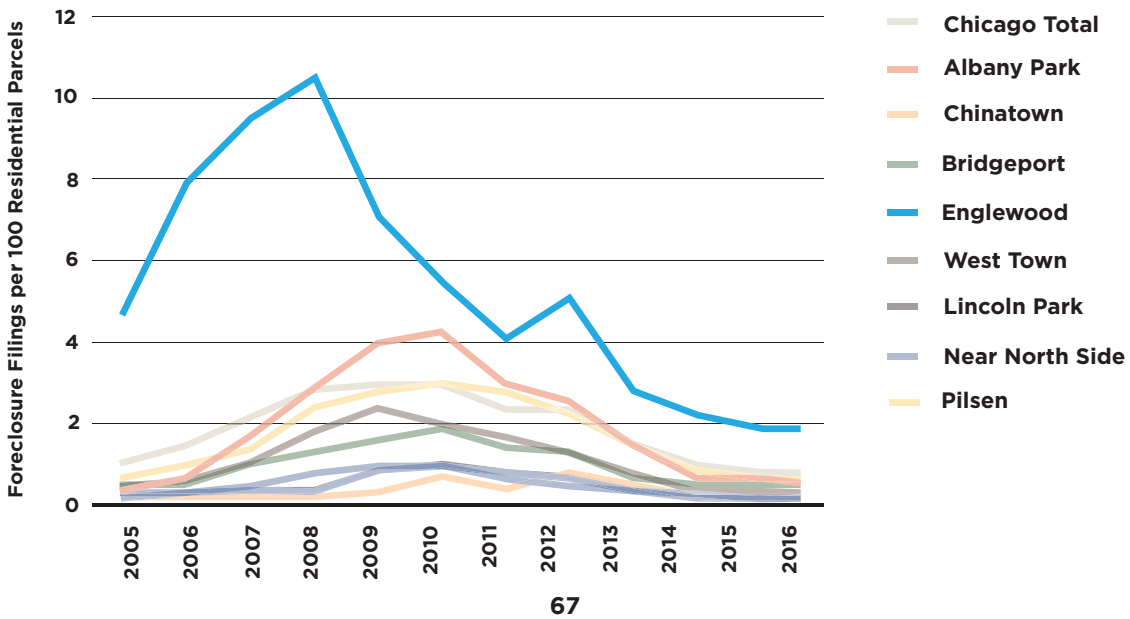
These African American young adults stated that outsiders and speculators are "taking advantage of the low prices" for property in Englewood. Faith, a 28-year-old black woman and Englewood resident, made the point more directly. *"Now I see a lot of white people coming into the neighborhood. They're starting businesses, and it's easier for them to obtain grants and loans as opposed to people that have been in the neighborhood 20, 30, 50, 60 years that are being pushed out for new businesses where they can't afford to shop."* Although these businesses may bring job opportunities, Faith's point is that there is a racial bias in who has the opportunity to open businesses in the neighborhood. These reflections on newcomers to Englewood stand in contrast to young, African American Englewood residents' reports of attending community meetings, where developers stated that they need more tax incentives and cheaper mortgage interest rates to offset

concerns over vandalism and negative neighborhood stereotypes.

Data from the city of Chicago show that the share of business-owned residential properties in Englewood has doubled since the 2007 housing crash **(see Figure 4)**. Today, between 40% and 50% of residential properties in Englewood are owned by private businesses. This rate is far greater than in most of the other neighborhoods we studied and has important implications for the community's decision-making power. The higher rate of business ownership of residential property in Englewood suggests that fewer residents are homeowners or are building this important dimension of equity, which in turn leaves many in the community vulnerable to rent increase and eviction. These trends also occurred as part of a broader wave of displacement: the housing foreclosure crisis, which disproportionately exposed Englewood to a foreclosure rate 3.5 times the average in Chicago at the height of the 2008 recession **(see Figure 5)**. Though it has been reduced, this disparity remains today and further spurs displacement.

Asian American and Latinx young adults made similar observations, although they also underscored the "trendification" of their neighborhoods. This involves not only the arrival of "hip" restaurants and storefronts, but also others' perception that their neighborhoods and ethnic cultures are themselves hip and fashionable. In Chinatown-Bridgeport, young Asian Americans repeatedly mentioned the diverse influx of young, well-resourced people to their neighborhoods. New coffee houses, pop-up shops, and restaurants come and go, and franchises such as Starbucks have recently opened their doors in the area.

FIGURE 5. FORECLOSURE FILING ACTIVITY BY NEIGHBORHOOD P



Young Asian Americans felt conflicted about these developments. On one hand, many were excited about the prospect of more businesses in the neighborhood that cater to young adults. On the other, they noted that this young demographic is coming to capitalize on particular advantages—the relatively affordable rent, Asian culture, and proximity to universities and high performing public schools. As a result, young adults in Chinatown-Bridgeport explained that established Asian American families are becoming displaced or pushed to buy property further west.[126] Alex, a 20-year-old Filipino from Chinatown-Bridgeport, put these issues in perspective: *"A lot of Asian things are the new, hip, trendy thing, so a lot of people want to come here and live in this neighborhood. And because of that, all the prices for the housing rise. And because of that, older Asian families, especially if they can't get a job here or don't speak English, have to move."* Yet, as some young residents have recounted, the young newcomers to Chinatown-Bridgeport are causing the rising costs they seek to avoid. Some have mentioned attending local community meetings composed of mostly new residents, where these newcomers ask how to keep the rent and cost of living down. *"It was really weird to hear [these young, affluent, mostly white] people talk about that,"* said one young Chinese-American woman *"...because they are the ones who are making the cost of living high."* This kind of account illustrates how new, more affluent residents may be unaware of their role in gentrification, while revealing how socioeconomic diversity also imposes some costs on established neighborhood residents.

According to many young Latinx adults in Pilsen, white newcomers have a fundamentally different relationship to the area, treating Latinx space and culture as commodities. Most point out the exclusionary actions of young newcomers and developers alike. These newcomers, said 25-year-old Lucía, arrive in Pilsen unaware of or unconcerned by their effect on the community. *"**I feel like they come here not really knowing how they're affecting the community. They just come here, and they feel like it's a cool place to be.** I've heard them say [Pilsen] is hip and up-and-coming and has cool bars and cool restaurants. ... But do you talk to the people? Do you respect the people and the residents and the families? ... They don't contribute to the community. If anything, they're opening their own little boutiques and shops, which the family across the street can never afford."* These observations

"I feel like they come here not really knowing how they're affecting the community. They just come here, and they feel like it's a cool place to be."

were echoed across Pilsen and, to a lesser extent, Chinatown-Bridgeport.

Young Latinx adults identified frequent occurrences of developers and businesses "asking" or "harassing" people to move from their apartments, thereafter buying property and selling it to more affluent, non-Latinx newcomers. This activity, said some young Latinx adults, is a form of capitalism in which outsiders take advantage of the vulnerabilities in the community and the lack of financial capital among its residents. Twenty-year-old Alec, a Latino from Pilsen, argued, *"Everyone is looking out for themselves. The developer who realized that this is cheap property for him to develop—he's going to get it … just like the artist who is coming from a different state and sees that he can afford rent at this place where it's so close to downtown, easy commute—he's watching out for himself."* But these activities crowd out the historic Latinx community that has been in Pilsen for years. As a result, the face and future of the community are changed.

In short, while exploitation emerges as an important concern among young adults in different neighborhoods, it takes a different form depending on the history and culture of the given area. African Americans in Englewood note the role of unfair racial advantage, while Asian Americans and Latinxs connect exploitation with how cultural space is made into a commodity. But across these neighborhoods, a number of young people regularly named developers and affluent newcomers as critical actors in gentrification and displacement. In doing so, these young adults revealed important class and race differences in people's sense of ownership and experience of space in Chicago. Less affluent groups feel constrained by their position. In contrast, those with more resources, in the words of 21-year-old Angela, a black woman in Albany Park, are perceived to have *"this mentality that [the city] is theirs, that they'd walked into this place, and it's theirs, and it's free-reign."* These kinds of behaviors may matter, since research indicates that patterns of gentrification are tied to and may well perpetuate racial stereotypes and racial inequality, which can lead to greater mental health risks for the displaced.[127] What is more, diverse young adults' compelling and frequent observations of gentrification and displacement in Chicago suggest that policymakers need to rethink the scale at which gentrification and displacement operate. A new generation in the city is being defined by these events. City government and policymakers would therefore do well to develop policies that protect vulnerable populations from displacement and other exclusionary effects of gentrification.

TABLE 3: POPULATION CHANGE IN CHICAGO (2000-2016) [Q]

	2000 Population	2010 Population	2016 Population	Estimated change in Population	Estimated Percent loss/gain
White	1,215,315	1,212,835	1,321,324	106,009	9%
Black/African American	1,065,009	887,608	839,917	-225,092	-21%
American Indian and Alaska Native	10,290	13,337	7,818	-2,472	-24%
Asian	125,974	147,164	165,229	39,255	31%
Native American and other Pacific Islander	1,788	1,013	906	-882	-49%
Hispanic or Latino*	753,644	778,862	790,548	36,904	5%
Total	2,896,016	2,695,598	2,714,017	-181,999	-6%

Divestment & Future Expectations

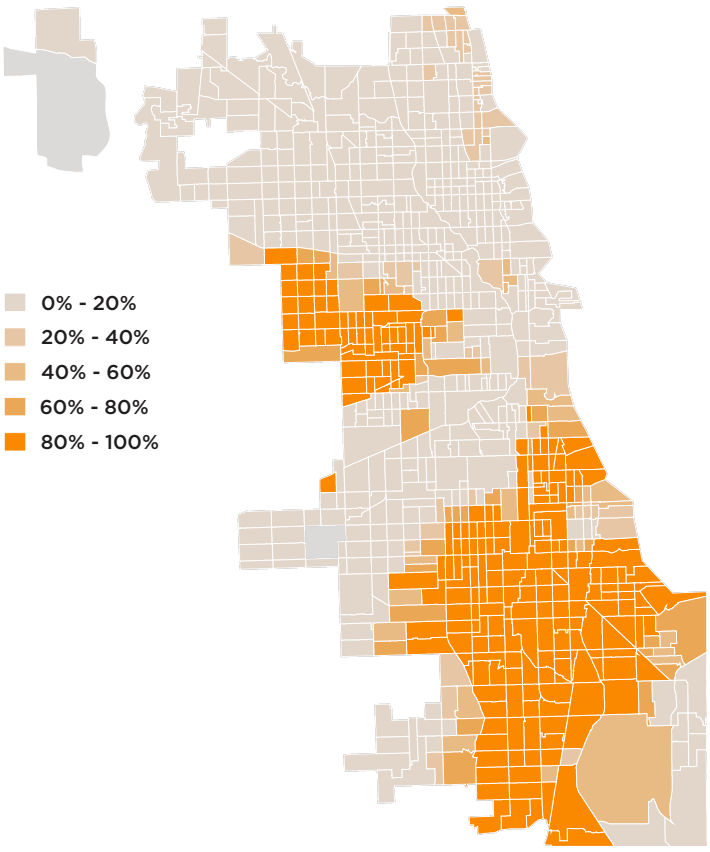
A wide array of the young adults we interviewed connected displacement with the uneven power people have to control their own lives in Chicago. To these young adults, the current displacement of lower-income people in the city is part of a broader history of inequity in Chicago. This history of inequity in the city is one of unequal investments. While some areas have received a disproportionate amount of local government support, other communities that in fact need more investments have instead been abandoned and suffered from disinvestment.[128] This history shapes the present—a present that young adults say does not bode well for low-income people and communities of color in the city. Many young Latinx and Asian American adults who saw themselves on the receiving end of gentrification and displacement feared that their families and neighbors will be forced to relocate. They feared that their communities will become less represented in the city. In comparison, numerous young whites we interviewed believed that they profit more from gentrification, and thus held more ambivalent views on the costs and benefits of gentrification and their role in that process.

In Englewood, Chinatown-Bridgeport, and Pilsen, young people of color worried that their neighborhoods will change to such an extent over the coming years that community may be lost. For many young African Americans and Latinxs, the changes that Englewood and Pilsen are experiencing are part of a strategy in the city to remake their neighborhoods for other people. For example, for many young African Americans, the opening of the Whole Foods shopping center in Englewood, alongside the planned construction of an $85 million public high school, signals future gentrification and displacement.

According to Joshua, a 23-year-old black man, the Whole Foods shopping center in Englewood *"just shows you the future of the South Side. ... I honestly think that the South Side is going to be a lot different in the next 20 years just based on the buildings and what is going on in the projects. I feel like most of the blacks are getting pushed out of the city."* Many young black people we interviewed were similarly pessimistic about black people's prospects in Chicago. Democratic gubernatorial candidate Edward Kennedy also drew connections between the displacement of black Chicagoans and policy decisions like inadequate school funding and the closure of hospitals and mental health facilities.[129] *"What choice do people have but to move, to leave?"* Kennedy stated. *"I think that's part of a strategic gentrification plan being implemented by the city of Chicago to push people of color out of the city. The city is becoming smaller, and as it becomes smaller, it's become whiter."* This critique is not unwarranted, given official data. As mentioned earlier in the report, Chicago's black population has fallen an estimated 21% since 2000, as has the Native American population in the city, according to the U.S. Census **(see Table 3)**. This change reflects racialized and concentrated levels of population loss in African American neighborhoods in Chicago, since the city is so heavily segregated and black residents overwhelmingly live in the South and West Sides **(see Figure 6)**.

At the same time, a large number of African American young adults also identified powerful actors, like city government and business developers, as critical agents in the acquisition and control of space in their neighborhoods. According to these young adults, while buying property and opening more businesses may seem to invest in the black community, many of these actions in fact divest from the community and lead to its displacement. Twenty-eight-year-old Malik, a young African American man from Englewood, expressed such a view about displacement, stating the common political view that the renovation and construction

FIGURE 6. CONCENTRATION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN CHICAGO N



in the area *"is all going into one big power play, a strategic move that's been in play the past few years."* Malik continued, *"I feel like eventually all the poorer black residents will have to find somewhere to move to as these new people come in and they get the better schools … the better streets, the buildings being remodeled."*

Taken together, these and other reflections from young African American adults reveal their anxieties and fears for African American people in Chicago. For these young adults, the future of Chicago is one in which the size and scope of the black South Side is imperiled. This situation is not an inevitability but, in their view, a political maneuver by the city government. Their response, then, is to fight to stay in their communities and in the city. However, fighting to remain in the city is difficult, they said, because of the lack of support and opportunities for decent work and safe housing in their neighborhoods. From their perspective, the political and economic landscape of Chicago supports the spread of disinvestment in black communities and displacement of black people.
Many young Asian Americans in Chinatown-Bridgeport, and Latinxs in Pilsen, were also worried about disinvestment and displacement, and they offered a political analysis of change in their neighborhoods. For instance, young Latinxs noted that the increased presence of businesses and police in Pilsen is not for their direct benefit, which further deprives them of support and ownership of the community space. According to these young adults, Latinxs are not only "exiled" from the community by developers who are acquiring local property, but police officers are also patrolling more in Pilsen to protect those properties.[130] All the while, community landmarks and murals have been destroyed by these private property owners, and new businesses are opening in the area that neither employ nor cater to established residents. María, a 21-year-old Latina from Pilsen, asked the question: *"Who are you bringing these jobs for, if the majority of the people in this community won't be able to apply for them?"*

The power to control their lives was an important issue among many young adults. This is particularly the case for young people of color whose communities are on the receiving end of gentrification and displacement. Divestment—the stripping of power, rights, or possessions from those less resourced—is a key concept among the young adults we interviewed. It involves not only established, lower-income residents, but also developers, incoming businesses, and city policymakers. Still, the interplay between these groups is not natural, but built on racial and class differences in wealth and power. As a result, many young adults of color worry about potential displacement and they fear for the future of their cultural and ethnic communities.

Conclusion: Inequitable Policy Practices and Young Adults as Critical Stakeholders

Neighborhood change looms large in the lives and minds of young adults in Chicago. Although many used the terms gentrification and displacement to describe these changes, important differences arose in young people's observations of these neighborhood changes. For example, young Latinxs, Asian Americans, and African Americans often discussed gentrification and the influx of affluent newcomers and speculators to their neighborhoods as sources of exclusion, including displacement. White young adults, however, held more constrained and conflicted understandings about the impact of gentrification. Few young whites discussed race as a factor in gentrification, choosing instead to talk about race and racism in their neighborhoods in terms of diversity. The small number of young whites who did talk about race and gentrification were themselves originally from Chicago. These differences may have powerful implications for public opinion on gentrification and public support for urban policy alternatives (e.g. renter protection policies like rent control, right to purchase programs, community benefit agreements, and inclusionary zoning ordinances).[131]

A large number of young adults also took issue with the economic behavior of real estate developers, corporate businesses, city policymakers, and well-off homebuyers, who they identified as powerful contributors to gentrification and displacement. In the eyes of many we interviewed, these actors capitalize on local property and cultural space, which undermines their community's capacity to influence decisions. The acquisition of space, opening of high-priced retailers, and influx of more affluent residents not only causes divestment from local residents (for example, by raising the costs of living and by making homes, jobs, and vendors inaccessible to long-term community members), but also leads to the displacement of communities of color, thereby imperiling their future status in the city. But even amid these challenges, a range of young adults also emphasized that their concerns and observations are connected to broader histories of political struggle in their communities. These histories of political struggle are a resource that young people of color use to make sense of present circumstances and point a way forward for future policymaking. In short, given young adults' deep connections to and knowledge of their communities, more effort should be made to prioritize their voices in urban policy debate.

RECOMMENDED CITATION

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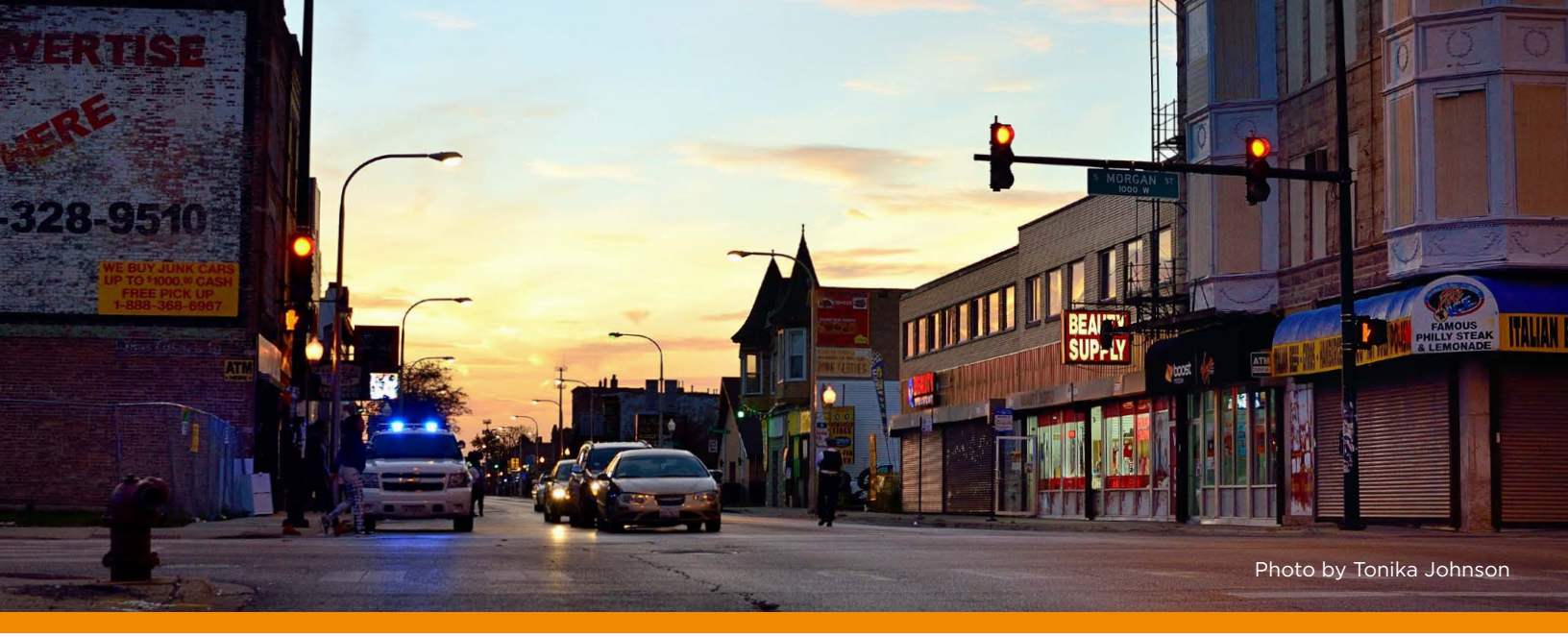


Photo by Tonika Johnson

POLICING, VIOLENCE, AND (IN)JUSTICE

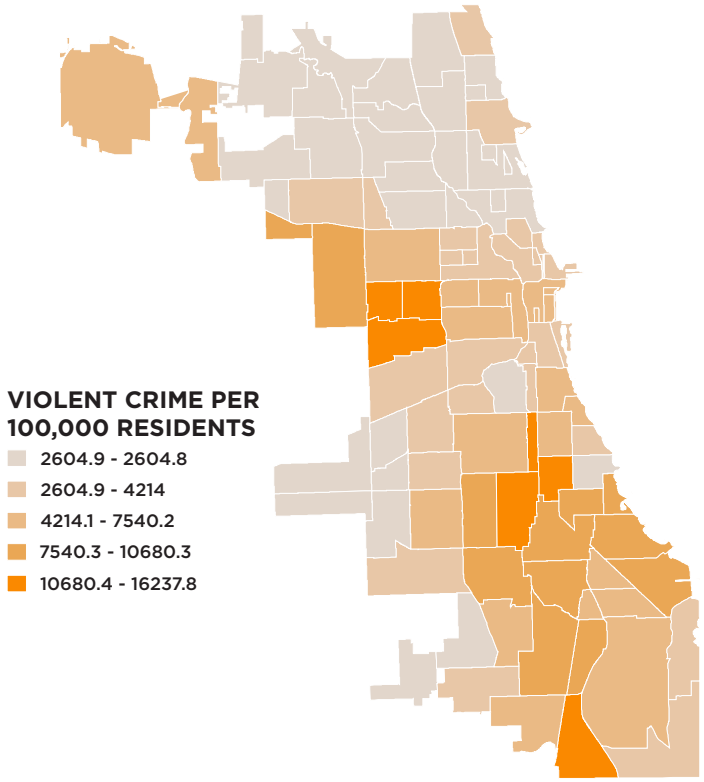
David J. Knight

Perhaps more than any other large city in the nation, Chicago is defined by vastly uneven levels of exposure to aggressive policing and violence. These two issues disproportionately affect the lives of African Americans in the city. For example, although African Americans constitute roughly 30% of the population of Chicago, over 70% of the individuals stopped by Chicago police in 2016 were African American.[132] This is a far greater proportion of African Americans being stopped by the police than in New York City, which recently made national news for its discriminatory stop-and-frisk practices.[133] In their investigation of the Chicago Police Department (CPD), the U.S. Department of Justice suggests that the CPD's practice of disproportionately stopping black people is related to its tactical approach to proactive policing, which prizes "aggression, hustle, and effort" yet leads to the unfair pursuit and criminalization of black and brown young people.[134] According to the Justice Department, these disparate interactions and systemic deficiencies lead to the harms of unreasonable and excessive force.[135] Thus, where Chicagoans live and their racial and/or ethnic identity significantly determines if and how they will interact with the police.

Violence, which tends to arise in contexts of poverty and structural disadvantage,[136] also varies considerably by neighborhood in Chicago. As **Figure 1** shows, many of the predominately white neighborhoods on the North Side experience rates of violent crime below Chicago's average of 4,491 per 100,000 residents.[137] The vast majority of black and Latinx areas on the West and South Sides, however, are exposed to higher rates of violent crime—sometimes much higher. At 10,134 per 100,000 residents, Englewood experiences

twice the rate of violent crime compared to the city's average **(see Table 1)**. This disparity matters tremendously because it affects community wellbeing, children's capacity to learn, social ties, mental health outcomes, and more.[138] It also correlates with other health-related outcomes such as life expectancy **(see Table 1)**. In effect, this uneven geography of violence deeply shapes social and political life among Chicagoans. These inequities in policing and exposure to violence are also reflected in our interviews with young adults across different Chicago neighborhoods.

FIGURE 1: VIOLENT CRIME PER 100,000 RESIDENTS ACROSS COMMUNITY AREAS R



"Show Us We Can Trust Them": Policing in the City

Unresponsiveness and Failure to Serve

For as much as charges of corruption and excessive force plague the Chicago Police Department, the most consistent evaluation made by young adults in our study was that the police are unresponsive and neglectful, and thus fail to fulfill their duties to serve and protect. In every racial/ethnic group, young adults told personal stories of police officers arriving late to scenes of assault, theft, and domestic violence, or otherwise responding inappropriately or insufficiently to emergencies. Despite the pervasiveness of this complaint, important racial and ethnic disparities also existed among young adults' reports of the police's failure to provide adequate and timely service. In our study, African Americans reported significantly higher levels of police unresponsiveness than other racial/ethnic groups. Roughly 1 in 3 young African Americans we interviewed reported that the police responded slowly or inadequately in their neighborhoods and in their own personal experiences **(see Figure 3)**. Among young Latinxs, about 1 in 6 reported that police failed to address emergencies in a timely or appropriate manner, compared to around 1 in 10 young Asian Americans and young whites. While these numbers are neither representative of all neighborhoods nor of all young adults in the city, they reveal an important racial disparity in how young adults perceive the police.

TABLE 1: VIOLENT CRIME AND HEALTH OUTCOMES BY NEIGHBORHOOD [S]

	Violent crime (per 100,000 pop., 2016)	Firearm-related homicides (per 100,000 pop., 2011 - 2015)	Injury deaths (per 100,000 pop., 2011 - 2015)	Infant mortality (per 1000 live births, 2011 - 2015)	Life expectancy (2016)
Albany Park	2260.3	3.9	34.6	6.1	79
Bridgeport	2282.9	4.2	41.2	4.9	79
Chinatown	3629.3	2.6	19.9	6.1	80
Englewood	10133.8	41.8	104.8	15.5	71
West Englewood	10133.8	46.9	99.4	15	68
West Town	3057.1	4.2	41.2	4.6	80
Lake View	2135.3	0.2	24.9	3.6	81
Lincoln Park	1531.6	0.4	25.3	3.4	81
Near North Side	3747.3	2.8	35.3	5.1	83
Pilsen	3212.3	6.1	50.9	6.9	78
City of Chicago	4491.1	13.7	55.5	7.9	77

However, this is not to say that young adults wanted a greater police presence in their neighborhoods.[139] To the contrary, large numbers of young adults reported that, when they do feel compelled to call the police for help, the police fall short in their fundamental duties. Numerous young adults described calling the police, only to find that their emergency—a missing person, a robbery, a car accident—does not reach the level of concern that merits the police department's immediate attention. Ana, a 28-year-old Latina from Pilsen, recalled, "*Just last weekend around 2:00 in the morning they were shooting right across the street. It sounded like they were right next to us, it was so loud. I'm like, this is really scary. I have my children at home; what if a bullet comes, and it kills one of them? … But either the 911 keeps ringing or they never return the call, or they don't pick up. … They came hours later. It happened at 2:00 in the morning, they came close to 12:00 p.m.*" Stories like this were repeated in Pilsen, Chinatown-Bridgeport, and Englewood **(see Figure 2)**.

Many young adults also stated that they believe the police need more training in handling race and cultural differences as well as family and community conflict. Several young women underscored that police officers' slow response rate and lack of training are particularly harmful to those facing domestic abuse. Jada, a black woman, aged 22, in Englewood, described such an experience: "*I had an issue with my son—I was in an abusive relationship. I called the cops five times to remove [my son's father] from my house, and instead of taking him out, they flipped to make it seem like I was the bad person. I literally just got hit, and the police did not say nothing about that.*" Stories of police neglect, insensitivity, and inappropriate response, particularly to domestic violence,

were echoed by a number of other young women in Englewood and across other Chicago neighborhoods.

Who Do You Call When You Need Help?

While a great deal of the young adults we interviewed said that the police respond insufficiently or inappropriately when called, these reports should not be interpreted as a demand for increasing the size or strength of the city police department. Instead, numerous young adults we interviewed, especially youth of color, were skeptical of the police but felt they had no other options when in trouble.

A considerable number of young adults, across race and ethnicity, stated that calling the police was undesirable, as they associated police involvement with its own set of risks. For example, Camila, a 24-year-old Latina in Pilsen, put it plainly: "*It has to be some crazy sh—t [to make me call the police]. Like, there's someone swinging a machete around here and someone has a cut arm. Even then I'm pretty sure somebody [other than the police] can stop them. I don't know. I just think cops are so dramatic. I don't want anybody [to end up] with a record when there's actually hope of them being rehabilitated*." These views were reflected in the large proportions of young adults across race, ethnicity, and place who stated that they would only call the police in situations where they had no other option **(see Figure 5)**. A notably large number of African Americans and

FIGURE 2: REPORTS OF POLICE UNRESPONSIVENESS AND CORRUPTION

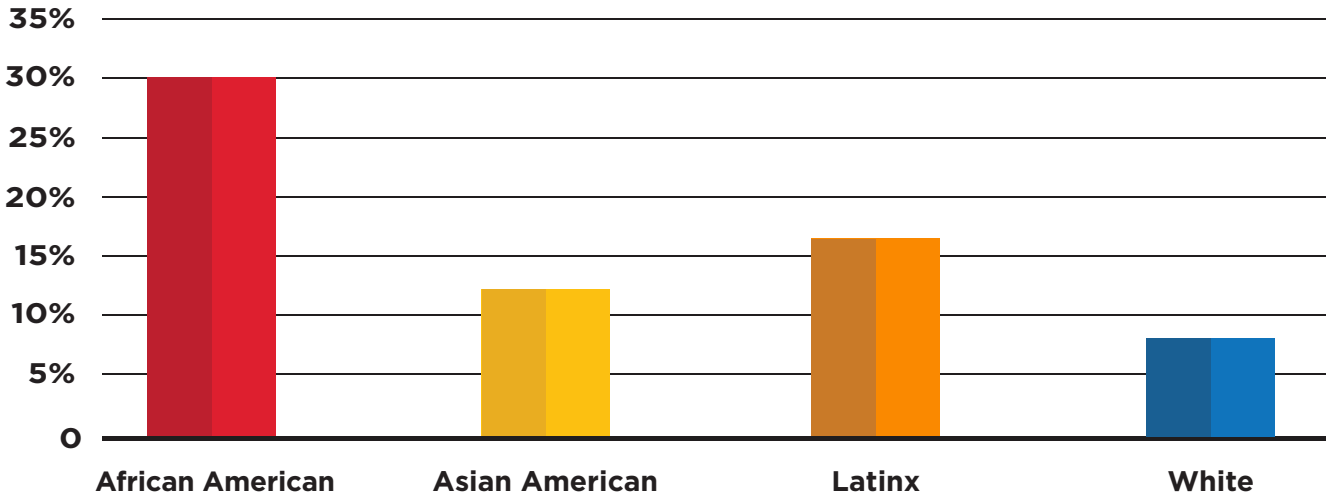
"My mom got jumped and her purse got robbed. We reported it to the police, but they didn't even try to find it or try to find who did it. They didn't even question the neighborhood, which kind of felt really offen[sive] because we're citizens, too."
—Amy, age 18, Asian American woman, Chinatown-Bridgeport

"They [Police] take their time. They take their time if something happens, like a murder; they'll take their time coming, or like I said, they the ones doing the killing. I've witnessed it; police bringing [black people] to someone else's block and letting them fight. I witnessed it."
—Jasmine, age 24, African American woman, Englewood

"I've seen a female get beat. A guy was beating her for probably 30 minutes. No policemen came. … [Also] that little boy got killed. There's no way you can tell me, 9 shots go off, y'all [police are] patrolling this area [and] nobody was there to help save this little boy's life, so hell no they [the police] don't respond. Police officers wait till the shots are over with."
—Kevin, age 22, African American male, Englewood

Asian Americans said "Depends/If I had no other option" when asked if they would call the police in a troubling situation. Importantly, around 1 in 5 African American young adults and 1 in 9 young Latinxs with whom we spoke—largely in Englewood

FIGURE 3: REPORTED POLICE UNRESPONSIVENESS AND NEGLECT BY RACE AND ETHNICITY



and Pilsen, respectively—said they would *not* call the police if they were in trouble. This is an important observation because it suggests that subsets of black and Latinx young adults in these neighborhoods neither trust the police nor see it as an institution that could make them safer even in the face of peril. But these young adults' concerns about calling the police, and choice not to do so, should serve as a catalyst for thinking about alternative ways of achieving safety and justice beyond policing and law enforcement.

Police officers are often the first responders when people need help, are in trouble, or face violence from others. However, several young adults who we interviewed struggled with this fact, stating explicitly that they did not know who else to call when they were in danger. As demonstrated in **Figure 4**, young adults across neighborhoods, gender, and race/ethnicity said that they thought the police were their final or only option in the face of danger or distress. Young adults repeated: "Who else is going to come help me?" "Who else would I call?" "What else am I gonna do?" On one hand, these questions reflect young people's sense that they have limited resources when it comes to protecting themselves. But these questions, coupled with young adults' profound critiques of the police, suggest that a lot of them are open to an alternative option to calling the police when they need help—an alternative set of institutions and support systems that could serve as first responders when trouble arises. Recognition of this point is crucial, because it pushes policymakers, activists, advocates, and community members to question the purpose of policing and to reimagine what resources, stakeholders, and approaches are needed to achieve justice, safety, and wellbeing in our communities.

One City, Two Realities

In addition to general concerns about the unresponsiveness of police, young adults also reported differences in police treatment by race and ethnicity. Respondents from South and West Side neighborhoods repeatedly described the police as a corrupt institution that particularly targets and exerts power over those perceived to be black, Latinx, Muslim, or of Arab descent. On the North Side, however, respondents painted a picture of the police as an imperfect but helpful resource in the community. For example, most white young adults we interviewed described a gap between their own, typically "good," "privileged," and respectful interactions with police and what they learn in the news about police harassment and brutality, largely against African Americans and Latinx individuals.

Of all the young adults we interviewed, African Americans in Englewood reported the most frequent levels of police harassment and the harshest experiences of police treatment. A common story emerges from the experiences of these young African Americans: Young black men and women are regularly profiled, stopped, and frisked by police. A considerable number of these young men and women recounted experiences of mistaken identity in which police detain, pin down, and handcuff them before determining that they are "clean." Gabriel, a 23-year-old young black man from Englewood, summarized the

FIGURE 4: YOUNG ADULT REPORTS ABOUT WHY THEY WOULD CALL THE POLICE IF IN TROUBLE

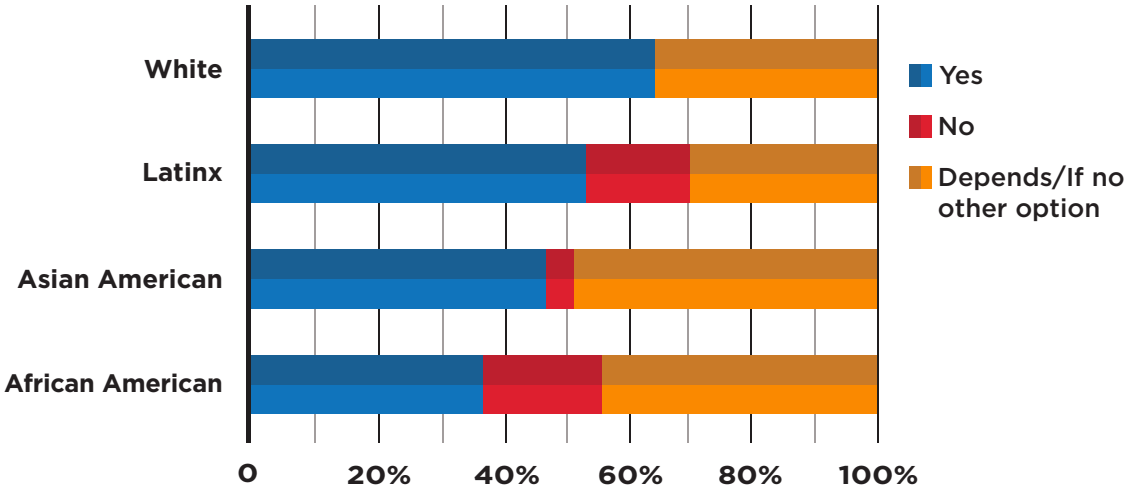
Interviewer: If you were currently in trouble and needed help, would you call the police?
Nicole: Yeah. I know there's a lot of negative [opinions] toward them, but if I don't call them, whom am I going to call? Who is going to come help me?
—Nicole, age 22, Latina, Albany Park

Interviewer: If you were ever in trouble or needed help, do you feel comfortable calling the police?
Peter: Yeah, because I think that's the only option. No one else in my family knows a better option besides calling the police when I'm in trouble. They don't know what to do, so I think the police is the best option I can get.
—Peter, age 20, Asian American man, Chinatown-Bridgeport

Interviewer: If you were in trouble or needed help, would you call the police?
Henry: Yeah, who else would I call? It depends on the situation, but for the most part, I'd call the police. There's nobody else to call.
—Henry, age 18, African American man, Englewood

Interviewer: Would you call the police if you felt that you were in trouble?
Yolanda: Yes, I would. That's because what else am I gonna do? I can't do nothing myself. If it was that big of a deal, I would have to call the police, hoping that they would do something.
—Yolanda, age 18, African American woman, Englewood

FIGURE 5: "WOULD YOU CALL THE POLICE IF YOU WERE IN TROUBLE?" RESPONSES BY RACE AND ETHNICITY



sentiments shared by many: "*You can just be black in Chicago and police most likely will be threatened by you*." These intense levels of racial profiling and harassment are also likely to make young black people more vulnerable to arrest. Survey evidence from the Sinai Community Health Survey, which finds that black people in Englewood experience high rates of arrest, supports what our interview respondents told us. Their data indicate that over half of black men and one-fourth of black women in West Englewood have ever been arrested.[140]

The reports in our study, especially among young black men, reveal that police officers often initiate contact with them through interrogation: asking these young black men if they committed an alleged crime or have drugs on them. During these encounters, police often physically apprehend and search these young men. Eighteen-year-old Elijah, a black man in Englewood, recounted a common story of racially discriminatory policing in his neighborhood: *I got harassed by the police when I was coming out of the gas station and I was putting something in my pocket. … I was putting some candy in my pocket and they pulled over, jumped out, and put me on the wall. They was checking me, trying to ask me, 'Where the drugs at?' and I had some candy in my pocket. They pulled it out, and they was mad and told me to get the f— out of there.*

Such personal accounts suggest that the human and constitutional rights of many people in Chicago are regularly violated. The contempt and disrespect underlying these racially targeted encounters with young African Americans also highlight the undemocratic nature of racial profiling and use of force. Police officers' treatment and targeting of young black people is a significant and recurring type of governmental interaction that flies in the face of the principles of due process and

the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution. The U.S. Justice Department makes this same point, finding that these practices are not only unsound but also unnecessary, unreasonable, and unconstitutional.[141]

For a lot of the black young adults we interviewed, formative experiences with the police begin before age 18. Malik, a 28-year-old black man, has had experiences with police harassment dating back to his teenage years. When he was 14 years old and walking from school in an unfamiliar neighborhood, police stopped him as they were looking for a murder suspect. According to Malik, the police said he fit the description and they detained him for several hours. *"But they didn't give me a description. … They held me in the car for about three hours just provoking me to try to get me to confess to something. And then they let me go and told me if they see me again in the neighborhood, they'll arrest me for sure."* As suggested by our interviews and by the Justice Department's report, a young person's race and appearance appear to be common reasons behind police stops and searches. Gabriel, a 23-year-old black man, noted, *"I can walk out in the street, I ain't doing anything, but the police will pull me over. I have been pulled over many times. … Last week I got pulled over just because they said I fit the description."* While the law is vague about what "reasonable suspicion" means, our interviews with young adults of different races and ethnicities clearly show that the presumption of guilt falls disproportionately on young black people.[142] Statistics on use of force further reveal this disparity. The Chicago Police Department uses force nearly ten times more often against African Americans than against whites.[143] These kinds of experiences reflect why the city has had to settle cases of police brutality totaling over $9 million in Englewood and $11 million in West Englewood **(see Table 2)**.

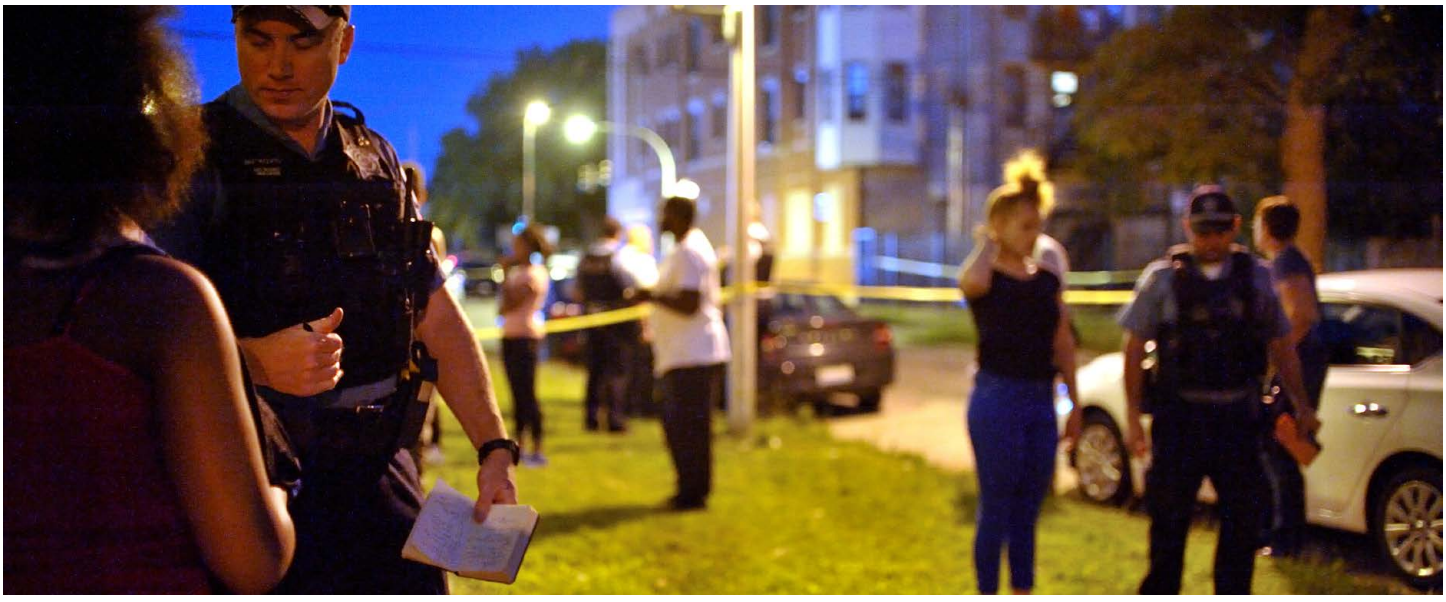


Photo by Tonika Johnson

But racial profiling is not limited to young black men. Young black women also reported being targeted and experiencing harassment. Several young adults in Englewood, for example, pointed out that police target young black women as well as men in their neighborhood based at least partly on appearance or other specific characteristics, such as having 'locs.' Destiny's experience with the police supported this observation. A 25-year-old black woman, she shared that the police targeted her because of her locs, tattoos, and general appearance. "S*ometimes after they establish that I'm a female they still proceed with searching me, you know, just to see if they can try to find some drugs or something … and then once they see my ID and it say disabled at the bottom, then they want to say, 'I'm sorry, ma'am. Enjoy the rest of your day*.'"

While Asian Americans in Chinatown-Bridgeport and Latinxs in Pilsen reported fewer encounters with police, racial and ethnic discrimination still played a role in their experiences with law enforcement. And unlike what is suggested by popular media, Asian American women and Latinas reported more incidents of racially discriminatory police contact than the Asian American men and Latinos we interviewed. For example, 23-year old Constanza, a Latina from Pilsen, discussed the role that race and skin color play in who is targeted by police. *"A lot of my friends are Latino and Latinas. There are instances when we've been stopped and certain people in my group of friends are questioned because they're darker or because they're more Hispanic-looking than the rest of us."* Constanza reported that the police separated the darker-skinned members of her friendship group. She believed that the police did this *"because they feel they [her darker friends] are going to act out violently, which is not the case."* These young Latinxs' experiences resonate with the experiences of young African Americans in the city,

TABLE 2: RECENT SETTLEMENTS/JUDGMENTS INVOLVING CHICAGO POLICE MISCONDUCT, 2011-2016 [T]

	Settlements	Total $	False report/arrest	Excessive force
Albany Park	3	$3,820,198	2	2
Chinatown	0	$0	-	-
Bridgeport	5	$142,750	2	3
Englewood	35	$9,198,816	18	22
West Englewood	22	$11,225,883	11	16
West Town	5	$236,500	2	4
Lincoln Park	2	$67,000	2	2
Near North Side	8	$681,136	5	6
Pilsen	0	$0	-	-

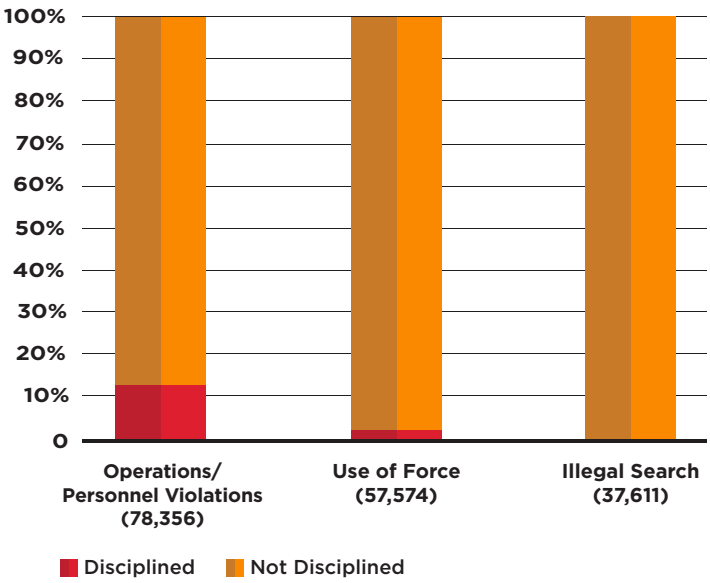
who stated that the police harass them based on a presumption of guilt.

Some young Asian American women and Latinas also discussed police encounters involving their mothers—encounters in which language barriers and immigrant status were points of conflict. In those instances, these young women attempted to translate for their mothers. Madison, a 19-year-old Asian American woman, recalled one such instance involving a miscommunication between police officers and her mother when she was in middle school. Upon learning that Madison's mother was not a fluent English speaker, the police criticized her mother and questioned why she had a driver's license, all the while refusing Madison's attempts to translate. Madison admitted, *"**I don't think I'll ever forget that experience, and I think that's a snapshot of being a minority … and that's the reason why I don't know if I can trust [the police] when I need their help.**"* A number of Latinxs and Asian Americans noted that their interactions with the police made them feel like second-class citizens, which deepened their sense of distrust in law enforcement.

"I don't think I'll ever forget that experience, and I think that's a snapshot of being a minority … and that's the reason why I don't know if I can trust [the police] when I need their help."

On the other hand, most of the white young adults we interviewed said that they are shielded from negative interactions with the police. Although several said that they are skeptical of law enforcement and that the police are slow to respond to reports and 911 calls, nearly all reported that their own personal encounters with the police were "good," helpful, and respectful. White young adults reported these types of experiences across gender. However, a great number of white young adults with whom we spoke also believed that policing has a racial bias and that a gap existed between their own respectful encounters with police and their understanding that police brutality is a problem in the city. For example, Trevor, a 28-year-old white man, acknowledged this point by describing a time in high school when he was driving drunk and was let go by police: "*If I was any other race and I didn't go to [an elite magnet public school], I would have 100% been arrested. … That is the impact of white privilege in the city of Chicago*." Representative of the position of various young white respondents, Calvin, a 21-year-old white man, reflected in greater detail on how he understood his privilege as a white individual: *There are plenty of fair police officers, but I think there are problems with the institution as a whole that reflect poorly … I know that police*

FIGURE 6: TOP THREE TYPES OF COMPLAINTS OF POLICE MISCONDUCT, 1988-2018 [U]



officers can be nice people. But it's still a career choice that represents a lot of institutional problems, you know, so it's hard to detach those feelings, especially if you're someone that's—I mean, I have my share of disadvantages, I'm disabled and I'm gay, but usually people can't tell that just from looking at my face, whereas if you're a person of color I think immediately there might be a first perception that's like, hey, this person might be carrying drugs or be a threat.

Moving Forward on Police Accountability

Young adults experience the police as an institution that treats people unequally based on race, ethnicity, and place. Both personal experiences and knowledge gleaned from friends, loved ones and the media support this outlook, which reduces the legitimacy of law enforcement in the city. But unlike most news stories that rightly focus on instances of police brutality, young adults' most repeated concern was their experience of the police department as unreliable and unresponsive when they were in an emergency. According to some of these young Chicagoans, the slow response time and disregard among the police makes the problems of police corruption and brutality even worse.

Young people's reports of police unresponsiveness and disregard are further supported by administrative data. Police data amassed by the Invisible Institute's Citizen Police Data Project (CPDP) reveals that operations and personnel violations—which include inadequate service, failure to provide service, or neglect of duty—were the most common complaints of police misconduct in the city **(see Figure 6)**. One-third of all complaints in the CPDP data were about operations and personnel violations, followed by complaints about police use of force. Yet only 2.5% of the nearly 127,000 civilian complaints made over the past four decades have been sustained, and one-fourth of sustained civilian complaints resulted in no penalty for the offending officers **(see Figure 7)**.

The lack of police accountability may contribute to the sharp disparities in reports of police misconduct among different populations. For example, police report data on citizen complaints of

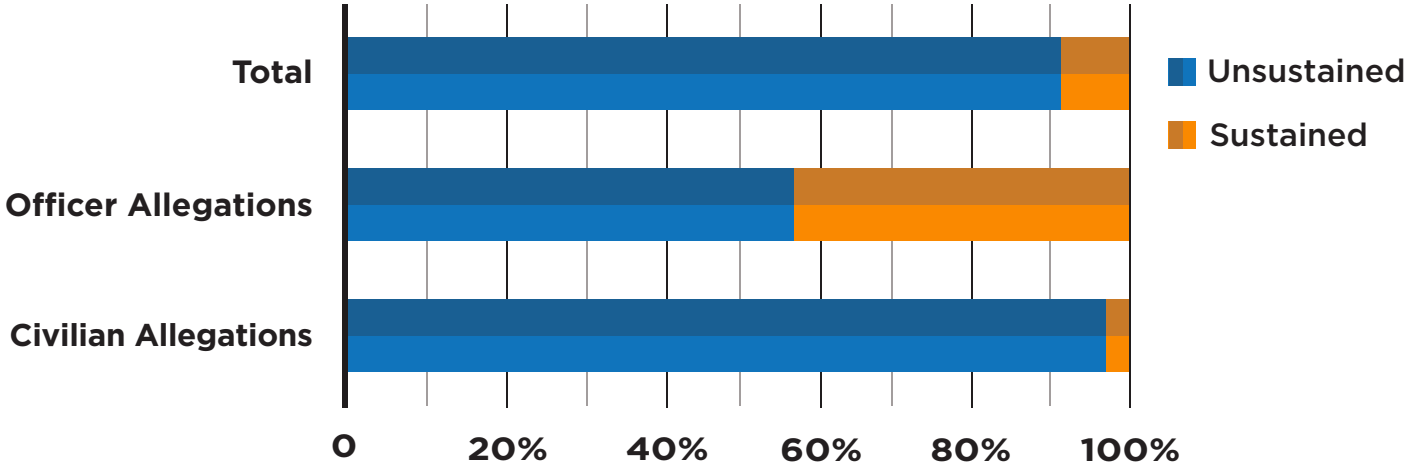
police misconduct filed between 1988 and 2018 show that young adults, ages 21 to 30, are less likely to report police misconduct relative to their share of the city population **(see Figure 8)**. This underrepresentation is concerning, since administrative data and research studies consistently show that young people in this age group have among the highest levels of negative contact with police. This underrepresentation in filed misconduct complaints suggests a reluctance to file among young people, or a lack of knowledge about how to do so.

Reimagining Justice in Chicago

When asked how to improve policing in the city, the young Chicagoans with whom we spoke typically suggested fundamental changes in the aims and operations of the Chicago Police Department. Many young people believed that we need to reimagine the purpose and place of police officers in Chicago. Some of those we interviewed advocated for more community policing. Eighteen-year-old Eduardo, a Latino from Pilsen, stated: *"If you have community police officers in their communities, they'd know the people more there, so they won't act on preconceived notions and they won't act out of fear."* Some community policing efforts are underway in Chicago: In November 2016, the superintendent of the Chicago Police Department announced an advisory panel on community policing, which released draft recommendations in August 2017.[144] It should be noted, however, that these young adults advocate for not only community policing,[145] in which officers participate in the life of neighborhoods (particularly those most heavily challenged by crime), but also for sufficient accountability and responsiveness to what people on the ground are experiencing.[146] Young adults underscored that community policing is hollow without proper training, accountability, and transparency. Some also demanded that tests of implicit or racial bias be incorporated. A lot of these recommendations squarely align with the Justice Department's investigation in January 2017, as well as with recommendations in a public draft of the upcoming consent decree.[147]

Beyond community policing, some young adults called for discussions about, and movement toward, the abolition of policing as we currently know it. Christian, a 22-year-old Latino in Albany Park, echoed the opinions of a number of young people in different neighborhoods by asserting that communities—rather than the police—should have the authority to hold their residents accountable. Farrukh, a 23-year-old South Asian American man, who also resides in Albany Park, agreed that more justice may come if community members solved problems among themselves as opposed to having police intervene.

FIGURE 7: ALLEGATIONS OF POLICE MISCONDUCT, 1988-2018 [U]



These young adults' visions of justice are also reflected in the vitality of youth-led organizing in the city. A number of Chicago-based groups are fighting for a broader, more inclusive vision of justice and liberation that centers those who are black, Latinx, women, queer, undocumented, disabled, and those who have had contact with the law. These efforts include challenging unjust policies and practices, but also go further to demand that changes in policing complement investments beyond the police force like increased funding for public schools, mental health clinics, jobs, and other actions to address problems facing communities on the South and West Sides of Chicago. These concerns are also reflected in numerous organizing activities across the city.

The #NoCopAcademy campaign is one example of an organized effort that calls current policing practices into question. In response to a plan by the city to spend $95 million to build a new police and fire training center in West Garfield Park, the #NoCopAcademy campaign, which is supported by over 100 community and social justice organizations in Chicago, challenges the creation of this center, but also advocates for redirecting such funding to youth and communities on the South and West Sides of the city. In so doing, the campaign raises the critical issues of why the city has increased police investment in black and brown neighborhoods which have experienced the state-sanctioned closure of schools and mental health facilities in the same era.[148] Importantly, in a recent report based on a large local survey, the #NoCopAcademy campaign found that residents of West Garfield Park overwhelmingly prefer that the city invest public resources in services other than the police, including education and youth programming.[149]

In addition to the opposition to the new police and fire training center, members of organizations like BYP100, Mijente,

and Organized Communities Against Deportations (OCAD) worked together to examine disparities in the Chicago Police Department's gang database (i.e. its information system of individuals suspected or found to be in gangs).[150] The research group found that 71% of the 128,000 individuals labeled as "gang-affiliated" are black, 61% are under 30 years old, and 68% have never been arrested for a violent offense or unlawful use of a weapon—all of which raise concerns about how large shares of young people in the city end up on the gang database.[151] Thus, both individually and collectively, it seems that significant numbers of young people are demanding that the city reimagine how we train, use, and fund police—and, more broadly, how we provide for the safety of all people in Chicago.

Underscoring all these efforts and recommendations is the fact that many young adults we interviewed suggested that the Chicago Police Department "must undergo broad, fundamental reform to restore ... trust."[152] As Owen, a 25-year-old black man in Englewood, stated: *"Show us that we can trust them."* Indeed, despite varied views on police that range from abolition to reform, the vast majority of young adults whom we interviewed wanted *substantial, transformative change* in the police department—and more profoundly, fundamental change in how justice is conceived and carried out in Chicago. However, numerous young adults were doubtful that the city government and the police department have the moral or political will to change current practices.

Violence, Trauma, and Healing in Chicago

Like policing, violence is a much-discussed topic in Chicago. But unlike many policy discussions that focus solely on the prevalence of gun and gang violence, this section also discusses violence against cis and trans women and gender-nonconforming individuals, and how exposure to violence shapes how young adults process, evaluate, and respond to victimization in the city. According to a recent survey by the *New York Times* and Kaiser Family Foundation, violence and crime shape the lives and perceptions of many Chicagoans. Seventy percent of those polled in the city believe it is likely that a typical young person in their neighborhood will experience violent crime.[153] Despite the overwhelming concern with violence among all those we interviewed, important racial disparities exist in exposure to violence. For instance, one-third of whites and Latinxs in Chicago report personally knowing someone who has been a victim of a crime involving a gun, compared to nearly half of African Americans.[154]

Among the young adults we interviewed, it seems that for a multitude of African Americans in Englewood, Latinxs in Pilsen, and—to a lesser degree—Asian Americans

in Chinatown-Bridgeport, exposure to violence has a become part of growing up. On the other hand, most white young adults live a different reality on the North Side. Among the white young adults we interviewed, the most common form of direct experience with violence was muggings, while some others talked about having friends or acquaintances who experienced violent crime. Meanwhile, a number of young African Americans and Latinxs reported firsthand encounters with violence and experiences of losing loved ones to gun violence.

Trauma: A Public Health Concern

Young adults who had experienced violence repeatedly talked about the lasting psychological effects of such encounters. At the individual and community level, it seems that exposure to violence has become a significant public health issue in Chicago and across the nation, particularly for young adults. In 2016, across the United States, a total of 635,477 young adults (ages 18-29) were treated in emergency departments for nonfatal injuries that resulted from assaults.[155] In 2016, there were 4,331 shooting victims and 762 homicides in Chicago, largely due to gun violence concentrated especially on the South and West Sides.[156] According to the *Chicago Tribune*, that was the most violent year in Chicago in nearly two decades.[157] Citywide data also indicates that 17- to 25-year-olds make up the largest share of victims—between 40 and 50 percent.[158] These data suggest that violence and its aftermath disproportionately affect young Chicagoans, particularly African American youth for whom such injuries are the leading cause of death.[159]

One particularly important way of thinking about violence and its aftermath is to consider how it affects individuals, their families, and their communities. Psychologists and public health experts note that exposure to community violence—experiencing or witnessing violent, physical interpersonal attack or damage—is a pervasive and unique type of injury, or *trauma*, in the lives of young people, particularly those living in cities.[160] But trauma does not cease when the violence ends. It lingers in people's minds and bodies, affecting the individual or community long after a violent event has ended or an injury has physically healed.[161] For these reasons, exposure to violence is a strong indicator for a range of social and mental health difficulties, including anxiety and depression.[162] But the story is not all bleak. Other evidence shows that people can experience personal growth after struggling with a traumatic event.[163]

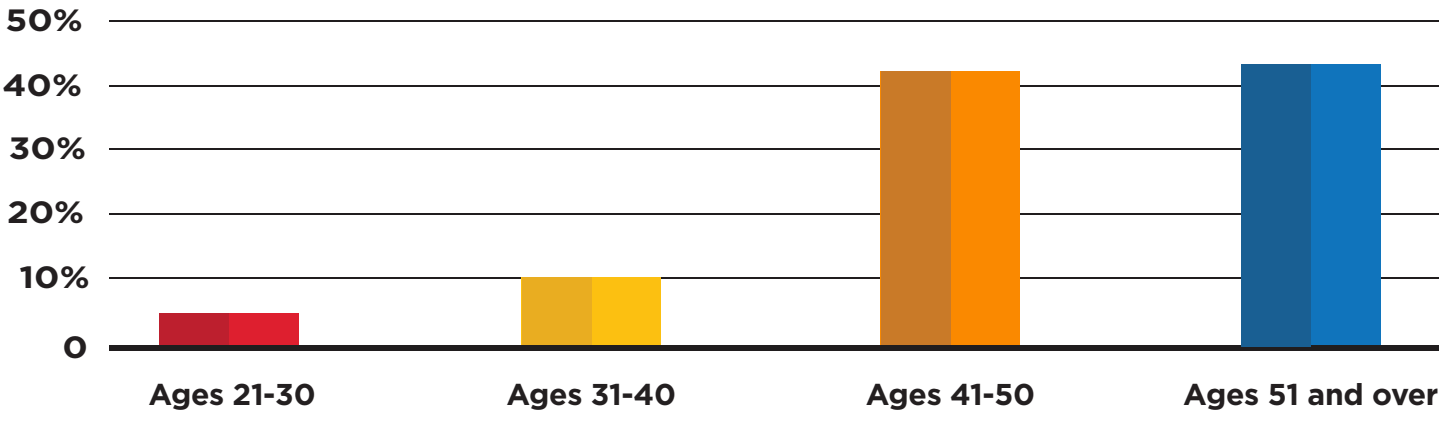
Our interviews with young people reflected this complexity in the wake of traumatic experience. The young adults we interviewed drew on an array of approaches and principles to move forward with their lives after encountering violence.

For example, some reported putting up murals or pursuing photography as a way of processing traumatic events. Others, like Ricardo, a 23-year-old Latino, have tried whatever they can to make sense of the violence they have encountered. *"I just take it in, try to write about my pain, draw it out. But sometimes, just sometimes, it's just so overwhelming that I can't. I just try singing, pray, or do whatever."*

Like Ricardo, large numbers of young people report that they are still processing the violence they have experienced. They are still healing. But more support is needed. According to 25-year-old Rebecca, a black woman from Englewood, "the mental health of the black community" is the most concerning issue. Rebecca stated that a lot of people in the city, and particularly in Englewood, are dealing with trauma, yet *"**there's not an abundance of services for mental health. ... That bothers me because I really feel like if you're not together mentally, then you really can't do much else.**"* Across different neighborhoods, young adults discussed their mental and emotional struggles after violent trauma, noting that needed supports are not equally available across Chicago. Rebecca concluded: "*There's a lot of hurt people ... a lot of people who need to heal. All these traumatic experiences—people need help. ... There needs to be a bigger attention to that.*" As Rebecca notes, people often don't receive help or know who to turn to for professional assistance. While many young adults are necessarily finding ways of coping with violence and trauma, their testimonies reveal a level of need for counseling and mental health services that the city should better address.

"there's not an abundance of services for mental health. ... That bothers me because I really feel like if you're not together mentally, then you really can't do much else."

FIGURE 8. AGE OF COMPLAINANTS, 1988-2018 [U]



Violence against Cis and Trans Women and Gender Non-Conforming Individuals

Although most reports and discussions about violence in Chicago focus on gun and gang-related violence, the young adults with whom we spoke also identified violence against cis and trans women and against gender non-conforming individuals as a highly prevalent problem in the city. When asked, a number of young adults who identified as women or as gender non-conforming individuals reported having a range of experiences of sexual violence and victimization, including rape and sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, and gender-based hate crimes. Several women with whom we spoke said that these experiences of sexual violence and harassment—that they personally experienced, witnessed, or heard about—began in adolescence, during the middle and high school years. For instance, Kimberly, an 18-year-old Asian American woman in Chinatown-Bridgeport, said that a friend in high school taught her how to be mindful of sexual harassment while riding and walking to and from the train. At the time of her interview, Kimberly reported that she still experienced catcalling and other sexual harassment on the street *"when I'm walking back from the train alone*," she said, which can make commuting "dangerous" and "unsafe." Few men who we interviewed, however, reported personally experiencing sexual violence or gender-based violence. Kevin, a 22-year-old black man from Englewood, gives one explanation for why few men report such experiences: *"I'm pretty sure that [personal experiences of sexual assault] is not something you talk about. I don't think that's something a man would tell another man. Even though we cool [and] we had a lot of stuff happen to each other, that's not something you really tell another dude."*

However, a number of young people across genders reported experiencing

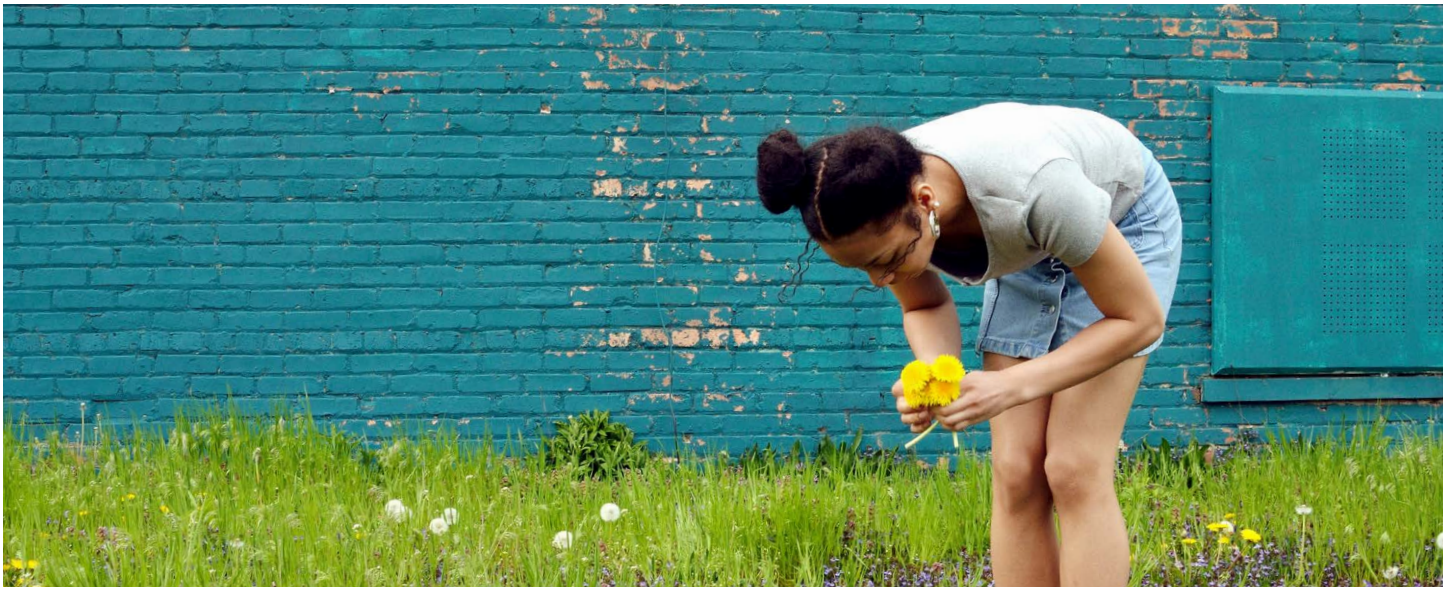


Photo by Tonika Johnson

domestic violence firsthand or witnessing the women in their lives, cis and trans, deal with domestic abuse from primarily cis men. Several women and men across racial/ethnic communities also mentioned that they had current friends or family members who were in abusive domestic relationships. Data from the city underlines the above observations that intimate partner violence and abuse are critical though often undiscussed dimensions of violence in Chicago. For example, in 2017, 16% of reported crimes in Chicago were domestic-related, and 17% of those arrested in Chicago between 2012 and 2016 were arrested for domestic violence.[164] These statistics suggest that an important share of violent and criminal acts in Chicago take place at home and in people's personal relationships. This violence is systemic within the city's institutions as well. Just this past year, the *Chicago Tribune* reported that police had investigated more than 500 cases of sexual abuse and rape at CPS schools over the past decade.[165] Ineffective institutional procedures related to background checks, alerting Child Protective Services, and institutional secrecy and silence allowed educators accused of such acts to resign discreetly and move to other school districts.[166]

Among those we interviewed, some survivors of domestic abuse spoke directly about seeking out and receiving counseling and support. Others stated that they have hardly spoken with anyone. All, however, said that they were still dealing with the trauma of domestic and sexual violence. When asked about sexual and domestic violence, Tasha, a 27-year-old black woman, admitted, *"We don't [talk about it enough]. We don't. Even in the media they say sexual assault, not rape, so they try to gloss over it."* Reflecting on their own experience with sexual assault, Belén, a queer, non-binary Latinx young adult, said that neither they nor do their friends who have experienced rape and sexual assault talk about it. ***"I've figured out that the people that I have felt comfortable with are people who have experienced the same thing. That's always so shocking because I don't talk about it and no one talks about it."*** Simply put, while attention to gun violence in the city receives constant coverage by the media, sexual and domestic violence are critical areas of concern that do not receive the appropriate level of media attention, services, and redress needed within the city. As a result, city government fails to

"I've figured out that the people that I have felt comfortable with are people who have experienced the same thing. That's always so shocking because I don't talk about it and no one talks about it."

properly address an important source of victimization in Chicago.

In the face of these challenges, the young women with whom we spoke, especially young African American women and Latinas, had cultivated their own networks of safety and support among their friends, mothers, and grandmothers. These networks are spaces where knowledge, dignity, and resistance are used to combat the trauma resulting from sexual assault and harassment. In talking about the prevalence of sexual assault in Chicago, 18-year-old Paulina, a black woman in Albany Park, says that her mother and grandmother taught her to be careful with whom she surrounds herself. Angela, a 29-year-old black woman, who also lives in Albany Park, says that getting to know more black women in Chicago, at church and at work, has made her life better. *"**I am an individual, but my experience is not individualistic. There are so many shared similarities, where we talk about hard issues.** It's just sitting down with friends that happen to look like me and happen to go through the same exact things that I go through, and then we can laugh about those things, and we can yell about those things. That has been the most life-giving thing*."

"I am an individual, but my experience is not individualistic. There are so many shared similarities, where we talk about hard issues."

Other young women described stories of standing up to abusers, witnessing others stand up to abusers, and ensuring that other women could find protection when needed. For example, Lucía, a 25-year-old Latina from Pilsen, recounted how she would stand up to her parents' physical violence at age 12 or 13. Moreover, Gabriela, a 25-year-old Latina who also resides in Pilsen, recounted how female friends and family members would come to her and her mother to escape domestic abuse because they were "like a sanctuary" where others could find safety and advice. These networks of safety and support are of critical importance and fulfill a significant gap where other resources and institutions (e.g. counseling) are sparse or misaligned with the personal needs and desires of survivors. These informal safe spaces also resonate with the aims of notable institutions such as Resilience (formerly Rape Victim Advocates), an organization that since 1974 has worked with and provided services for survivors of sexual violence.[167]

Organizations and collectives like Resilience reveal the need for, and promise of, women- and survivor-centered empowerment advocacy, organizing, and service provision. Arguably, city, state, and

federal agencies and policymakers would do well to provide more material and capacity-building support to community members and grassroots organizations that can draw on within-community networks of safety and protection among cis and trans women and LGBTQ communities. These organizations and spaces can serve as alternative institutions to counteract the overlapping racism, sexism, and gender victimization prevalent in current institutions, including the police. In so doing, these alternative institutions are perhaps better able to advance the health, wellbeing, safety, and healing of community members across gender, race and ethnicity, and social class.

Avoidance

Avoidance is among the most common strategies young adults reported practicing to protect themselves against violence. Young Latinxs in Pilsen regularly said they avoid certain areas for safety reasons. But in Englewood a number of the African Americans that we interviewed, particularly young black men, stated that they disengage from their peer group and withdraw from public spaces in order to reduce the risk of a violent encounter. Warren, a 28-year-old black man, describes this strategy: *"I try to just stay out of the way and not get involved in so much that's going on. Not be outside, not doing nothing."* Tyler, a 24-year-old black man, went into further detail:

Interviewer: *Do you ever try to avoid violence?*

Tyler: *Most definitely. … Sometimes I will not even walk down a block because I see too many people on that block.*

While most young adults reported that they become more vigilant of their surroundings after experiencing violence, the decision to disengage from peers and withdraw from public spaces has other important consequences. These

behaviors may also constrain young adults' social worlds, networks, and connection to community life. This withdrawal also potentially limits young people's capacity to act politically and voice their concerns. Political Scientist Cathy Cohen refers to this process as *a politics of invisibility*—a process whereby young people decide to pursue a strategy of making themselves invisible to the police and to other institutions that they believe threaten their safety and freedom. However, as Cohen and others note, such a strategy also decreases the possibility that these same young people will engage with individuals and institutions, often in the community, who could offer support.[168]

These experiences and behaviors contrast with those of many young whites and, to a lesser extent, Asian Americans in Chicago. Across gender, most within these two groups stated that they did not think explicitly about needing to avoid violence. That said, some white and Asian American young women did discuss precautions they take when traversing the city, including avoiding alleys and secluded places, trying not to go out late, traveling with others, and spending time with friends in familiar places. Moreover, young Asian Americans in Chinatown-Bridgeport discussed their communities' collective efforts to address theft and keep each other aware of such incidents. A surprisingly high proportion of young white and Asian American men with whom we spoke, however, said that they have not needed to exercise avoidance tactics or take precautions in Chicago. Ryan, a 26-year-old white man, for example, gave the following response when asked if he ever tries to avoid violence: *"No. I would say it's not something that passes my mind at all, really."* Farrukh, a 23-year-old South Asian man in Albany Park, similarly said, *"I don't really go out with that [the need to avoid violence] in mind."* There is, nonetheless, complexity to this story. Those few young Asian American men in Chinatown-Bridgeport who did speak about avoidance explicitly talked about avoiding certain streets and neighborhoods at night, in addition to avoiding gang-related peers and areas. Peter, a 23-year-old Asian American man living in Chinatown-Bridgeport, said he avoids violence by *"mak[ing] friends that do the same thing that I do, that stay away from violence. Stay away from certain people in my school that are part of gangs and stuff."* These differences reveal the importance of race and ethnicity, gender, place, and exposure to violence in shaping how young adults navigate the city.

Chicago: A Violent City?

Finally, we asked our respondents if they thought Chicago was a violent city. Like so many other topics, race, ethnicity, and location significantly shaped young adults' views on the topic. While many young adults we interviewed said they do think Chicago is violent, young African

Americans in Englewood—those most directly affected by violence among our interview participants—challenged the idea that Chicago is a violent city. Like young Latinxs in Pilsen, these black young adults named specific areas, streets, and street corners as hotspots for violence. But they stopped short of saying violence is inherent to the city. Young black women especially challenged the stereotype that Chicago is a violent city. Imani, a 25-year-old black woman in Englewood, makes this point plain.: *"The people are violent. That's just how I feel. It's not Chicago. Chicago's a beautiful place—the people are violent."* This does not mean that black young adults minimized the reality of violence in Englewood. David, a 23-year-old black man in Englewood, said he knows violence is a problem in the city *"just [from] growing up. All the killings. The robberies. Drugs play a role in it. The police. A lot of things play a role and it's just very violent here [in Englewood]."* But their experience of violence as an interpersonal problem compels them to echo Imani's comments, as 23-year-old Kennedy did, that Chicago is *"not a violent place, it's just the people in it that make it seem that way."*

These views may also be influenced by the fact that many young adults in the South and West Sides have encountered violence up close, as well as the poverty and joblessness that often perpetuates it. Eduardo, an 18-year-old Latino in Pilsen, made this point, viewing violence as a kind of tool used among those with very few means: *"**There's a lot of violence [on the South Side] because there's no opportunity to find jobs and there's no opportunity to seek mental health or any other resources.** So violence is a resource used to gain money, gain power, gain family."* Eduardo's perspective on violence in Chicago differs greatly from the reports of white and Asian American young adults we interviewed. These young adults stated that Chicago is a violent city, and pointed to the media and policy reports as evidence that "the South Side" generally was the most violent area. For example, 19-year-old Mei, a Chinese American woman from Bridgeport, said "definitely" when asked if she thinks Chicago is a violent city: *"Definitely a violent place. And it's statistically one of the most violent places in America. In fact, my mom has been talking about moving away from Chicago for a while."*

"There's a lot of violence because there's no opportunity to find jobs and there's no opportunity to seek mental health or any other resources."

The views on violence and danger in Chicago articulated by our respondents suggest how important race, ethnicity, and location are in shaping young people's

relationship to the city. Direct, personal experiences have shaped how African American young adults in Englewood think about violence in Chicago, making them more likely to see violence as a problem of individuals exerting harm onto others in their neighborhood. On the other hand, the white and Asian American young adults with whom we spoke had fewer encounters with violence and drew on news reports to shape their opinion of violence in the city, often unable to differentiate violence perpetrated by people in a neighborhood from a more generalized view of a neighborhood being violent.

Where Do We Go from Here?[169]

When asked how to address issues of violence, young adults in Chicago generally recommended what many researchers and policymakers have also recommended. First, they emphasize that addressing violence requires fundamentally addressing issues of poverty, education, jobs, and access to health care—especially mental health services. Indeed, research shows that only one-third of those in Illinois who need mental health treatment actually receive it.[170] These inequities are exacerbated for those in low-income, racially segregated communities affected by gun violence, which are also the areas with the greatest number of hospitalizations for anxiety, depression, self-medication, multiple forms of trauma, and other mental health concerns.[171]

Having said that, communities have long been leading the effort to counteract violence, to restoratively address the roots of violence, and to invest in the social and economic well-being of their residents in productive and respectful ways. As mentioned previously, youth-led activist organizations play an important role in outlining alternative approaches to safety and justice beyond policing, and in demanding more investments to address trauma and violence. And in African American, Latinx, and Asian

American neighborhoods, community groups and organizations have launched various initiatives to increase safety. For example, the Resident Association of Greater Englewood (R.A.G.E.) organizes community events in the summer and fall to take over parks that have been sites of drug dealing and gang violence. These actions reclaim parks as important, positive spaces for community. Likewise, Enlace does street outreach in Little Village that includes targeted mediation and community activities to promote peace. Researchers have found that the efforts of community organizations like these have had a direct impact on reducing rates of crime and victimization in large cities around the country.[172] These local efforts have also been critical given the recent spate of mental health center closings and a severe $187 million cut in state mental health funding between 2009 and 2012.[173] Yet the efforts of these organizations are also often challenged and constrained by a lack of funding and shifting interests in philanthropic giving. As the young adults we interviewed make clear, more resources are needed to address the gaps in public services. In short, by functioning as spaces where community members can gather, share grievances, become connected, and reimagine possibilities for themselves and others, youth-led activist organizations and local grassroots organizations have demonstrated that they are a vital lifeline for positive change and wellbeing in our communities.

As the city launches and rethinks efforts to address the challenges of violence in Chicago, the young people with whom we spoke emphasized that policymakers and advocates need to consider all dimensions of violence in their problem-solving, including sexual and domestic violence. These policymakers must consider not only how geography shapes violent incidents, but also how place, race, and ethnicity shape how Chicago's young people *process* and *negotiate* violence and trauma in their daily lives. Young adults are holders of critical knowledge related to these issues. Put simply, to create more effective policy that addresses violence in Chicago, city government would do well to center the experiences of young adults and follow the lead of local community and activist organizations that are already doing the work to address these critical issues.

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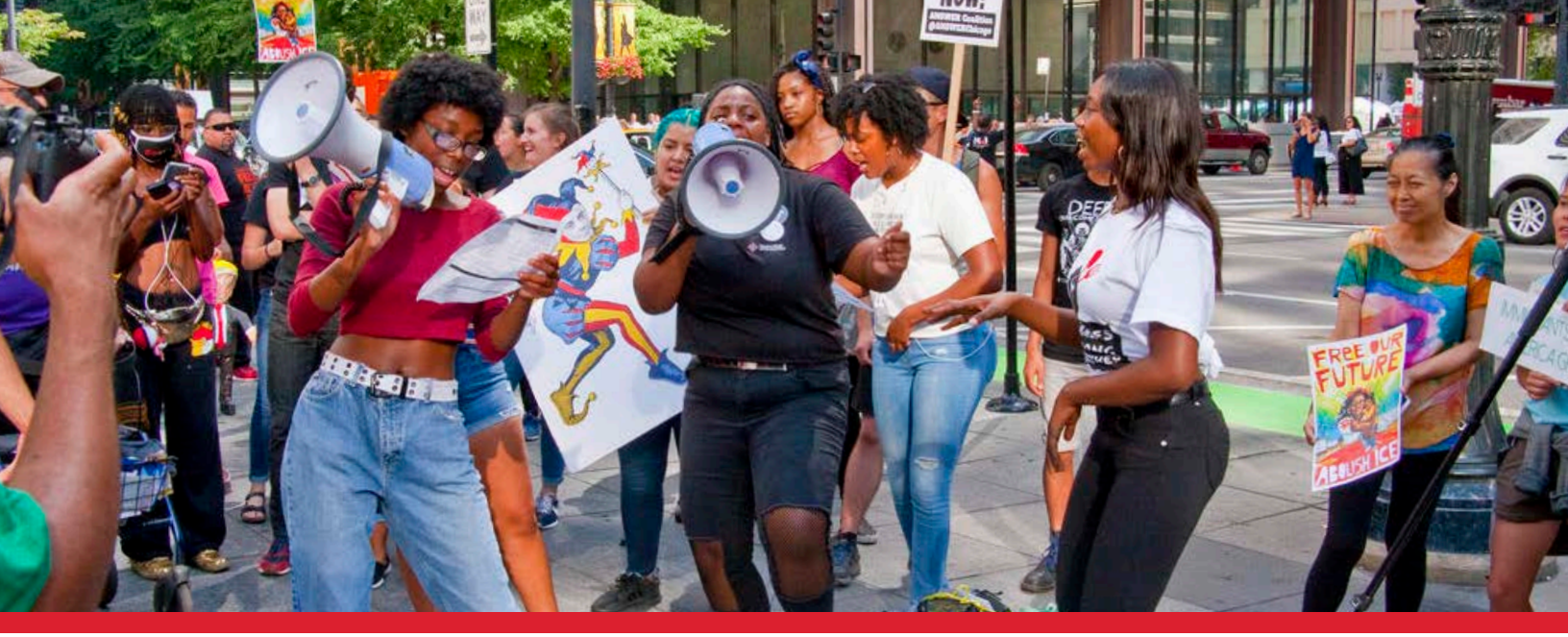


POLITICAL INEQUALITIES AND REIMAGINING DEMOCRACY

Margaret Teresa Brower

Urban Politics & Chicago's Political Machine

In a city like Chicago, much of the politics goes through and is controlled by the city council and, more specifically, by one's local alderman. In our interviews with young people, the politicians referenced most often were the mayor and the Chicago City Council aldermen. The Chicago City Council, a legislative branch of the city government, is divided into 50 districts or wards that are each represented by one aldermanic representative. The constituents of each ward elect this representative to serve a four-year term.[174]

The Chicago City Council is sometimes viewed controversially by Chicagoans who know its history of corruption. Since the 1970s, many aldermen have accepted bribes,[175] and/or have been convicted of crimes related to their political duties.[176] Moreover, they have predominantly served political elites in the city over the broader population's interests.[177] Currently, an alderman accused of bribery awaits a trial in the summer of 2019; if pronounced guilty, he will be the 30th such legislator over the last 46 years to be convicted of a crime related to corruption in the city. This history of local politics was often mentioned by the young adults we interviewed as they shared how they made sense of politicians' responsiveness, how they evaluated which aldermen were trustworthy, and the extent to which they believed political representatives in the city would advocate for their interests. For example, as Rebecca from Englewood explained: ***"It's the Windy City, right? It's like that because of the politicians; we have a history of having corrupt politicians, and I think that still exists today."***

Another equally defining attribute of Chicago's local political system is its "machine politics," with one party controlling the political and administrative power in the city. In Chicago, this has meant that every mayor since William Thompson in 1915 has been a member of the Democratic Party.[178/179] This political dominance by one party has created a unique environment for city politics in which most politicians cater to different subgroups of Democrats.[180/181] Mayor Richard J. Daley, who served from 1955-1976, was known for appealing to elite and poor white Democrats. For example, he maintained support among working-class whites in part by allowing discriminatory city housing policies, which limited resources to low-income African American populations in the city, to stay in place while other municipalities were changing such administrative policies.[182] In contrast, Mayor Harold Washington (1983-1987) appealed to and created a voting coalition of liberal whites, African Americans and Latinxs—particularly in the South and West Sides of the city.[183] His political agenda was very different than that of Richard J. Daley's, yet both of these mayors represented the Democratic Party in the city.

In a city with a long-standing history of both corruption and machine politics at the local level, to what extent have these structures shaped the political behaviors of young people? To better understand the political engagement of young adults, we asked our interview participants about their perceptions of their access to politicians, their political behaviors, and the extent to which they felt represented by the city government. Speaking to young people with different racial and ethnic identities about their political experiences across neighborhoods in Chicago revealed that they have very different interactions with a political system that is supposed to represent them all equally, yet systematically caters to some while ignoring others. While most young adults living on the North Side explained in their interviews that the political system in Chicago is working for them, the opposite was true for African American, Latinx, and Asian American young adults living in Englewood, Pilsen, and Chinatown-Bridgeport, who often shared experiences of political alienation, interactions with unresponsive political officials, and rejection when attempting to participate in formal politics. These political inequalities shape how young adults engage with and resist this system, and their stories

"It's the Windy City, right? It's like that because of the politicians; we have a history of having corrupt politicians, and I think that still exists today."

should both challenge and motivate us to reimagine politics in the city of Chicago.

Who does the Mayor Represent?

When we spoke to young adults we learned that they had strong views about Mayor Rahm Emanuel, and that their views on the political representation they received from the Mayor of Chicago varied considerably by neighborhood. In their interviews, young adults living in Pilsen, Englewood, and Chinatown-Bridgeport mentioned that the mayor's responses to educational institutions were an indicator of the extent to which local politicians were prioritizing young Chicagoans. Moreover, many of the young adults from these neighborhoods explained that living in close proximity to underfunded or closed CPS schools led them to view these outcomes as political indicators of a negligent local government. Asian American adults in Chinatown-Bridgeport and African American adults in Englewood regularly criticized the mayor and related local officials for their role in endorsing and allowing the closing of CPS schools. Owen, a 25-year-old African American in Englewood, shared why he felt school closings signified that local politicians did not care about young adults' interests. He said: *"I feel that way because, if [politicians] did [care about young adults], then we wouldn't have over 52 schools closing. If they cared [about] anything they wouldn't be shutting down after-school programs that help the kids stay in school and learn. Because those were the best parts of growing up. And grammar school and high school, those are the best parts."*

Alex, a 20-year-old Asian American woman in Chinatown-Bridgeport, also believes local politicians, especially the mayor, do not care about young adults' interests. She said: *"I feel like Rahm Emanuel only really wants the good schools—or not even the good schools, just the charter schools to succeed, and wants to get rid of the public schools. But not everyone can afford [or access] charter schools or private schools, so we need the public schools."* Young adults that we spoke to across age groups, including those who did not attend a Chicago public school, viewed the state of educational institutions in Chicago as a primary indicator of the extent to which their local government is serving young people. For many of them, school closures and under-resourced schools in the city reflect broader political negligence to serve their neighborhoods.

While some white young adults we interviewed on the North Side were also critical of politicians' involvement and association with the closing of CPS schools, many of them were more positive in their evaluations, especially of Mayor Rahm Emanuel. A number of our interviewees positively mentioned the mayor's efforts in making the city more environmentally friendly. Jack, a 28-year-old white young adult living on the North

Side, explained, *"I actually like Rahm; I don't mind him. … I feel like there are things happening in the state that affect my quality of life here, in this city, of course. Yeah, in terms of what Rahm has done, he's very oriented towards green streets. I tend to agree with a lot of his initiatives, overall. I know he gets a lot of flak for school closures, like some of his decisions about that. A lot of people hate Rahm; I don't quite understand where they're coming from, either."*

Emma, also a 28-year-old white young adult from the North Side, shared a similar attitude. She said: *"I feel like Rahm is very interested in the millennial generation and adding bike lanes and creative office [space] and making the city more, like, San Francisco-esque. I feel like that's something he's made very apparent."*
Many white young adults we interviewed saw city improvements, green initiatives, and innovative ways to use city spaces as an indicator that politicians were paying attention to their needs. White young adults, living both on the North side and in Albany Park, often mentioned politicians respond to them, and that they have the power to persuade the mayor to take action. For example, William, a 29-year-old living in Albany Park, explained why he thinks the mayor will cater to his interests. He said, *"**I think if we make our opinions heard we will force the government and politicians to take action in our direction.** … I think that Chicago people are happy, and they gather together and make their opinions heard. Rahm is going to be forced to take an action, but I think somebody needs to push for that action."*
Many other white young adults on the North Side and in Albany Park shared similar sentiments of being able to control and have influence over politicians in the city. In contrast, young adults of color did not express the same perception. The difference is correlated with where these young people live and what signals they use to evaluate their politicians. Many young adults of color perceive the mayor's failed educational policies as evidence that he does not care about them or their communities. Young whites on the North Side, who as noted earlier in the education section of this report attend better-funded public and private schools, view the successful environmental policies of the mayor as a sign that he is pursuing an agenda that they care about.

"I think if we make our opinions heard we will force the government and politicians to take action in our direction."

Interestingly, while we were in the field, we did not know that Rahm Emanuel would not run for reelection in 2018. However, the variation in how young people across the

city experience and perceive the extent to which the mayor does or does not represent them, is a lesson that mayoral candidates should take to heart. This lesson also applies to any politician in the city. How young adults discuss their aldermanic representatives only further illustrates this point.

The Politics of Chicago's City Council

The local aldermanic system in Chicago was structured to serve as an accessible pathway for local residents to participate in politics. Chicagoans live in the same neighborhoods as their representatives and thus are presumed to have more access to them than to other political officials. However, young adults shared very different experiences with their local political representatives that varied by race and ethnicity. For example, many Latinx young adults living in Pilsen expressed frustration in their interviews that some of their aldermanic representatives supported urban developers over what they perceived to be the interests of their communities. They shared stories of talking to and reaching out to their local representatives, only to be disappointed when those politicians supported gentrification efforts in the neighborhood that ran directly counter to the interests of many young adults. In our interviews, Latinx young adults expressed frustration about living in a place that appeared to have less crime and more development only because more whites moved into Pilsen. Several of them believe local representatives are catering to the new white residents instead of protecting and serving the people who have lived in the neighborhood for decades, including back when it was less developed and had more crime. For many of the Latinx young adults we spoke with, their representatives are reachable, but not responsive to their interests and needs.

Asian American young adults living in Chinatown-Bridgeport mentioned that they know how to reach their local aldermanic representatives, but that oftentimes these representatives take a long time to respond to them and are not helpful. Minh, a 25-year-old Asian American living in Chinatown-Bridgeport, shared an experience that captured her opinion that representatives are not responsive to young people. She said: *"The youth were working on a community mural, and they had asked the alderman for permission and for funding. And for several months, there was no answer from the alderman, even though the alderman had said he liked the project and he wants to support it. We had sent him a letter requesting for funding, and I think if he didn't want to fund us, he should have said so at the beginning. But it took him about maybe five months to say, 'oh, I don't have money.'"* Other young adults in Chinatown-Bridgeport referenced experiences of trying to work with their local representatives, but ultimately,

feeling that their representatives did not take them seriously.

In Englewood, African American young adults told us a different story about their local aldermanic representatives. For those we interviewed, representatives are absent, and many of them mentioned having no contact with their local aldermen. Tyler, a 24-year-old African American, shared why he thinks his alderman does not do a good job representing Englewood residents. He explained, *"because I do not see them enough. I do not see them engaging with the community. I do not see them enough. I have not seen an alderman in our place for like six years, and nobody knows what you look like. So at least walk up and down every block and just wave at people or something—asking people 'will you pass out flyers or have community meetings?' Or post a program like, 'I am going to show you how to buy the houses in the community.' You learn something. I do not see any proactive politicians in the neighborhood."* Llyod, a 21-year-old African American, added, *"the alderman doesn't care. You reach out to the alderman; they get back to you 30 years later."* Most of the African American young adults we spoke with perceived their local political representatives as absent and inaccessible.

In contrast, white young adults shared with us numerous stories of positive engagement with their local representatives, although their interest in political engagement seemed to vary depending on whether they were longtime residents of Chicago or recent transplants. For example, white young adults who were transplants often held positive views of local officials, but ultimately were uninterested in engaging with them because they were less invested in staying in the city long-term. For example, Ashley, who is a 27-year-old white woman living on the North Side, explained she felt she had

access to her local alderman, but ultimately was not invested in politics. She shared: *"I think that from an alderman's perspective where you get smaller and smaller, I would say yes [they represent me]. In terms of my individual interests, I don't engage very much with the political system here in Chicago at all. It's not something that I've ever been super interested in because I've*

always known that I'll probably leave, so I haven't engaged very deeply with it. We do—just through my job and my work; I work with a lot of people who have worked in the mayor's office and are really deeply entrenched in the political system now, and they're people that I respect, and I really like. I know that they feel very strongly that the government here in Chicago is looking out for our interests."

In comparison, white young adults who were long-term residents of Chicago also felt represented by their local aldermen, but they mentioned having a closer relationship to these representatives than those who are recent transplants to the city. Craig, a 25-year-old white man living on the North Side, explained that *"**[city politicians] care about my interests because I'm an upper-class white male, at least at the mayoral level.** I think the aldermen, you could flip a coin depending on who it is. I'm very familiar with certain aldermen. [Carlos Rosa], I think he's an example of an alderman who really cares. And although I think he is really focused on his neighborhood, I think he's somebody who is really passionate about change. I know one of his staffers … and you can just tell that they really do care about seeing positive … revolutionary change."* Overall, white young adults we interviewed expressed very positive feelings toward their aldermanic representatives, and many of them—especially men—felt they could influence these representatives.

Based on these interviews with young adults across the city, we see that young adults from different neighborhoods have contrasting relationships with their aldermanic representatives and have divergent views of the mayor. Despite feelings of alienation among several young adults of color, many of whom we interviewed were able to list a number of political issues they cared about deeply. A lot of these issues have previously been mentioned in this report: education resources, mental health services, violence, crime, safety, and poverty. **Table 1** provides an overview of the political issues young adults were most concerned about, depending on their neighborhood. The issues these young people prioritized tended to vary by race and ethnicity as well. Yet, as previously discussed in this section, young adults' access to politicians who might act on these issues also varies disproportionately. Many of the young adults of color we spoke to who live on

TABLE 1. ISSUE IMPORTANCE BY NEIGHBORHOOD (INTERVIEW SAMPLE)

Pilsen (Latinx)	Englewood (African Americans)	Chinatown-Bridgeport (Asian Americans)	North Side (Whites)
• Gentrification • Immigration • Violence	• Violence • Unemployment • Mental health	• Education • Crime & Safety • Immigration	• Crime & Gun Control • Women's rights • Healthcare

the West and South Sides of the city have decided not to rely on politicians to address the issues they care about.

"[City politicians] care about my interests because I'm an upper-class white male, at least at the mayoral level."

Instead, they are employing extra-systemic strategies of resistance that include developing counter spaces for democracy and engaging in social movements.

Resistance and Reimagining Democracy

As noted above, young adults are having strikingly different experiences with formal systems of political participation. White young adults we spoke to believed they could shape and influence politics through formal types of political participation such as voting, donating money, and contacting political representatives. In contrast, most Latinx, Asian American, and African American young adults we spoke to believe these forms of political participation gave them little to no power to influence political outcomes in the city. Our interviews illustrate that, when formal politics do not work for everyone in the city, many young adults of color turn to alternative forms of political engagement. These alternative forms demonstrate how some young adults feel they are positioned in the Chicago political system, what changes need to occur to improve their position, and where they believe they have leverage or power to affect this system.

Asian American young adults in Chinatown-Bridgeport often mentioned feeling rejected from formal politics. Many told us stories of trying to participate in formal politics—attending a community forum, voting, reaching out to their political representatives—yet ultimately feeling ignored. When many of them reflected on the descriptive representation of politicians in the city, and the lack of Asian Americans representing city residents **(see Figure 1)**, they described wanting more opportunities for people of color, and for Asian Americans in particular to get involved in politics. Vincent, a 24-year old Asian American, explained: *"**I think there needs to be an increase in POC [people of color] politicians. Just people that want to get into that field.** A lot of persons of color, especially Chinese people, they don't want to become politicians.*

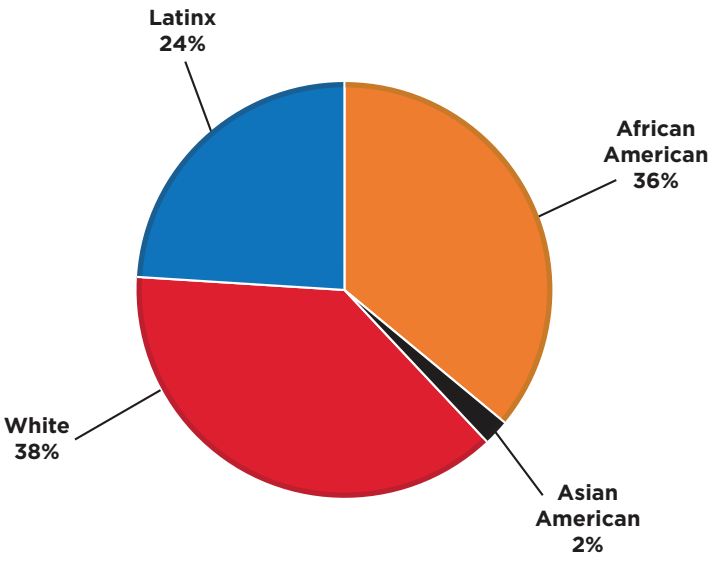
"I think there needs to be an increase in POC [people of color] politicians. Just people that want to get into that field."

Me, personally, I don't think I would mind being a politician, but it's not something I considered. You don't grow up with those

considerations either. Your parents are always, like, 'become a doctor.' They do say 'become a lawyer,' but they never say 'become a politician.' … And culturally, we're not putting ourselves in positions to help ourselves when we don't have people in our own community serving us in the government." Other Asian American young adults shared with us their belief that there was a need for a larger number of Asian Americans in government. Many Asian American women in particular mentioned getting involved in political advocacy groups and wanting to establish better political pathways for Asian Americans and young adults of color to run for office.

Several of the African American young adults we spoke to in Englewood similarly emphasized community-based organizations in their neighborhoods as places to reimagine democratic engagement. However, unlike Asian Americans in Chinatown-Bridgeport, in their interviews many of them focused on civic engagement that would result in immediate changes in their communities. Many young African American adults explained that these urgent changes required collective action now, and they saw nonprofit organizations in Englewood as an institutional structure for facilitating these swift results. Kayla, a 25-year-old African American in Englewood, explained her involvement in a community project through which abandoned houses on the block were restored by young adults, thus

FIGURE 1: CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL RACE/ETHNICITY



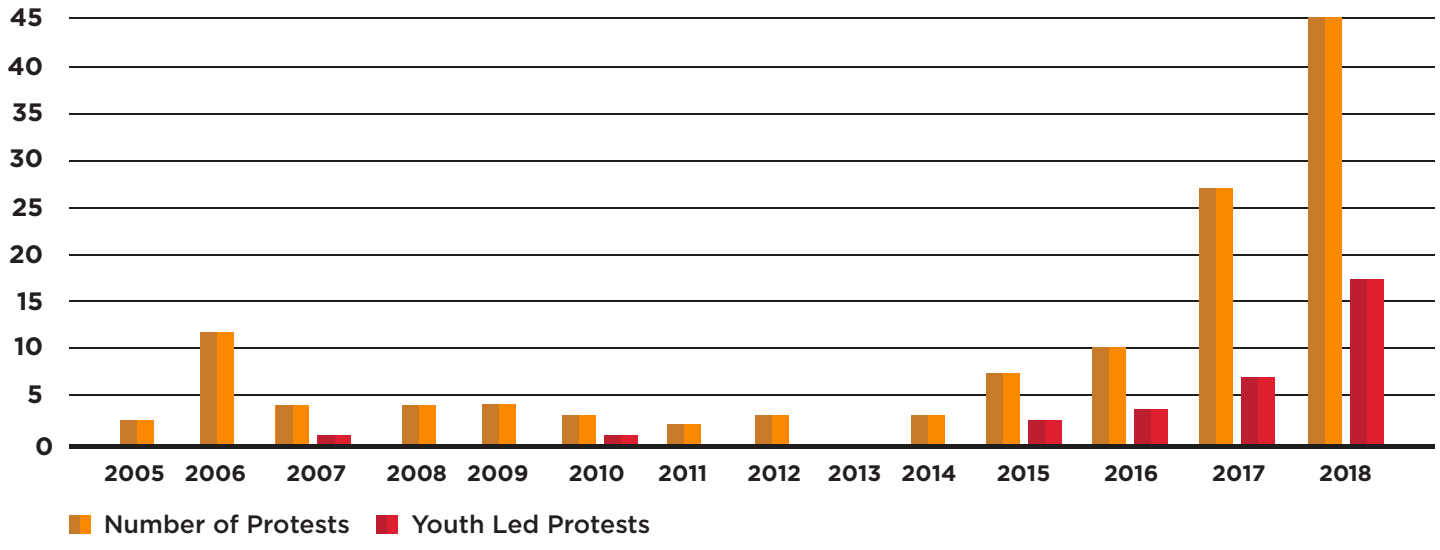
providing them with an alternative form of income and work. She shared: *"This was an abandoned house that was tore up inside, it was stripped down, it had nothing in it. … [The cofounders of the project] set the table up and walked down the block. They got to shaking our hands. … Half of these guys helped build this. We colored this stuff with paint and all of this. These guys on the block got talent, real talent, and she put that to use. [The cofounders] even took some of these guys off of the street and they turned their whole life around."* According to Kayla and other African American young adults we spoke to, if politicians are not going to step up and address issues such as poverty and violence in Englewood, then people in the neighborhoods have to find effective alternative mechanisms, like community organizing, to address these problems.

Emily, a 28-year-old African American living in Englewood, similarly described getting

involved in a community effort to address some of the issues she was witnessing in her neighborhood. She shared: *"I started my organization at the time [someone] was murdered. I started my organization the day after his funeral. And first I just wanted people to see a shirt that told people to put the guns down, but I've seen so many shirts that said put the guns down. And I was like, if I make shirts and I sell them, I can do stuff for the community with the money and that will become a movement. And that's exactly what I did. Every time I would make money, I would figure out how to put it back into my community. Kids need clothes, so I need to do a clothing drive, I need to do a toy drive, I need to do a shoe drive, I need to feed the homeless. I need to have events where kids can come and play and be safe. I need to do a gun buyback. I need to do a GED program, I need to do a water draft, get the people in the community outside the community so they can see that they're not the [only] ones going through things. Let's go to Flint, Michigan. These people don't even have clean water. If you all don't have money at least you have water. So I was able to do everything that I named because of my shirt sales and because I have the power to bring people together. I could call right now and say I need 50 people to meet me outside of the police station tonight."*

Many African American young adults we spoke with in Englewood mentioned that political officials ignore the issues they face in their neighborhood, and as a result some young adults such as Kayla and Emily have turned to grassroot efforts to try to make a difference. Many other young adults we interviewed in Englewood explained that community-based organizations were some of the few places where they felt their opinions were heard, where they felt they had power, and where they experienced working with fellow residents to solve collective problems. In many ways, community-based organizations in Englewood fulfilled a need

FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF PROTESTS REPORTED BY THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE [v]



for democratic institutions and were places where many of the young adults we spoke with felt they could actually experience democratic participation. Teamwork Englewood[184] and the Resident Association for Greater Englewood (R.A.G.E.)[185] are two organizations, among others, that are creating these types of opportunities for young adults.

Other African American young adults felt grassroot organizing was another outlet for democratic engagement, and referenced the Movement for Black Lives or the Black Lives Matter Movement as one form of infrastructure for this involvement.

"Yes [protests make a difference]. If you have the right amount of energy and the right amount of people, you can change [circumstances]."

Marcus, age 24, from Englewood, explained that he got involved in protests and marches through Black Lives Matter. He said: *"You know how they had the Black Lives Matter people walking through the neighborhoods? I did that."* Fatima, age 20, also from Englewood, shared *"I did a protest with my church for Black Lives Matter."* These references should not be surprising: Chicago has a highly visible and active presence of activist coalitions affiliated with the Movement for Black Lives, composed of many youth-led organizations leading marches, protests, and making explicit demands for transforming Chicago's criminal justice system and addressing other forms of systemic racism throughout the city.[186] Chicago has become one of the national epicenters of youth-led activism with organizations such as the Black Youth Project 100,[187] Assata's Daughters,[188] Black Lives Matter Chicago, Let Us Breathe Collective and Chicago Votes[189] mobilizing young people across the city. According to media reports from the Chicago Tribune **(see Figure 2)**, in the last three years protesting has increased in the city of Chicago, and many of these protests have been youth-led.[190/191]

The young African American adults we spoke to from Englewood shared some of their motivations for participating in these types of protests. For some, protests are a way to finally reach distant and unresponsive political officials. Brianna, age 23, a young African American in Englewood, explained: *"Yes, it does [make a difference], because you get your voice heard and you get to tell the political people how you feel and how it is, and then once you do that and more people feel the same way, they'll join and then your voices are going to be heard and you'll get on TV, and then they'll know that there's a problem they need to fix or something."* Others believe that protests are a mechanism for change because they illustrate a sense of unity among

disenfranchised groups. Justin, a 20-year-old African American also from Englewood, insisted: *"**Yes [protests make a difference]. If you have the right amount of energy and the right amount of people, you can change [circumstances].** You can scare Trump. You can make anything happen. We are people, we come as one, unite[d]."*

When political officials are invisible, and issues such as police, poverty, and violence are prevalent in a community like Englewood, many young African Americans search for other political strategies to change these circumstances. For some, community organizations are powerful institutions—places that are attuned to the neighborhood needs and opportunities for individual and collective agency. Others, however, seek political strategies that will dismantle broader political systems of inequality, such as police brutality and mass incarceration—and these goals require visible resistance, often through grassroot organizing and protest.

While many African American young adults in Englewood are invested in activities such as protesting and organizing, there are others who feel deterred from these actions. For some in Englewood, engaging in protest is too risky an endeavor that makes one vulnerable to police retaliation and repression. Taylor, age 20, from Englewood, explains why he has never engaged in protesting:

Taylor: *I've been too scared [to participate in a protest or march].*

Interviewer: *You say you've been too scared? Why?*

Taylor: *Only because people can get very violent, very rowdy. Even if you're protesting something about people … you see, they're [the police] killing people left and right. So, if they do that, if we're just talking about peace, they don't care.*

Interviewer: *So, if you were to go to a protest, the folks you would be afraid of are the police?*

Taylor: *It all depends on who you march with. If they are together with you. I would think so. Like I said, the police, they'll gang up so hard against you. We don't need you all. We're just marching for peace. We just want some peace. What you're doing right now is not bringing peace. You should be on the side with us.*

Like Taylor, several other African American young adults in Englewood referred to the risks associated with engaging in mobilizing efforts like protesting, often mentioning police retaliation as a factor that affected their decision to not participate in these efforts.

These fears are not unfounded; engaging in protests does come with risks and, according to African American and Latinx young adults in Englewood, Pilsen, and Albany Park, there are many instances when police officers unethically and unfairly repress these efforts. For example, Sofía, age 26, a Latina in Pilsen, shared: *I wish [police] were better trained, and they were not manipulated, they weren't brainwashed against—the way they behave towards the people in the community, especially people [of color]. … I have gone to protests where—I'm not a violent person, at all; I protested, so they can hear my voice, and we would be peaceful—we would not be violent, or we wouldn't start anything to cause violence, or anything like that. The police would attack right away; right away, they just react to unnecessary behavior. I've been hit by a cop twice. … We were just protesting, and a friend of mine was holding a poster; I fell out of nowhere, a bunch of cops just came in and they just surrounded him. I was near him, and we were holding hands, so I got caught up into the crowd and my arm was getting punched by a cop. He would just—he was hitting me really, really hard, and I looked up. He looked up and looked straight at me—straight into my eye. He looked at me for like two seconds, and I think he noticed that, "I'm hitting a girl," and he just backs away. I couldn't look at his badge; I remember his face, but I couldn't see his badge.*

Like Sofía, other Latinx young adults in Pilsen also referred to the risks involved in protest, but most insisted that protest and social movements are some of the only strategies that can truly change the political landscape for Latinxs in Chicago. Manuela, a 22-year-old Latina, explained why these are necessary political tools: *"I think if we make them care they, to a certain level, have to care. What I mean by that is, I don't think that politicians, at least any politicians that I've met, have an interest to uplift the immigrant, low-income, Latino, brown, black community; no. I don't think that they have a personal investment or a financial one. So I do not think they care to provide safe spaces, to provide schools that educate our students well and set them up for their own personal success. No, I do not think that they care. There are moments, I think, when the community can mobilize and influence a politician to act on something that we care about, that's the only time I think we or I feel cared for, if we demand it."*

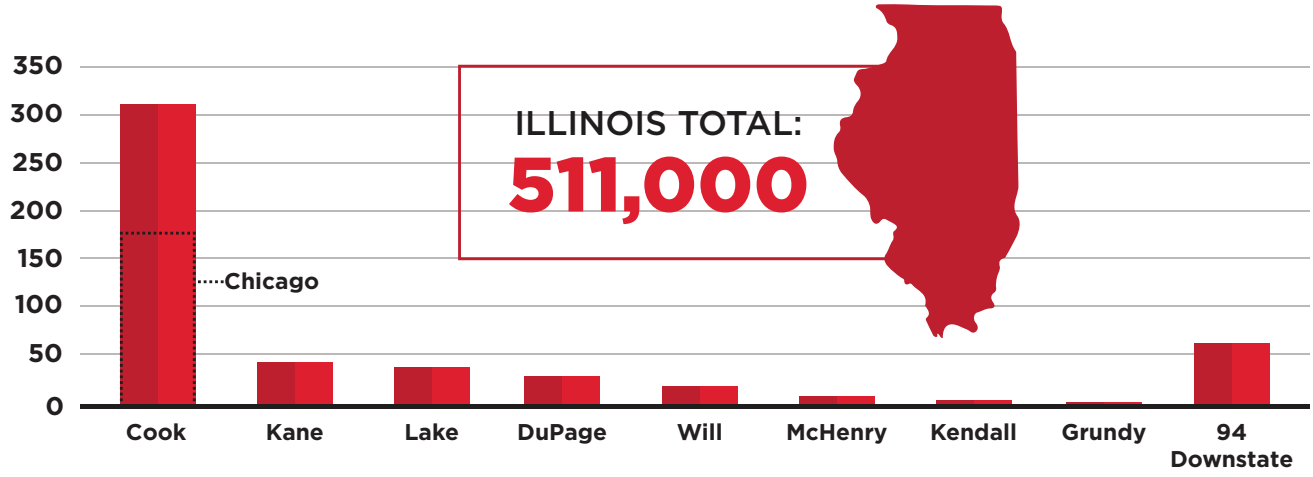
Manuela and others advocated for protesting and marching as an effective strategy for addressing local issues in

their community, such as gentrification. Josefina, a 24-year-old Latina, explained that in order to get the attention of local politicians in Pilsen to support affordable housing, she needed to rely on grassroot organizing. She explained: *"My group of friends and I formed this small group. I work a lot with Pilsen Alliance, and the Resurrection Project, and local organizations. We're starting a march on August 5th, and it's going to pass by the new sites where there is new development. There's supposed to be a 465-unit new development on Peoria and we're passing by it and just talking about trying to really fight for having it stay at 21% affordable income for families and things like that."*

Others organized marches and rallies as a way to resist gentrification and demonstrate the importance of preserving the culture of their community. María, a Latina, age 21, from Pilsen, explained she was going to participate in a march to illustrate what gentrification in the neighborhood would destroy as a result of new development projects. She explained *"the march is called Joyful Resistance … we're trying to preserve our community. Because [there is] all this culture here, all these traditions. It's actually a community. I feel like [gentrifiers] come and they look at us from a distance, and it's like a zoo. … That building had a beautiful mural with a bunch of revolutionaries of Latinos and mexicanos. You're trying to erase that? I feel like the kids growing up should get to see that and know the important people from their culture and why that's important. So tomorrow we're coming together [to march] as a celebration [of] our people and our culture."*

Young adults in Pilsen view protesting and marches as versatile political strategies to visibly illustrate localized issues in their community—and these strategies are effective. Because of this type of advocacy, Pilsen, unlike other Chicago neighborhoods, has strict mandates for developers. For example, the percentage

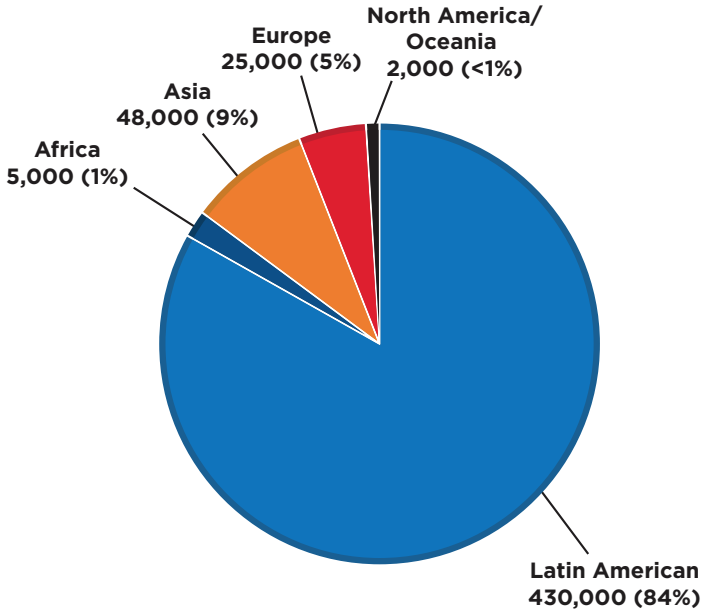
FIGURE 3: ESTIMATED UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANT POPULATION BY COUNTY [W]



of affordable housing required in Pilsen is double that of the rest of city's neighborhoods, as regulated by the Affordable Requirements Ordinance.[192] These types of mandates are possible through activism and support from local community organizations such as the Resurrection Project, the Pilsen Alliance, Eighteenth Street Development Corporation, and Pilsen Neighbors Community Council, which organized dozens of public meetings and activism around zoning changes in Pilsen.[193]

Latinx young adults in Pilsen also use protest and grassroots organizing to address immigration issues that span beyond Pilsen. In Illinois and Chicago, the undocumented population is majority Latinx **(see Figures 3 and 4)**, and in the last two years there has been a large increase nationally in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)[194] immigration arrests of Latinx individuals.[195] Community organizations in Chicago, such as Organized Communities Against Deportation, report that in Chicago ICE has been operating with impunity, often engaging in racial profiling and entering homes without warrants.[196] Latinx young adults from Pilsen often mentioned in their interviews experiencing and hearing about these types of incidents in their neighborhood and realizing there is a need for political action. Indeed, immigration is a motivating political issue for many Latinx young adults who fear they will lose someone they love due to deportation. For example, Alec, age 20, explains his constant anxiety of losing his parents as a result of deportation: *"Just the whole concept of me and my parents being deported [is scary]. As of right now, I only live with my dad. He's the only one that, you can say,[is] contributing. He's the one who's taking care of my brothers. It got to the point where my sister[is] like, 'They're going to take dad away from me?' And I'm like, 'No, no, no, they're not going to do anything. Don't worry. Relax.' And like, 'But what if they take him away? Whatever he's done, we're going to take him.' I really don't know how to explain to a little girl, like, 'Yes, this is going on, but nothing's going to happen.'"*

FIGURE 4: CHICAGO IMMIGRANT AREAS OF ORIGIN [W]



Many Latinx young adults in Pilsen explained that despite Chicago's status as a sanctuary city—which is supposed to limit cooperation with federal immigration enforcement agents to protect low-priority immigrants from deportation—ICE continues to operate within the city's jurisdiction due to the city's limited influence over a federal agency.[197] In response to this issue, Juan, age 23, a resident of Pilsen, insisted on political changes that *"offer an actual path towards citizenship for people. Or some amnesty, some sort of amnesty."* When asked how to achieve these political goals, Juan continued: *"Be an activist. Take part in social movements. If you see a problem and you don't do anything about it then it's not going to change. You have to do something, somewhere or another. That's kind of how people throughout history have gained rights through social movements and protests. It seems like it works."* Juan is not alone in this belief: many young Latinx adults in Chicago have joined organizations such as the Immigrant Youth Justice League,[198] which was founded and is led by undocumented youth organizers in Chicago to advocate for the rights of those who are undocumented, and Organized Communities Against Deportation,[199] another organization in Chicago led by Latinx young adults to fight deportations and immigrant detentions.

Asian Americans in Chinatown-Bridgeport also mentioned immigration issues as a political issue that mobilized them, but not in the same way. Claudia, a 27-year-old Asian American living in Chinatown-Bridgeport, explained that immigration issues are really important to Asian Americans. She states: *"So I've always wished the Asian community here in Chicago would be more supportive in terms of—like I think we're in an interesting middle group where these things don't affect us as much because we're not talked about in the media. So everyone thinks immigration issues have to do with Latinos, which is not true. It affects every immigrant."* Asian Americans we interviewed in Chinatown-Bridgeport were less concerned with deportation and more concerned about the available services in the community to support immigrants' transition to the United States, such as

translation services, healthcare clinics, and adult education programs. Jevon, age 27, an Asian American living in Chinatown-Bridgeport, explained the type of local, political advocacy organizations she would like to see further supported: *"They're always cutting into Springfield, lobbying for USCIS [United States Citizenship and Immigration Services] programs, moms and baby's programs, food stamps, and all that works. ...There are organizations out there that do help the vulnerable, and the underrepresented, and those who have language barriers, to try to have access to social welfare. There's another organization that I recently signed with. ... They are a coalition for limited English-speaking [people], specifically for [the] elderly."*

Like African American young adults we spoke with in Englewood, many Asian Americans in Chinatown-Bridgeport viewed nonprofit organizations as important counter spaces for democracy. George, an Asian American who is 19 years old and lives in Chinatown-Bridgeport, highlighted the importance of these institutions in light of government negligence. He explained: *"I feel like maybe the community itself [has to act], not so much the government, because even though the government can help us it's not always a guarantee because I always feel like there's some kind of separation between the government and its people.* ***I feel like as long as the community is sticking together, and staying connected and in touch, we can all support each other.***" Although Latinx and Asian American young adults emphasized different priorities related to immigration, both often mentioned in their interviews not being able to rely on local politicians to lead these political efforts. Latinx young adults in Pilsen pursue strategies of protest, social movements, and grassroots organizing, while Asian Americans in Chinatown-Bridgeport focus on local, political advocacy organizations that will support immigrants in their neighborhoods.

"I feel like as long as the community is sticking together, and staying connected and in touch, we can all support each other."

Young adults living in Englewood, Chinatown-Bridgeport, and Pilsen are all grappling with a deficit of political representation in Chicago. Many of these young adults are forging new and wide pathways through protest, social movements, and community advocacy that will provide nontraditional forms of power to act on the issues they care about. These young people are persistent and imaginative, pursuing a new vision of democracy in the city of Chicago—one that takes seriously the concerns of young people and elevates their political agendas.

New Political Futures

The stories we heard from young adults across the city point out their different opinions about the way forward for Chicago politics. White young adults living on the North Side envision a future much like the present: participating in formal political institutions, supporting responsive political officials, and enjoying the many ways in which politics improves their lives. Meanwhile, young adults from Chinatown-Bridgeport, Pilsen, and Englewood are insisting we envision a new political future, and they have ideas and suggestions for how to craft it. For many, these perspectives are informed by their attempts to participate in politics formally by voting, contacting their representatives, or voicing their concerns at city council meetings—all methods that ultimately make visible an unequal political system of representation in which those with power seem uninterested in the voices, concerns, and issues most important to young adults of color. For many young adults with whom we spoke, these experiences motivated them to consider creative and alternative strategies for engaging in politics. Some of these strategies are risky, and many of them depend on resources outside of the state, as many young adults rely on nonprofits, community organizations, activist organizations and neighborhood resources to facilitate their political participation. For many of them, these institutions and places are counter spaces for democracy.

Asian American young adults we spoke with in Chinatown-Bridgeport have ambitions for creating new pathways for young people of color to run for office. African American young adults in Englewood are creating organizations and getting involved in grassroots efforts to reimagine democratic institutions and build new initiatives that are designed to benefit people in their neighborhoods. Moreover, some African Americans and many Latinxs are participating in a vibrant scene of collective action in which social movements help to shift the power in their direction. Thus, the young adults we interviewed in Chicago are very much engaged in local politics, but often their pathway to justice, equality, and liberation is one that leads them outside of sanctioned state institutions. Many are working hard to create new pathways through which politics is reimagined and opportunities for change are created by these young people themselves.

RECOMMENDED CITATION

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PLACES OF FREEDOM, SAFETY, AND JOY

Matthew D. Nelsen

Shifting Narratives in Chicago

Chicago is frequently portrayed as a city of deficits: gang violence and homicides capture the attention of media outlets and the entertainment industry alike;[200] bond-rating firms label the city's credit as "junk;"[201] and schools are portrayed as "crumbling" and "failing" despite academic gains.[202] As previous sections of this report have emphasized, these challenges are real and worthy of scrutiny. However, addressing these topics in the detail they deserve risks painting a unidimensional portrait of the city. One study finds that many Chicagoans feel that media coverage of the city is too negative and does a poor job of capturing what is actually happening in their neighborhoods.[203] This is especially true among residents living on the city's South

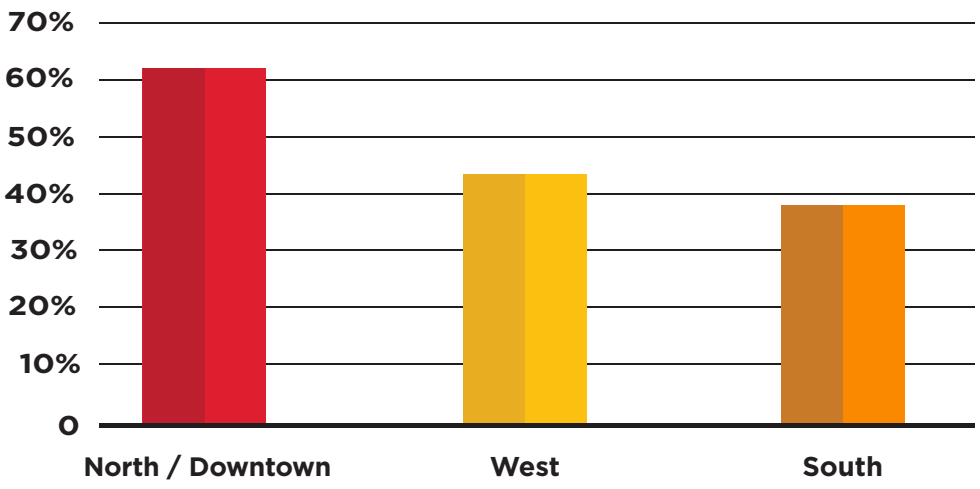
FIGURE 1: CHICAGO RESIDENTS WHO AGREE "STORIES ABOUT MY NEIGHBORHOOD ARE TOO NEGATIVE"

and West Sides **(see Figures 1 and 2)**. Our conversations with young Chicagoans allow us to identify stories that typically go unrecognized. Young people of color in particular are well aware of the challenges facing the city. However, they also remind us that individuals living on the city's South and West Sides continue to experience joy, exercise agency, and possess a great deal of pride in their communities even in the face of harsh inequities. Alternative representations of what it is like to live on the South and West sides of the city not only complicate our image of Chicago but lend important insights to policymakers. As the city grapples with continued population loss, city leadership should be attuned to the emotions young people ascribe to their communities.[204] Freedom, agency, and feelings of safety and joy play an important role in how young adults envision their futures in Chicago.

Freedom

Freedom is central to the work of youth led-activist groups. Thus, understanding how individuals conceptualize freedom is a necessary step in identifying policies that aim to improve the lives of young people of color in the city. Our conversations reveal that young people across Chicago define and experience freedom differently. As previous sections of this report have emphasized, economic resources, education, interactions with the police, and violence all shape how young people experience life in the city. These factors permeate their sense of freedom as well. A plurality of white young adults claimed to feel free everywhere in Chicago. For example, Jeffrey, a 22-year-old living on the North Side explained: *"I feel [free] anywhere … I just feel comfortable, I guess, all over the city."* Several of the young white adults we spoke to mentioned this mobility,

FIGURE 2: CHICAGO RESIDENTS WHO AGREE "STORIES ABOUT MY NEIGHBORHOOD DO A GOOD JOB OF SHOWING WHAT IS GOING ON"



suggesting that freedom is something they experience across neighborhoods. Moreover, when white young adults discussed feeling free, they often stressed the various opportunities provided by the city. Some of these opportunities reflect broader trends in how Chicagoans perceive North Side neighborhoods: A

study that drew from a representative sample of Chicago residents found that the North Side and downtown were often described as places that were safe, beautiful, trendy, and quiet. These characteristics were mentioned by white young adults as they explained why these areas of the city provide them with a sense of freedom. When asked how the city contributes to his sense of freedom, Jared, 22, shared the following: *"[In] every way I can think of. Tons of jobs. Tons of park space. Tons of music in the park. The street fest. The museums. The libraries. Lakefront path. Beaches. The 606 Trail here. Just the people here, I think, are really awesome."* In many ways, responses such as these are not surprising. The fact that white young adults like Jared express a high degree of freedom in the city is indicative of the educational and economic opportunities discussed in earlier sections of this report, as well as the high concentrations of funding allocated to North Side neighborhoods. While other North Siders framed these discussions with an acknowledgement of their privileged position, they frequently discussed South and West Side neighborhoods as lacking, mirroring the ways that media often portray these neighborhoods.

For example, when asked about who has less freedom in the city, Connor, a 26-year-old white man, presented an account of black and brown communities that emphasized deficits and downplayed agency. *"I think there's a lot of people that are locked into where they are and there's this [youth organization] that I'm kind of tangentially involved with. I think it's the simplest and best idea I've heard. What it does is take kids from neighborhoods in Chicago—some of these kids have never even been on an elevator. Never been on an elevator in their whole lives and they're in high school. They just take them on explorations throughout the city ... and just say 'hey, this is literally three*

miles away from where you live and this is an opportunity you personally could have.'" While Connor's involvement in this organization may be well-intentioned, his description of its mission promotes a deficit-minded account of South and West Side neighborhoods that erases the agency of young people of color. Our conversations with young African Americans in Englewood challenge the notion that young people are "locked into where they are" and require an organization to "show them the opportunities they could have." This is not to say that structural barriers do not shape access to resources and opportunities in the city. Rather, the young African

"I'd say [I feel most free] when I stay [in Englewood]. I feel free, honestly, everywhere I go, I pretty much feel free to be myself. … Everywhere I go, I'm me."

Americans and Latinxs we spoke with demonstrated what we already know: self-efficacy and agency exist and have always existed in marginalized communities.

Among young African Americans, freedom was frequently described as an attitude or an outlook that one chooses to adopt in order to navigate the city. While our conversations certainly touched on constraints and inequalities frequently

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referenced in media accounts of Chicago's South Side, young African Americans also claimed that freedom was something they possessed across contexts. Their words provide an important narrative shift, challenging both media portrayals of the city and discussions of inequality among white North Siders. Jerimiah, an African American, age 24, shared the following: *"**I'd say [I feel most free] when I stay [in Englewood]. I feel free, honestly, everywhere I go, I pretty much feel free to be myself. … Everywhere I go, I'm me.** If I'm at Chicago State, people are going to know, 'oh, you from the hood.' If I go [to Englewood], people are going to know, 'oh, you a college kid.' I'm me, wherever I go. If I'm up north, I'm me. I think I'm a good person. I think I'm a good representation of somebody that can come from [Englewood], and I try not to*

hide that anywhere." Rather than being "locked in," young African Americans we interviewed frequently embodied a sense of self-efficacy that spanned beyond neighborhood boundaries. These conversations also complicate narratives that exclusively emphasize absence in South Side communities.

According to one study, 54% of South Side residents believe that media portrayals of their neighborhoods are too negative.[205] Specifically, many South Siders feel the media typically emphasizes violence and crime over other topics. Young people like Kennedy, a 20-year-old African American woman in Englewood, challenged this narrative by locating her own neighborhood as a place of freedom. *"I'm [most free] by myself in my backyard … because don't nothing really be back there but my hometown and my tree that I grew up with. It's like a little tree in my backyard that I had a lot of childhood memories from, and they make me feel like I'm safe and you could be whoever you want to be back there."* While neighborhoods such as Englewood are typically cast in a negative light, young African Americans in our study challenged this notion in their reflections on freedom and place.

Young people in Pilsen echoed many of these sentiments. Latinx young adults also challenged media portrayals of their neighborhoods. Again, as earlier sections of this report discuss, young adults in Pilsen are well aware of the unequal distribution of resources across geographical contexts and frequently described the ways in which white youth in the city are afforded more opportunities. However, they also approached questions of freedom in terms of self-definition. Like Jerimiah in Englewood, Edgar, a 23-year-old Latino, described a sense of internal freedom that he experienced all the time. *"[I feel free] all the time. I feel like, for me, it's like I know who I am and I'm not going to not be myself. I feel like all the time whenever I am around my neighborhood, let it be Pilsen, let it be downtown, I feel like I'm … always going to be happy because I'm living life."* María, a 21-year-old Latina from Pilsen, shared a similar perspective. She suggested that her school pushed her to think critically about marginalization, which has subsequently allowed her to feel empowered by her identity. *"**I feel like I've become more comfortable now that I've gotten older and it's at a point where [I feel free] anywhere.** I know women in general, but especially black or brown women, feel like they have to make*

"I feel like I've become more comfortable now that I've gotten older and it's at a point where [I feel free] anywhere."

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themselves small and be hypervigilant and hyperaware of how loud they're talking or how much space they're taking up or attracting attention. … I just feel like, knowing that, it's made me really confident in who I am and really happy with myself and how I am as a woman. … I love being a Latina and a woman especially. I'm just proud of that."

Like South Siders, nearly 70% of West Side residents feel that media portrayals of their neighborhoods are too negative. When asked how the media represents their neighborhoods, West Side residents named issues such as poverty, gangs, drugs, and violence. However, when asked about freedom, many Latinxs in our study specifically discussed locations in Pilsen as free spaces. Constanza, a 23-year-old Latina, shared a side of Pilsen often overlooked in media portrayals of Chicago's West Side. *"There is this [spot], a garden on Carpenter. It's a couple blocks down from where I live. It's always been there ever since I moved here, since I was like five. It is just this little place; it's a tiny little garden called El jardín de las mariposas, which is garden of the butterflies. There's usually never anybody there. I worked on the painting and the murals when I was a little kid. I feel like that specific place is where I can feel myself because I can just grab a book, sit there all day, and nobody will be bothering me."* Young Latinx adults living in Pilsen discussed numerous conceptions of freedom, but consistently stressed a state of self-acceptance and appreciation—whether that appreciation was for one's self, one's identity, or neighborhood art.

Other young adults associated freedom with economic prosperity. This was particularly pronounced in Chinatown-Bridgeport, where young Asian Americans frequently discussed freedom alongside financial aspirations and vocational achievements. Jessica, age 18, explicitly associated the allocation of resources to degrees of freedom. *"Money is the pathway to freedom. It's just like the sea or the ocean. It's kind of like a pirate on the sea. You can do whatever you want, whenever you want. You're free from the law. It's like complete freedom, [and] with money it's the same thing. If you have a lot of money you can do whatever you want. … Basically, the more money you have, the more freedom you have."* Brendan, a

26-year-old Asian American resident of Chinatown, also linked freedom to financial independence. When asked when he felt most free, he explained it was *"when I was in college … I was able to do everything for myself independently. Got my bills paid, tuition was taken care of, my classes [were] fine, extracurriculars [were] fine. I was still able to work full-time and then I was able to contribute to my family, like help my mom pay bills, help my sister pay tuition … I was happy doing all of that. … As busy as it was, it didn't feel like an obligation, it didn't feel stressful. They [were] all really good experiences."* While young adults living on the city's South and West Sides experience numerous challenges, these conversations also highlight moments of self-efficacy, ambition, and freedom that enhance our understanding of Chicago's neighborhoods.

Safety, Joy, and Staying in Chicago

Safety

As leaders and policymakers grapple with Chicago's persistent population loss, it is important to explore factors associated with one's attachment to the city and to one's neighborhood.[206] In our conversations, we found that young adults hold mixed feelings regarding whether to stay in Chicago. Young African American adults in Englewood, for example, were the most likely to say that they eventually wanted to move away. As other sections of this report have emphasized, factors such as violence, aggressive policing, and unequal access to educational and economic resources all contribute to how young people assess what is possible in their neighborhoods. Given the multifaceted nature of disinvestment experienced by Englewood residents specifically, it is not particularly surprising that a plurality of young African Americans we spoke to reported wanting to leave the city. In fact, our conversations reveal that those intent on remaining in Chicago for a long period of time are those who generally feel safe in their neighborhoods.

Young adults are not alone in sharing these concerns. A recent study finds that 57% of Chicago residents identify crime and law enforcement as the most important issues facing the city's neighborhoods.[207] While these are policy domains traditionally associated with public safety, young adults

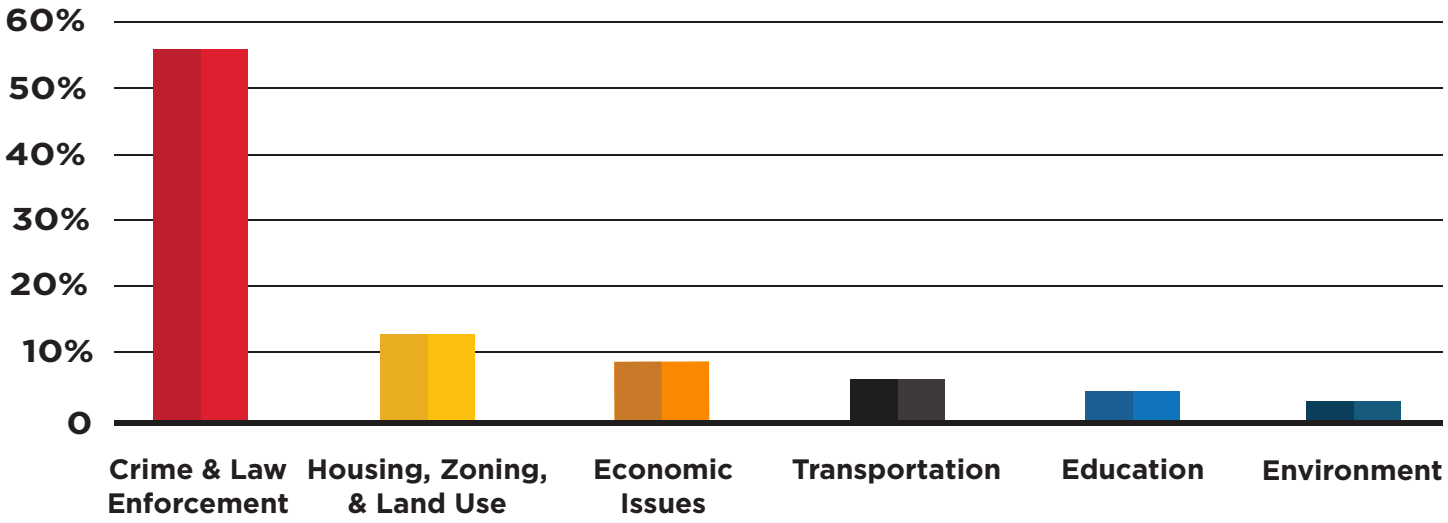
TABLE 1: CHICAGO OUTLOOK AMONG STUDY PARTICIPANTS

	I want to Move Away Eventually	For a Long Time/My Entire Life	I Don't Know
Albany Park	35%	32.5%	32.5%
Chinatown-Bridgeport	25%	47.5%	22.5%
Englewood	42.5%	20%	32.5%
North Side	32.5%	35%	25%
Pilsen	35%	30%	22.5%

in our study discussed this topic in broader terms. Young people of color in particular offered a conception of safety that included a broader array of factors that often go overlooked in public discourse on this topic.

Young adults in Chinatown-Bridgeport, Englewood, and Pilsen often framed discussions of safety in terms of community connections and familial relationships. Madison, a 19-year-old Chinese American woman who wants to live in Chicago for the rest of her life, reflected upon how frequent interactions with her neighbors contributed to her sense of safety in Chinatown. *"Since I grew up most of my life in Chinatown, it's really nice to see how ... community-based everyone was. The way I grew up, I would come outside as a little kid, then everyone would have their grandkids outside, and my grandparents would be talking to their grandparents, sitting outside, chatting. Then, I would grow up with the neighborhood kids, and everyone would be riding around on their bicycles. It felt really, really safe; you knew your neighbors, you grew up knowing your neighbors, especially the adults and the grandparents who took care of their grandchildren. They would grow up seeing you grow up, and seeing how everyone changes, and how everyone takes care of each other. That's my favorite part."* Faith, a 29-year-old African American woman, echoed this sentiment. *"You want me to be honest? It is the hood. ... It's home for me. I love Englewood. As crazy as it sounds with the violence, the lack of education, I know what it's going to be and I'm holding onto that. ... A lot of people are moving, a lot of people are like, 'girl, you're crazy.' But no. I know everybody. I don't have problems. What you see on TV, what*

FIGURE 3: MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOODS



people see on TV that says 'Englewood, you're doing this or you're doing that; you can't walk down the street, you can't do that.' I don't feel that every day."

Similarly, young Latinxs who intend to stay in Chicago often attributed neighborhood safety to familial relationships. Paola, a 27-year-old Mexican American, intends to stay in Chicago for her entire life to remain close to her family: *"**All my family is here. I know, if I ever need something, everyone is just a block or two away. It just feels like home.** I always say, even if I'm not technically at home, if I'm in Pilsen I feel safe. It has changed a little bit because I don't know everyone in my neighborhood anymore, but I know enough people here that, if I was ever in trouble, I would be okay."* Contrary to white North Siders, African American, Latinx, and Asian American young adults we interviewed provided an important reminder that safety and security encompass a variety of factors, including familial relationships and community connections. The security these individuals feel within their own neighborhoods is also indicative of their long-term intentions to stay in Chicago.

Joy

When we asked young Chicagoans to describe what brings them joy, many of the participants mentioned pride in their neighborhoods. Feelings of joy and neighborhood pride are also strongly associated with a desire to remain in the city. Xiaoming, a 26-year-old Chinese American, intends to live in Chicago for his entire life and takes pride in sharing his neighborhood with his classmates. *"When*

"All my family is here. I know, if I ever need something, everyone is just a block or two away. It just feels like home."

I get to Bridgeport, I'm like, 'I'm home.' When [my medical school classmates] first came to Chicago, I was the one person from the city, so the first restaurant I took them to was Brick and Benny's, which is right down here in Bridgeport, close to Chinatown. And I introduced them to Jackalope and Bridgeport Coffee Shop; we go to Maria's all the time. I bring people to Bridgeport because I love it." Rafael, a 23-year-old Latino resident of Pilsen, expressed a similar sense of pride in his neighborhood. When asked where he feels happiest in the city, he responded with *"right here in Pilsen. I like seeing people walk around and smelling the bakery, the fresh bread, and seeing people dressed up to go to work and seeing parents drop off their kids and talk to other parents. I feel like there's a strong sense of community when I wake up and I go to work and when I come back from work."* Rebecca, a 24-year-old African American Englewood resident, described feeling happiest on her own block, and emphasized the close relationships she has forged with her neighbors. *"I actually feel happiest on my block … because I've got relationships with my neighbors, being block club president and different things like that. …* ***I feel pretty happy when I get to just be out and my neighbors say hello to me, and it makes me feel good.****"*

"I feel pretty happy when I get to just be out and my neighbors say hello to me, and it makes me feel good."

The joy and pride that individuals like Xiaoming, Rafael, and Rebecca ascribe to their communities not only reflects their intent to stay in Chicago for a long period of time, but also highlights the

Photo by Tonika Johnson

role neighborhood, friendship, and family connections play in bringing joy to those committed to Chicago.

A New Vision for Chicago

Our conversations with young adults allow for a more complete picture of Chicago. The city undoubtedly faces a number of challenges that disproportionately affect communities of color on the South and West Sides of the city. Yet the young adults included in this study serve as an important reminder that Chicago is more than a city of deficits; young Chicagoans continue to exercise agency, experience joy, and take pride in their communities even in the face of a number of inequalities. Alternative narratives such as these are important to take into consideration in order to gain a multidimensional view of the city and its neighborhoods. These interviews also lend important insights to the city's policymakers.

As city leaders work to address population loss and to foster long-term neighborhood connections, it would be wise to give young adults a role in the policymaking process. While young people of color often experience the city's most pressing challenges firsthand, they are also quick to identify its potential. When asked about his hopes for the future of Chicago, Anthony, a 27-year-old resident of Englewood envisioned *"a thriving, blossoming big city in which everyone, no matter or regardless*

of their socioeconomic background, neighborhood, or religion, can come [to] attain opportunities to get on a path to success. A city that's embracive of all people, inclusive of all people. A city in which you can start from the bottom and honestly make it to the middle or to the top. ... A city [where] there is a place for everybody at the table, a place where violence is eradicated, and crime is stabilized. [A city where] the schools are properly funded, and [where] corporations and elites pay their fair share of taxes."
We offer this report as one small piece of the struggle to make Anthony's vision a reality. Only through centering the voices, political work, and lived experiences of young people in Chicago, and especially young people of color, can we hope to make Chicago's future an equal, just, and joyful one.

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Please note that the decennial census and ACS are different. While the census is an official count of the population, the ACS measures different characteristics of the population and is therefore not an official count of the population. We use these measures here to provide the most up-to-date estimate of population change.

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[T] Source: http://projects.chicagoreporter.com/settlements/ The Chicago Reporter compiled police misconduct lawsuits dating from January 2011 to September 2016 from list of Judgment and Settlement Payment Requests published online by the City of Chicago's Law Department.

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[V] "This data is based on media reports from the Chicago Tribune and was collected as part of an ongoing research project by Dr. Traci Burch at the Northwestern University."

[W] Source: Analysis of 2010-11 American Community Survey data by Rob Paral and Associates