

# The Racial and Economic Foundations of Municipal Redistricting

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## ABSTRACT

How do local governments resist internal pressure for social change? This study explores this question by examining the role of redistricting. Using digitized ward maps from Chicago, Milwaukee, and St Louis from the 1800s to the present, this study applied mixed methods to systematically explore and understand the movement of districts over time. We discovered that local governments used redistricting for racially and economically motivated social control. Specifically, findings illuminated four practices aimed at regulating or resisting elected officials advocating for racial justice or equity: 1) suppressive redistricting, 2) disciplinary redistricting, 3) remunerative redistricting, and 4) transactional redistricting. These findings advance theories of racialized space and the racialized state by uncovering additional ways that governments regulate or suppress movements for racial equity or justice from within.

**KEYWORDS:** race; space; politics; law; redistricting.

Social science has long shown that governments produce and maintain racial and economic inequalities (Bailey, Fialho, and Loveman 2018; DuBois 1945; Omi and Winant 2015; Walker 2016). At the local level, governments have engaged in efforts such as felon disenfranchisement (Behrens, Uggen, and Manza 2003), increased policing (Carmichael and Kent 2014; Muhammad 2019), and exorbitant fines and fees (Harris 2016) to exclude or exploit communities of color. Few, however, have examined how local governments regulate challenges to the racial and economic order from within. City councils, for example, are legislative bodies composed of numerous elected members that create laws, budgets, and policy agendas—all shaping communities. While local governments can be racially punitive, they are also capable of pioneering innovative, progressive, or redistributive policies, such as welcoming ordinances for immigrants (Huang and Liu 2016), reparations (Taylor 2016), and participatory budgeting (Fung 2004; Wright 2010). Given the various ways city councils can govern, this article asks: how do local governments resist internal pressure for social change?

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Legal research suggests that ward redistricting, or gerrymandering, may play a key role. *Gerrymandering* refers to a redistricting practice that aims to enhance or dilute the power of particular parties or elected officials (Stephanopoulos and McGhee 2015). While redistricting scholars have devoted most attention to competition between the two major political parties, the urban politics literature suggests that political competition in cities unfolds within parties under race and class-based lines (Pattillo 2010; Reed 2010; Stone 1989). Despite extensive litigation over redistricting at the municipal level, local government redistricting practices remain underexplored as a tool for preserving racial and economic political orders.

This study applied an inductive mixed method research design to explore municipal redistricting practices in three cities. Using digitized ward maps from Chicago, St. Louis, and Milwaukee from their founding in the 1800s to the present, we mapped the location of each ward's centroid for every year from 1830–2020 and measured the distance each ward traveled after each redrawing. Our analysis revealed numerous instances of what we call “ward teleportation,” or the drastic movement of a ward from one region of a city to another. Then, we conducted historical research to understand cases where wards were teleported great distances and cases where wards hardly traveled at all.

Some cases of ward teleportation stemmed from elected officials retiring or efforts to balance populations across districts; however, we also discovered numerous cases where city governments used teleportation to socially control elected officials espousing anti-racist or anti-capitalist policy positions. Specifically, we found four types of redistricting practices: 1) suppressive redistricting; 2) disciplinary redistricting; 3) remunerative redistricting; and 4) transactional redistricting. Suppressive redistricting referred to drawing districts to pre-emptively disempower powerful Black sub-organizations perceived as threatening to party leaders. Disciplinary redistricting referred to drawing districts to punish deviant elected officials who resisted the mayor and the local party's policy agendas on anti-racist or anti-capitalist grounds. Remunerative redistricting referred to rewarding elected officials most loyal to mayors' policy agendas by keeping their districts virtually unchanged for consecutive decades. Transactional redistricting involved drawing districts to negotiate and motivate white suburbs into agreeing to annexation. To be clear, this typology does not represent the full extent of manipulative municipal redistricting practices, as it was not feasible for us to conduct archival research on all 1,183 ward movements. Instead, our typology should be interpreted as a useful starting point for scholarly efforts to identify the social structures influencing redistricting practices at local government levels.

These findings make several contributions. First, we advance racialized state theory (Bracey 2014; Omi and Winant 2015) by introducing redistricting as an instrument whereby local governments resist internal pressure for anti-racist or anti-capitalist social change. In doing so, we integrate Ray's (2019) theory of racialized organizations with racialized state theory (Omi and Winant 2015) by showing that redistricting is an instrument the racialized state uses to regulate itself and dominate movements for racial justice or equity (Bracey 2014). Second, our study contributes to the broader literature on the use of space to achieve racialized social control (Knowles 2003; Lipsitz 2011; Neely and Samura 2011). For decades, the urban literature on race and space has devoted significant attention to how elites manipulate or transform urban space to segregate (Duneier 2016; Massey and Denton 1993), police (Beckett and Herbert 2009; Gordon 2020), or displace low-income minority populations (Roy 2019). Redistricting serves as an additional instrument whereby local governments racialize space, particularly by eliminating challengers to the local political order. Finally, our study reconceptualizes the notion of a “racial gerrymander” from an issue of racial representation in local government to the regulation or management of Black and Latino spaces in cities.

## REDISTRICTING AND RACIALIZED STATE THEORY

Omi and Winant's (2015) racialized state theory has been foundational for research on the state's role in maintaining racial inequality. They define the state as “government institutions and the

personal, organizational, and political relationships they engender, as well as the social norms and ideologies that legitimate and constrain government action.” The state, therefore, is a set of organizations and an ideology. Bracey (2014) amended racialized state theory with a more critical lens, arguing that whites’ power to exclude people of color from participating in politics is one of many ways that the state maintains white supremacy.<sup>1</sup> Bracey’s theoretical intervention is crucial because it emphasizes that failed efforts to resist the racial state are due not only to social movements’ blunders, but also due to the state’s instruments to exclude. The question of how the state excludes has been studied extensively, as have illuminated suppressive or exclusionary state practices like the proliferation of punishment in schooling (Welch and Payne 2010), increased policing (Brayne 2020; Stuart 2016), racialized neoliberal social service provision (Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011), voter disenfranchisement (Breens, Uggan, and Manza 2003), and criminalized health care (Lara-Millan 2014).

Despite this extensive literature, it is less clear how the racial state regulates members of its own organizations. Minority elected officials have existed since the era of reconstruction (DuBois [1935]1998), and while some scholars have cast minority elected officials as primarily serving white interests (Bonilla-Silva and Ray 2009; Reed and Reed 1999), historians have described ways that governmental institutions have controlled elected officials of color. Holt (1979) documented that Congress initially refused to seat South Carolina’s first Black elected representatives in the Reconstruction Era and manipulated its delegate system to underrepresent Black communities. In an interview study of retired former Black Congressional representatives, Musgrove (2012) found that the initial post-civil rights generation of Black elected officials experienced extensive harassment from the media, law enforcement, and the leadership of their own parties.

Building upon these works, our study introduces redistricting as an instrument whereby the racialized state can socially control its members. Understanding how the state accomplishes this at the local government level requires synthesizing Ray’s (2019) theory of racialized organizations with racialized state theory. Specifically, we conceptualize city councils as racialized organizations that use redistricting to “enhance or diminish” the agency of elected officials. For Ray (2019), a racialized ideology guides organizational behavior, and in the context of municipal redistricting, the local politics of both race and class serve as the ideology guiding redistricting practices.

The urban studies literature provides ample evidence to support the role of race and capitalism in urban governance. Since the 1980s, city governments have been led by coalitions of political and economic elites pursuing neoliberal, economic growth-oriented policies (Logan and Molotch 1987; Stone 1993). To fulfill their economic agendas, studies show that local governments have punished or banished their low-income minority populations to make their cities appear more appealing for middle-upper class consumers (Beckett and Herbert 2009; Davis 2006; Gordon 2020; Mitchell 2003; Roy 2019). As a result, the size and scope of policing in cities grew exponentially through cities’ emphasis on economic growth and through racialized fears over growing Black communities (Hinton 2016).

Studying redistricting as an instrument of race- and class-based social control, however, requires an alternative epistemological and methodological approach to the study of space. Conventional redistricting research defines partisanship as political party membership; consequently, researchers have devoted great attention to population or voter asymmetries across districts that advantage one party over another in an election (Grofman and King 2007; Stephanopoulos and McGhee 2015).<sup>2</sup>

1 Although Bracey’s (2014) critical theory of the racialized state is meant to be a substitute rather than an addendum to Omi and Winant (2015), we find both theories to be helpful with integrating redistricting into theories of the racialized state.

2 Although redistricting research has focused heavily on demography since the advent of the one-person one vote Supreme Court decision in 1964, legal scholarship on redistricting lawsuits shows that demography has become less important in redrawing districts. Stephanopoulos (2012) documented how, over the course of the 70s and 80s, courts accepted moderate to extreme population deviations, allowing particular districts in a state or municipality to have as much as 60 percent more population than the average district. In each of these decisions, judges ruled that ensuring district-community congruence was more important than strict population reapportionment. As recently as 2014 in Chicago, when the League of Women Voters challenged the city’s

With these definitions, researchers have described gerrymandering practices with terms like “cracking,” “packing,” or “stacking,” all of which refer to redrawing districts to compress or disperse an elected official’s relationship with voting party members (Bernstein and Duchin 2017). Studying redistricting practices with a focus on local intra-party race and class politics, however, requires a different approach.

### ANALYTICAL APPROACH: RACE AND SPACE

Our epistemological and methodological approach to the study of redistricting is guided by critical race and critical urban studies’ conceptualizations of space. According to the race and space literature, space is contested, fluid, interactive, and relational (Neely and Samura 2011). Racialized space also produces advantages and disadvantages for different racial groups (Lipsitz 2011). These approaches differ from methodological approaches in conventional redistricting studies which assume that district-level metrics of individuals’ party affiliations are the most relevant spatial measure for partisanship. This assumption exhibits what Jessop, Brenner, and Jones (2008) describe as “place-centrism”—the treatment of districts and their populations as discrete, self-contained units. Place-centrism in redistricting research assumes that district-level metrics of individuals’ party affiliations are the most relevant measure for partisanship. In contrast, the race and space approach views “space as an active archive of the social processes and social relationships composing racial orders” (Knowles 2003:80). Accordingly, contestations over the production of space constitute a useful site to observe and study racial projects (Omi and Winant 2015).

Studies applying the race and space framework have uncovered a variety of racialized administrative boundary formation practices that reinforce racial inequalities. For example, scholars have shown how white communities have seceded or unincorporated themselves from city governments where racial minorities have achieved significant political representation (Hogen-Esch 2001). Others have documented practices such as municipal underbounding, a practice where white-led municipalities annex (or refuse to annex) low-income minority communities to exclude them from participating in elections or receiving public services (Lichter et al. 2007). Studying redistricting as the racialized construction of space, as Neely and Samura (2011) argue, renders mundane yet powerful instruments of racial exclusion and economic exploitation.

We approach the study of ward redistricting, therefore, as a site to explore the racialized political contestations over the production of municipal space. The cities in our study (Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Louis) are ideal cases because their ward boundaries were drawn and voted on by the elected members of their respective city councils. Historically, citizens, voters, or community members have had little say or input over the drawing of wards in these cities. This legislative redistricting process is overseen in Chicago by the City Council’s Committee on Committees and Rules, in Milwaukee by the Common Council’s Judiciary and Legislation Committee, and in St. Louis by the Board of Aldermen’s Legislation Committee. The councils are expected within a year of the decennial census to propose redrawn ward boundaries to appropriately represent the population (City of Chicago 1990; City of Milwaukee 2011; City of St. Louis 1914).<sup>3</sup> Chicago’s city council contains 50 wards, while St. Louis and Milwaukee have 28 and 14 respectively.

We approached our data with the simple goal of quantitatively exploring the movement of districts across space over time, then qualitatively unpacking the relationships, interactions, and histories that

2015 ward remap, the courts dismissed the lawsuit on the grounds that such population deviations are “part of the political process” and therefore “an inevitable result of redistricting” (*League of Women Voters v. City of Chicago* 2014). This judicial discretion in the interpretation of the Supreme Court’s “one person one vote” doctrine has created ample opportunity for gerrymandering.

3 There are some specifications to voting on redistricting: Chicago’s city council needs a minimum of 41 affirmative votes or else the map is voted by the public through a referendum (Dardick 2013). In Milwaukee, a two-thirds vote by city council is required to change the number of aldermanic districts (City of Milwaukee 2011). For all three cities, redistricting maps must be passed by city council vote, but there is no distinction of what dictates a majority vote for passing redistricting ordinances (City of Chicago 1990; City of Milwaukee 2011; City of Milwaukee City of St. Louis 1914).

produced the most extreme district movements. Applying this analytical approach resulted in our discovery of four types of redistricting practices that reinforced the city council's racial and economic order. First, in Chicago, the mayor and city council engaged in *suppressive redistricting* to disempower the perceived threat of a powerful Black elected official who (at the time) controlled a bloc of nearly 100,000 voters. This was an effort to pre-emptively disempower a potentially threatening figure within the party. Second, city councils engaged in *disciplinary redistricting*, which meant drawing districts to punish elected officials who espoused policy positions that deviated from the mayor's agenda. In Chicago and St. Louis, this meant punishing elected officials advocating for racial equity and tighter control over economic development. Third, *remunerative redistricting* drew districts to reward elected officials most loyal to the Mayor's policy agenda. In Chicago, this meant keeping the districts of the most loyal politicians virtually unchanged since 1923. Fourth, *transactional redistricting* involved drawing districts to negotiate and give an incentive to white suburbs so that they would agree to annexation. In Milwaukee, white suburbs feared the growing presence of Black elected officials in the city council, and the promise of providing suburbs with their own district served as a key bargaining chip in negotiations over annexation.

## METHODS

### *Mixed Method Research Design*

Our study applied an inductive approach. We did not approach our data with racialized state theory nor with social control in mind. Rather, we began by applying exploratory data analysis to novel historical data of ward redistricting in Chicago, St. Louis, and Milwaukee (Tukey 1977). Exploratory data analysis involves the use of summary statistics and data visualization to discover basic data patterns and identify questions to further explore.

Our exploratory analysis began with quantitative analysis of each cities' ward maps. We retrieved and scanned copies of ward maps from the University of Chicago's Regenstein Library, the Milwaukee Public Library, and the St. Louis Public Library. After photo scanning the maps, we used ArcMap to create georeferenced TIFF files, then used street shapefiles from local government data portals and Google Maps to create new polygon shapefiles for each ward map.

With shapefiles of each ward map, we began exploring the data by simply describing change over time in the location of each ward. We began by producing measures of the distance traveled by measuring what we call "ward journeys," which refers to the distance traveled by a ward's centroid from the previous redrawing to the next. To do so, we converted ward polygons to points (e.g. districts' centroid) and used ArcMap to measure distance between wards' centroids over time. This data exploration resulted in a total of 1,183 journeys across all three cities.

Summary statistics and data visualizations of ward-centroid journeys revealed two patterns (which we describe in the findings section) that became the basis of our qualitative archival analysis. Our descriptive statistical analysis generated two questions: 1) why did the longest ward journeys happen? And 2) how did a handful of wards remain at almost the exact same location?

Qualitatively investigating these questions involved the following sources: 1) newspaper archives (specifically, the *Chicago Tribune*, *St. Louis Post*, and *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*); 2) existing secondary histories of each city; 3) government reports on proposed redistricting or annexation ordinances; and 4) phone conversations or email correspondence with retired city council members in each city. After amassing hundreds of historical texts, our archival analysis focused on what Clemens (2007) calls *process tracing*, or deciphering the key ordering of events while paying attention to as many alternative explanations as possible. The qualitative historical findings we share in this paper were accounts of events confirmed by multiple sources. In addition, we spoke with and emailed retired city council members in each city as an additional historical fact-checking mechanism. These exchanges were not meant to be done as formal qualitative in-depth interviews, but rather as an additional means of corroborating our interpretations of historical materials.

Overall, our mixed method approach follows what Small (2011:72) calls “integrative crossover analyses,” a type of mixed method research design where “quantitative data are analyzed primarily through qualitative techniques.” Our objective was to apply multiple complementary analytical techniques to the same data to yield a more comprehensive picture of the redistricting practices in our large-scale and historical datasets. We applied the mixed method approach because it proved to be more generative than any single methodology.

### *Case Study Selection*

We selected Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Louis for several reasons. First, they have each had ward-based governance structures since their founding, which enabled comparison between each city for the maximum amount of time possible. Most importantly, each city requires city council members to reside in the ward they represent for at least one year prior to their election. Therefore, in addition to residing in their wards, city council members in each city play a critical role in approving economic development projects, as well as allocating resources for social service and infrastructure repair. Second, these cities are clustered in the Midwest region of the United States, which meant they had similar political-economic historical trajectories. Each city was founded at a time of westward expansion, and each competed to become the gateway city to the west. Third, and more pragmatically, these cities were the only group of somewhat similar cities to have all ward maps catalogued and archived in their local public libraries.

These cities also share similar political landscapes. Chicago and St. Louis have long histories of Democratic Party dominance. Republican Party influence in St. Louis peaked in 1945 when they held 13 out of 14 council seats. By 1949, however, democrats won a slim city council majority and the mayor’s office. Since 1951, Democrats have maintained a strong majority of the city council, as well as in the Mayor’s office (Stein 2002). In Chicago, Democrats have held the mayor’s office since its founding in 1837. Republican mayors held office for periods between 1860 and 1930, but the election of Mayor Richard J. Daley in 1955 and his 21-year tenure fortified Democratic dominance over city politics through today. Milwaukee is the only city with a unique party history, specifically through its period of socialist party leadership that peaked with Mayor Emil Seidal from 1910–1930. Although a socialist mayor held office in Milwaukee for another twenty years after Seidal, the Democratic party has maintained the mayor’s office and a city council majority since the 1950s (Smith 2003:82).

As our case studies are not representative of cities more generally, our findings should not be understood as generalizable to all cities. Approximately one-third of city governments in the United States have exclusively ward-based representation; the other two-thirds have at-large representation or a combination of the two (National League of Cities 2016). Instead, our study should be understood as a theory building effort based on descriptive analysis where we inductively analyzed redistricting practices to arrive at a revised theoretical framework that may be useful in some local contexts—but certainly not all.

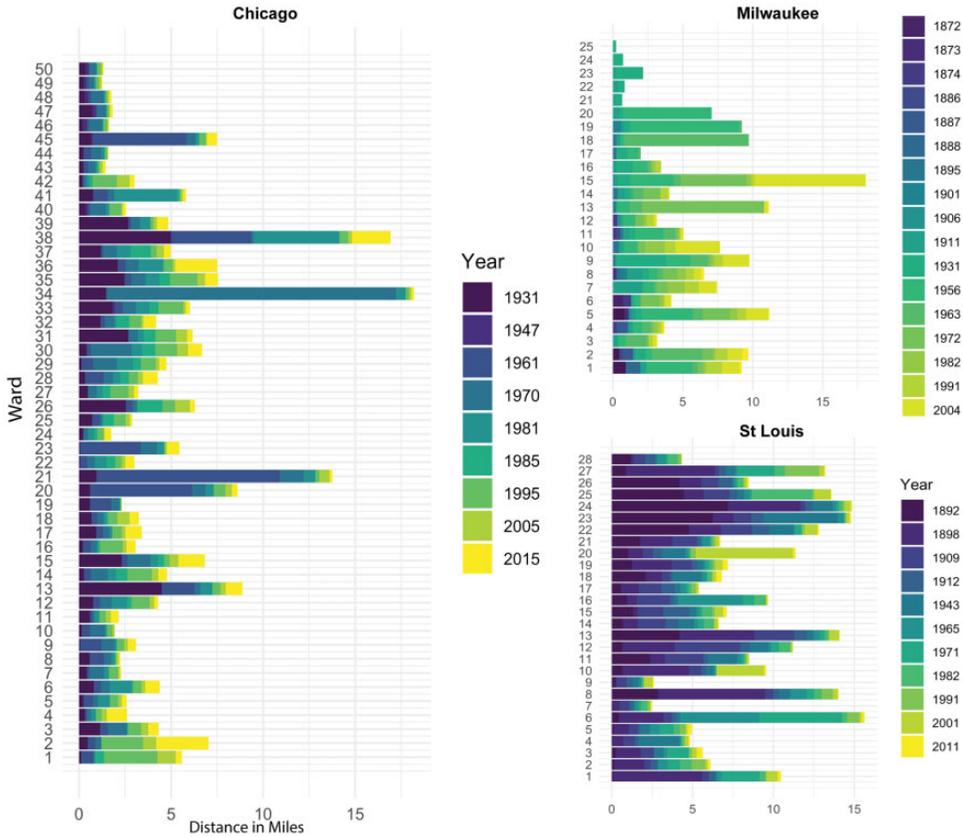
### *Ward Journeys*

Table 1 displays descriptive statistics for each ward-centroid journey in Chicago, St. Louis, and Milwaukee. Overall, the mean distance traveled is low (half a mile in Chicago and Milwaukee, a little over three-quarters of a mile in St. Louis), and the median even lower. This suggests that, on average, most districts travel little distance during remaps. Two notable patterns, however, emerged from the data: 1) some districts traveled great distances, and 2) some districts hardly traveled at all.

We visualize these patterns with stacked bar graphs of ward-centroid journeys at each redrawing from 1923 to the present in Chicago, 1876 to the present in St. Louis, and 1846 to the present in Milwaukee (see Figure 1). We started in 1923 for Chicago and 1876 for St. Louis because these were the years they standardized their total number of districts, which remain in place to this day. Milwaukee has never standardized its total number of districts. Thus, our analysis of Milwaukee

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics of Ward-Centroid Journeys in Miles

City	Total Journeys	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Chicago	450	0.54	0.29	1.11	0	15.68
Milwaukee	513	0.49	0.15	1.16	0	8.93
St Louis	1271	0.61	0.36	1.17	0	15.68



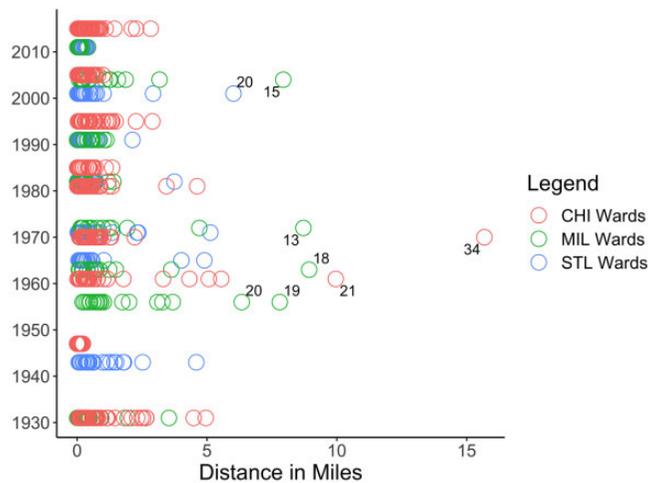
**Figure 1.** Stacked Bar Graphs of Ward Centroid Journeys in Chicago, St Louis, and Milwaukee

begins in 1846, the year of the city’s founding. Figure 1 shows that most of St. Louis’ long-distance ward journeys occurred before 1943, whereas Chicago and Milwaukee’s longest ward journeys occurred after 1961. The graphs also revealed districts in Chicago and Milwaukee that hardly traveled for almost 100 years.

To visualize discrete ward journeys, we created a scatterplot of all individual ward journeys from 1850–2020 (Figure 2). The numeric text next to the values in Figure 2 indicate the ward of that journey (we only labeled journeys greater than five miles). Figure 2 helped identify ward journeys at specific time points to further investigate with archival data.

*Null Cases*

To clarify that we did not select on the dependent variable, we briefly describe ward journeys where we found no evidence of race or class motivated redistricting practices. In Milwaukee, many of the short and long outlier ward journeys reflected more pragmatic than political motivations. Although wards 21–25 in Milwaukee traveled minimal distance, it was because these wards existed for only a



**Figure 2.** Scatterplot of Ward-Centroid Journeys 1850–2020

few decades as the number of city council seats contracted from 1910–1970 due to population loss. During Milwaukee’s city council downsizing, we suspected these were instances of racialized gerrymandering but, instead, found these were cases of elected officials retiring, which Milwaukee used to reduce the city council size with minimal conflict. In St. Louis, the Missouri state constitution of 1876 locked its city limits, which meant its land mass has remained the same ever since (65.99 square miles). Thus, fewer St. Louis wards could be teleported like Milwaukee or Chicago’s, whose land masses are 96.81 square miles and 234 square miles respectively. Finally, we learned that the teleportation of Milwaukee’s 15<sup>th</sup> ward stemmed from Black city council member Willie Hines’ decision to take a job in the local housing authority. These null cases illuminated that not all short and long wards journeys were instances of race or class politics. Moreover, this indicates that not all cases of ward teleportation or stasis should be interpreted as manipulative.

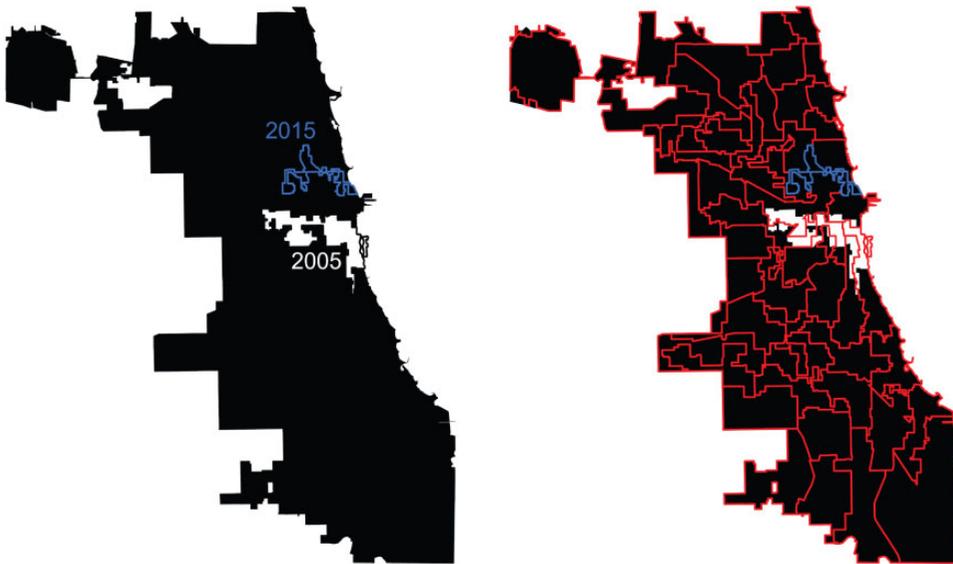
## RESULTS

### *Disciplinary Redistricting*

In 2015, Bob Fioretti’s 2<sup>nd</sup> ward in Chicago was teleported from the near-south side to the north side, which severed his ties with his predominantly Black constituency. Fioretti, who is white, was elected to the city council in 2007 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> ward, a historically Black-majority ward where rapid economic development led to gentrification and Black outmigration. Fioretti promised to support the city’s labor unions and prevent further displacement of Black residents in his ward (Ciokajlo 2007). When Mayor Rahm Emanuel was elected in 2011, Fioretti was the lone and most vocal critic of the mayor’s closures of mental health clinics and 54 public schools, mostly in Black neighborhoods, where activists condemned the closures as blatantly racist (Ewing 2018). Fioretti also supported “anti-business” ordinances interests such as a higher minimum wage and a commuter tax imposed on suburbanites working in Chicago (Gardner 2015). Throughout his tenure in city council, Fioretti voted to support the Mayor’s proposed ordinances only 52 percent of the time, which was the second lowest of all city council members.

The teleportation of Fioretti’s ward (see Figure 3) was in retaliation for his outspoken criticism of what activists described as the city’s racist and pro-business policies. Two key votes leading up to the 2015 ward remap contributed to this outcome: Fioretti opposed 1) the city hosting the NATO/G8 summits and 2) efforts to restrict protests in advance of the summits (Zmuda and Simpson 2013).

## Ward 2



**Figure 3.** Map of Chicago’s 2nd Ward Teleportation in 2015

When the city council proposed a new ward map that teleported Fioretti’s ward, he publicly challenged the map and the lack of transparency in its creation (Brown 2012). However, the map passed with the minimum votes needed to avoid a referendum: 41–8. Alderman Richard Mell (from the 33<sup>rd</sup> ward), a close ally of Mayor Emanuel who led the remap, told the press that Fioretti was simply “the odd man out” (Chase 2014). In 2015, Fioretti declined to run for reelection in his teleported ward and, instead, ran for mayor and lost (Simpson et al. 2016).

The area formerly governed by Fioretti was split into seven wards in 2015, with the following breakdown: 23.5 percent in the 27<sup>th</sup> ward, 24 percent in the 4<sup>th</sup> ward, 17.3 percent in the 25<sup>th</sup> ward, 16.3 percent in the 28<sup>th</sup> ward, 10.5 percent in the 3<sup>rd</sup> ward, 5.3 percent in the 42<sup>nd</sup> ward, 3 percent in the 11<sup>th</sup> ward. Each of these wards (except the 11<sup>th</sup> ward) was won in 2015 by incumbent alderman who were all allies of Mayor Emanuel. This meant that the 2<sup>nd</sup> ward’s teleportation did not come at the expense of incumbent aldermen or mayoral allies.

In addition, looking at divided roll-call votes from the 2007–2011 and 2011–2015 aldermanic terms, the 2<sup>nd</sup> ward’s teleportation transformed the urban space it left behind from a base of mayoral resistance to a space governed by seven Aldermen who voted with the Mayor over 88 percent of the time. This meant that 95 percent of the space in the former 2<sup>nd</sup> ward was now governed by the mayor’s allies. The teleportation both successfully removed the threat of Fioretti and diluted the power of an activist community by “cracking” it into wards favoring the mayor’s policy agendas.

Sharon Tyus, Black Alderwoman of St. Louis’ 20th ward, similarly saw her ward teleported in retaliation for deviating from the city’s racial and economic order. Months after her election in 1991, Tyus disputed the city council president’s plan to create a special redistricting committee. In solidarity with other Black city council members, Tyus preferred to allow all city council members to submit their own maps. This marked the beginning of Tyus earning a reputation in local media for being an outspoken critic of the city council president and mayor.

In contrast to Fioretti, Tyus was a growth-oriented politician. This meant that the basis of her disputes with the mayor and city council president stemmed mostly from efforts to advocate for racial equity. Tyus advocated for her predominantly Black constituents to equally reap the economic benefits from the city’s growth-oriented policies. This position deviated from St. Louis’ mayors, who

prioritized wealth accumulation in the city's predominantly white and wealthy neighborhoods. For example, in the mid-1990s, a discount department store (Venture), supermarket, and a real estate firm submitted a plan to create a shopping center on an abandoned site in Tyus's ward. The plan included stores and a sit-down restaurant in an area where 75 percent of residents needed to travel 12 miles to buy goods other than groceries. When Venture pulled out of the development in spring of 1995, Tyus refused to accept a smaller development project and demanded that the city bring in a new store.

Tyus compared the city's refusal to spend funds to save the development with the city's willingness to take on \$720 million in debt to finance a football stadium for the St. Louis Rams NFL franchise. St. Louis Mayor Freeman Bosley and city council president Francis Slay criticized Tyus' outspokenness because of the "negative message" she was sending to developers (Tuft 1996). Again, the basis of Tyus' dispute with the city's leadership was rooted in race and class, as she spoke out against the city prioritizing economic development in the city's predominantly white downtown over its economically disadvantaged Black neighborhoods.

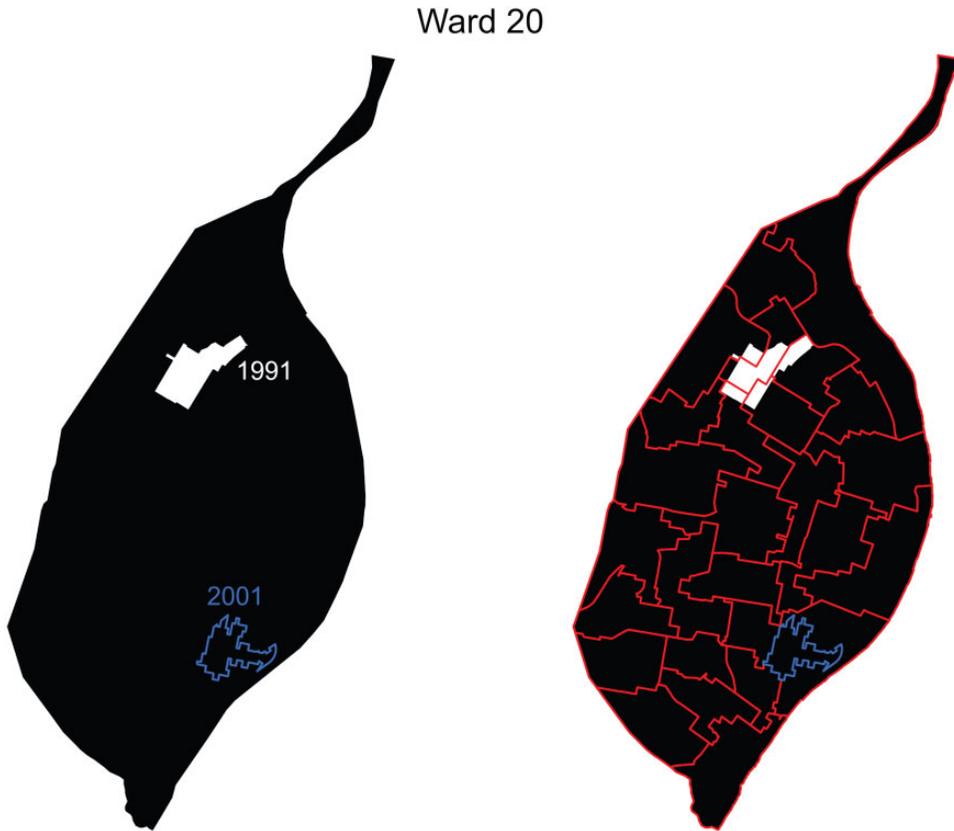
Tyus continued advocating for racial equity in June of 1997 when she pushed for the Intergovernmental Affairs committee (which she chaired) to review race and gender equity in promotions within the fire department. In the middle of her speech, City Council President Slay cut her microphone off, citing rules that delegated the meeting to a different committee (Parish 1997). Tyus responded by publicly calling City Council President Slay racist and sexist (Schlinkmann 1997).

When Council President Slay was elected mayor in 2001, the city council passed a redistricting plan that teleported Tyus's 20<sup>th</sup> ward to the city's far southeast (see Figure 4). The media described the redistricting plan as punishment for Tyus's outspoken ways and regular clashes with city leadership. Tyus accused Mayor Slay of pushing for a remap that would remove her from the city council (Schlinkmann 2001a). The Black caucus tried to block the remap because it decreased the total number of Black aldermen. Supporters of the 2001 remap claimed that a northside ward had to be teleported elsewhere on the map because the heaviest population losses from 1990 to 2000 came in majority-Black northside neighborhoods.

As a last resort, a group of Black city council members led by 1st ward Alderwoman Irene Smith filibustered to prevent the passing of the 2001 remap, but Acting City Council President James Shrewsbury ruled she would have to yield the floor if she left for the bathroom. In what became a highly publicized turn of events, Alderwoman Smith's friends held up a towel as she urinated into a trashcan (Schlinkmann 2001b). Public reaction to the filibuster was sympathetic to Tyus, but the remap still passed, and the city council made procedural changes to prevent future filibusters.

Tyus declined to run for reelection in her newly located ward and instead ran for the vacant seat in St. Louis' predominantly Black 1st ward in 2005, but lost. The 2011 remap, however, brought more of Tyus' old 20<sup>th</sup> ward into the 1<sup>st</sup> ward, and Tyus ultimately was elected as 1st ward Alderwoman in 2013 in the area once home to her old 20th ward (O'Neil 2013). Tyus still holds this position, but the city's Black population remains underrepresented in the St. Louis city council.

The area vacated by Tyus' teleported 20<sup>th</sup> ward was split into five wards in 2001: 43.7 percent in the 1<sup>st</sup> ward, 21.4 percent in the 21<sup>st</sup> ward, 13.9 percent in the 4<sup>th</sup> ward, 10.5 percent in the 18<sup>th</sup> ward, 11.4 percent in the 22<sup>nd</sup> ward. By far the largest section of the former 20<sup>th</sup> ward was included in the 1<sup>st</sup> ward, including Tyus's own home. This diluted community power, but differently from Fioretti in Chicago. Whereas Fioretti's 2<sup>nd</sup> ward was "cracked" into wards led by pro-mayor aldermen, the teleportation of the 20<sup>th</sup> ward effectively "packed" the Black population of St. Louis into fewer wards, as all five of the "new" wards taking over the 20<sup>th</sup> ward area were represented by Black aldermen. In addition, moving Tyus's home into the 1<sup>st</sup> ward guaranteed she would not run because Irene Smith, the incumbent 1<sup>st</sup> ward alderwoman, was a close ally of Tyus. In fact, it was Smith who had urinated in a trashcan during her filibuster to prevent the ward map approval. St. Louis' city leadership diluted Black political power by teleporting the 20<sup>th</sup> ward and packing more Black votes in fewer wards.



**Figure 4.** Map of St Louis' 20th Ward Teleportation in 2001

Fioretti and Tyus represented city council members who challenged their city's race and class based political order. Fioretti staunchly opposed unfettered economic development policies that were displacing Black residents in his ward. In contrast, Tyus never opposed economic development, but rather, vocally criticized racially unfair city investment and hiring practices. Both Fioretti and Tyus' records of vocal opposition to their mayor and council president agendas made them targets when it came time to redraw city ward boundaries.

These cases illustrate how attentive and sensitive the racialized state is to challenges from challengers. While never acknowledged by city leaders of both cities, the punishments of Fioretti and Tyus continue to serve as examples of the risks elected officials face when opposing local dominant policy agendas.

### *Suppressive Redistricting*

Four of Chicago's longest ward journeys were efforts by white Irish Mayor Richard J. Daley in the 1960s to suppress a powerful Black political bloc led by Black Congressman William Dawson. A former member of the Chicago city council, Dawson rose to prominence initially as a Republican in the 1930s by organizing Black South Side voters into a "Black submachine" ([Grimshaw 1995](#)). Like St. Louis' Sharon Tyus, Dawson was growth-oriented and advocated for racial equality in access to jobs and profit from economic enterprises. For example, as a city council member, Dawson advocated for Black "jitney cab drivers," a term for illegal taxis in the segregated Black Belt ([Cohen and Taylor 2001:94](#)). Police ticketed "jitney cab drivers" who were the only means of transport for Black Chicagoans traveling through the segregated city. Dawson also protected illegal Black gambling rings

and argued, “If anybody is to profit out of gambling in the Negro community, it should be the Negro. I want the money my people earn to stay in the Negro community” (Travis 1987:171–172).

When the Republican Party would not support his Congressional campaign, Dawson switched to the Democratic Party and won a seat in Congress as representative of Chicago’s 1st district (Drake and Cayton 1945). This made Dawson the strongest political leader in Chicago’s Black communities through his ability to appoint and distribute patronage jobs. Dawson also helped African-Americans get elected to the city council in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th wards, which covered all of Chicago’s South Side “Black Belt” (Grimshaw 1995). When Richard J. Daley ran for mayor in 1955, he did so with Dawson’s endorsement, which helped Daley secure 81,910 votes from Black wards (Cohen and Taylor 2001:141). To be clear, Dawson was no champion of civil rights or racial justice. In fact, Dawson supported Daley’s mayoral election campaign in 1955 out of hope that Daley would simply be more tolerant of Black economic enterprises (be they legal or illegal) than incumbent Mayor Martin Kennelly.

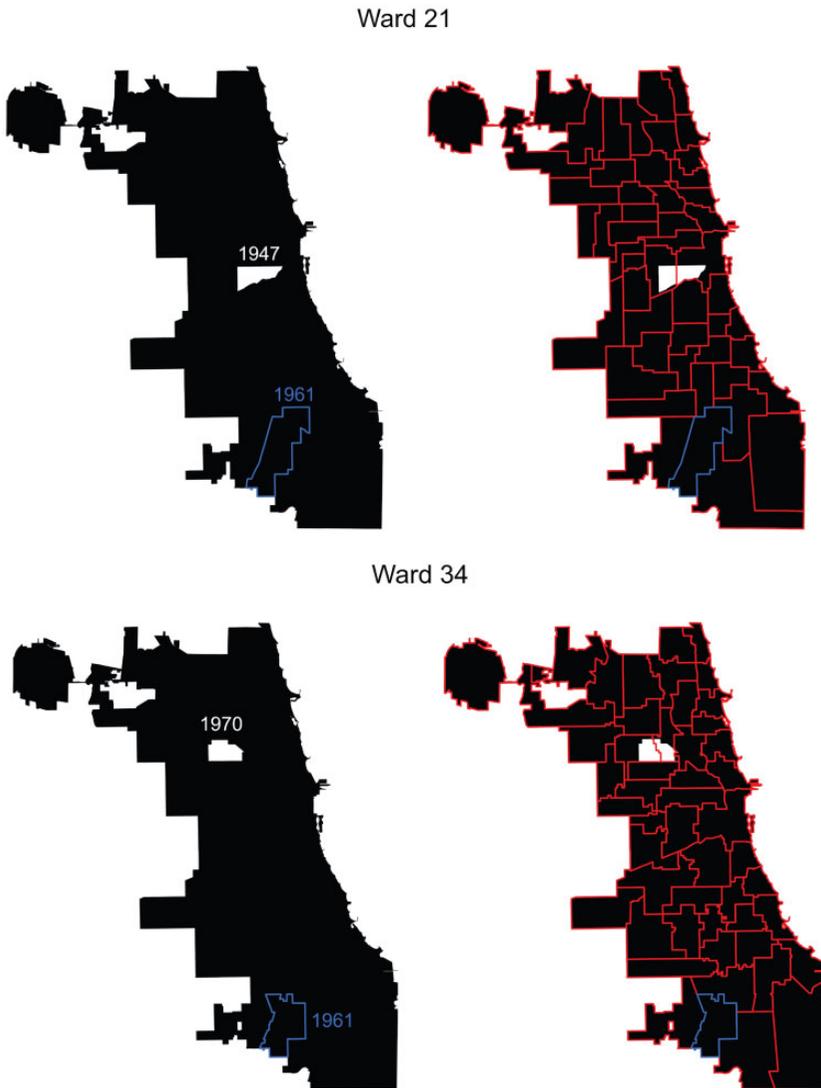
Three years into his first term, Mayor Daley began “the process of quietly eviscerating Dawson and the Black submachine” (Cohen and Taylor 2001:213). As Cohen and Taylor wrote (2001:213), “Daley’s objection to Dawson was not how he exercised power, but how much power he had.” Any individual with the capacity to control a large voting bloc like the Black submachine could make things difficult for the Democratic Party (Grimshaw 1995:86).

Mayor Daley eroded Dawson’s power by using redistricting to impede Dawson’s allies from winning office in Black communities. In Chicago, when a city council member retires or dies while in office, the mayor has power to appoint an interim city council member to finish the term, which provides the appointee an incumbency advantage. Thus, Mayor Daley prevented Dawson’s allies from ever holding office by 1) coercing white city council members into retirement by teleporting their wards from the white north side to Black south side; then 2) appointing Black candidates to finish their terms. These strategies enabled Mayor Daley to fill the city council with Black candidates in Black communities that would be loyal to his administration and not Dawson, as well as provide Daley’s Black allies incumbency advantages when running against Dawson’s allies.

The strategy began in 1958 when Mayor Daley appointed a Black candidate (Benjamin F. Lewis) to finish the term of 24th Ward Alderman Sidney Deutsch, a Jewish man representing a majority Black ward (Cohen and Taylor 2001). Then, in the 1961 remap, Mayor Daley teleported white Alderman Charles Bonk’s 21st ward to the south side, and, in the 1970 remap, teleported white Alderman Rex Sande’s 34th Ward (see Figure 5). The selection of these two Democratic city council members’ wards was strategic. Mayor Daley slated Bonk for a new position in Cook County government (“Three to Tackle Boundary Issue” 1961), while Sande was approaching retirement. Although Sande did not intend to retire, Mayor Daley’s teleportation of his ward forced him into an early retirement (Schreiber 1974).

Mayor Daley’s plan to appoint new Black city council members, however, did not initially unfold as planned. In the new Southside 21<sup>st</sup> ward, white Democratic committee man James J. Driscoll ran for alderman (which was majority Black but contained a small white minority population in the Roseland neighborhood). Driscoll, along with Black candidates for alderman supported by Daley and Dawson, split so many votes that Republican Samuel Yaksic ended up winning the 1963 election. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, prior to Yaksic’s victory, “there were reports of friction between Driscoll and Mayor Daley, who it was said believed that the Democrats should back a Negro because the ward population is made up of a majority of negroes” (Schreiber 1963:5).

Mayor Daley, however, would not let this defiance happen again in 1967, as he placed significant financial and social support for Black candidate Wilson Frost, who defeated Republican incumbent Yaksic and the Dawson-endorsed Black candidate in the 21<sup>st</sup> ward, which had become 70 percent Black (Elmer 1967). Four years later, when the 34<sup>th</sup> ward was teleported to create another new Black majority ward in the south side, Daley slated Frost to run in the new 34<sup>th</sup> ward, and Bennett Stewart (a new Black candidate) in the 21<sup>st</sup> ward. Both won their respective elections, thus establishing for



**Figure 5.** Chicago's Teleporting Districts in 1961 and 1970

Daley a new foothold for his political machine in Black communities once dominated by William Dawson. Although Dawson died in 1970 from pneumonia, he left behind a list of hand-chosen successors whom he wished to represent Chicago's Black communities. However, they all lost to Daley-supported Black candidates (["U.S. House Vet Dawson Dies at 84" 1970](#)). Wilson Frost, in particular, became Mayor Daley's city council president in 1973 and served as alderman of the 34<sup>th</sup> ward from 1971–1987 ([Elmer 1967](#); [Fremont 1988](#), [Schreiber 1967](#); [Schreiber 1973](#)). These ward teleportations facilitated the transformation of Chicago's Black politics from a Dawson-led submachine to a Daley-led submachine.

The effort to undermine Dawson's Black submachine preserved Chicago's racial and economic social order because Mayor Daley, like the white mayors before him, sought as much control as possible over the political economy of Black communities. It is worth emphasizing that Daley's fear of Dawson stemmed not from acts of resistance or defiance (like Tyus or Fioretti), but from the sheer fact that Dawson was a powerful figure in his own right. This suggests that the mere presence or

visibility of Black power can be perceived as threatening by the local racialized state and preemptively suppressed via redistricting.

These cases also reveal the interlocking roles of race and class in how the racialized state responds to threats. An exclusively racial interpretation of Dawson's suppression would miss the economic basis of Dawson's power. Dawson supported Black-led economic enterprises in the lawfully segregated and underserved Black communities he represented in pre-civil rights Chicago. Simultaneously, a purely economic interpretation of this conflict would miss the racial basis of Dawson's power relative to Mayor Daley, as Daley feared the nearly 100,000 Black votes Dawson could mobilize for any mayoral candidate of his choosing at any time. Thus, the Daley administration's suppression of Dawson through redistricting served as a pre-emptive strike against a growing Black political-economic power base.

### *Remunerative Redistricting*

In addition to wards that traveled long distances, our descriptive analysis of Chicago ward journeys in [Figure 1](#) illuminated another notable pattern: 15 districts whose centroid traveled less than 2.5 miles since 1923—specifically, wards 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 19, 40, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50. [Figure 6](#) visualizes each of these ward's journeys from 1923 to the present. The filled circle represents the ward's starting point, and each subsequent hollow circle represents the ward centroid's location after each remap since 1923.

Our archival analysis revealed that these wards belonged to three types of groups in the city council that had either remained loyal to the mayor's policy agenda since 1923, or had been white and wealthy enough to afford being politically independent. These groups (labeled by color in [Figure 6](#)) were: 1) white ethnic enclaves, 2) the Black Democratic submachine, and 3) "lakefront liberals." One explanation for stasis in these wards' locations over time could be that their populations have changed the least. To assess this, we produced box plots of population change by race for census tracts residing in remunerative and non-remunerative wards from 1970–2010 (see [Figure 7](#)). The box plots show no statistically significant difference in population change between the two groups. In fact, white, Black, and Hispanic population change was slightly greater for tracts in remunerative wards. This shows that ward location stasis occurred despite these wards experiencing white population decline and minority population increases.

Our analysis of vote tallies in elections for alderman from 1979–2019 indicate that officials in remunerative wards have, over time, won their elections in a more dominant fashion, especially after redistricting. [Figure 8](#) compares the margin of victory for alderpersons in remunerative wards compared to all other wards. The period between 1979 and 1995 showed few differences, which should be expected as this period saw the peak of independent politics in Chicago through the tenure of Harold Washington as mayor from 1983–1987. Ward elections in the 1980s were described as "council wars," which pitted independent city council members against the Democratic Party. In 1999, however, the margin of victory in remunerative wards spikes, then remains high through the early 2000s, and spikes again in 2015. We interpret this as evidence that the unchanged locations of remunerative wards, coupled with ward redistricting, contributed to more dominant electoral victories for alderpersons in remunerative wards. Our description below gives greater context for the reasons these wards remained in the same location throughout their history.

### *White Ethnic Enclaves*

These wards have historically been home to some of Chicago's white ethnic immigrant communities that, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, built the city's infamous Irish-Catholic political machine. The Irish political machine governed Chicago for two generations and nearly 50 years. In addition to their powerful place in city politics, the communities residing in these wards also have a troubling reputation for racism against African-Americans—a reputation that lingers to this day.

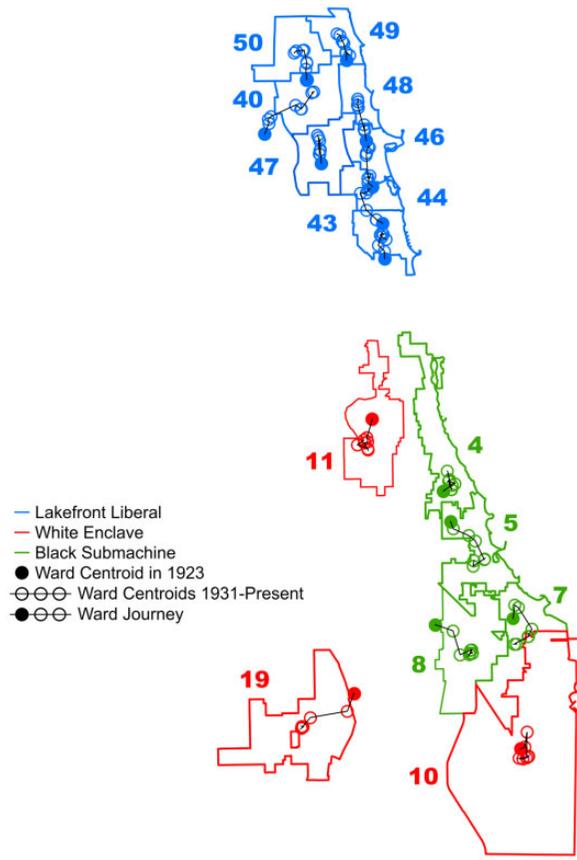


Figure 6. Map of Chicago Wards with Shortest Journeys (less than 2.5 miles)

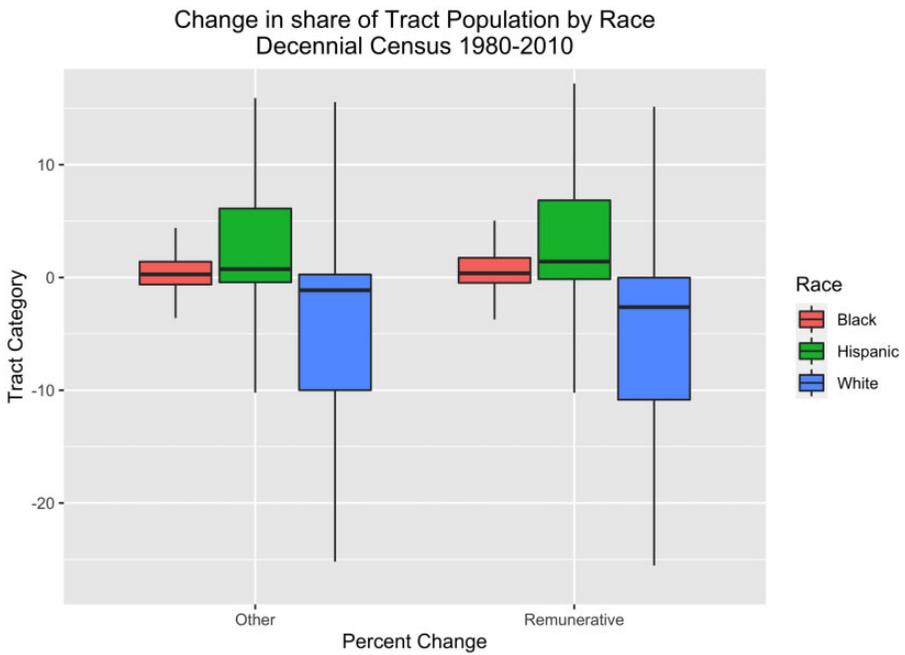
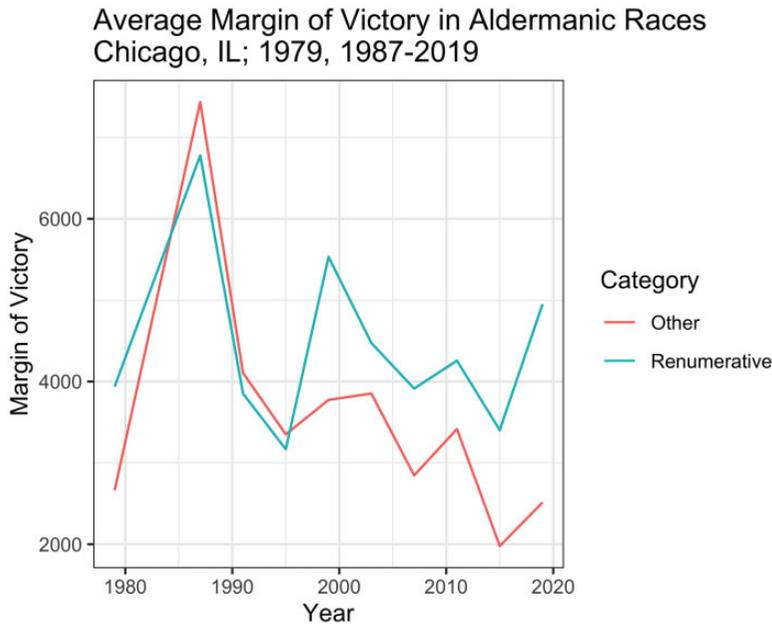


Figure 7. Box Plots of Tract Population Change by Race in Remunerative v. Non-Remunerative Wards



**Figure 8.** Time Series Graph of Margin of Victory in Remunerative and Non-Remunerative Wards

The 10th Ward has been the home of the Vrdolyak family, a powerful Chicago political machine family of lawyers. The South Deering and Hegewisch neighborhoods in the 10th Ward were originally majority-Polish neighborhoods, home to mostly white steel mill employees. Ed Vrdolyak was a personal injury lawyer who ran for the ward Democratic committeeman in 1968 to oppose the racial integration of schools. In the city council, he became a close ally of Mayor Richard J. Daley who appointed him chair of the Finance Committee, which held significant power over the city budget. When Chicago's first Black mayor, Harold Washington, ran for office and won in 1983, Vrdolyak led the white opposition through explicitly racist campaigning. "It's a racial thing, don't kid yourself," said Vrdolyak to a reporter, "we're fighting to keep the city the way it is" (Marable 1986). He also referred Puerto Rican city council member Luis Gutierrez as a "bomb-thrower," in reference to Puerto Rican nationalists who bombed government buildings (Marable 1986).

Vrdolyak was also corrupt. As a city council member simultaneously running his own law firm, he used his Zoning Committee chairmanship to receive clients and kickbacks (*United States v. Edward Vrdolyak* 2010). He was convicted for this in 2010 and served ten months in prison. His personal wealth remains massive and his house is "described as a Taj Mahal among the bungalows" (Fremon 1988:76). Vrdolyak's brother and former mentor took over his position in the city council after he retired in 1989, but the 10th Ward became majority Latinx by the late 2000s. In 2019, the ward finally elected its first Latina city council member, Sue Sadlowski Garza, without connections to the Vrdolyak family.

The 11th ward covers the historically Irish Catholic Bridgeport neighborhood, home of the Daley family. Historians allege that former Mayor Richard J. Daley built the Dan Ryan and Stevenson expressways to prevent Black migration into Bridgeport. As far back as the 1919 race riots, Bridgeport was known as a neighborhood that Black Chicagoans did not want to enter under any circumstances (Marx and Martin 1997). As recently as June 2020, when the city was engulfed in looting and mass protest against police brutality, an armed group of white vigilante residents patrolled Bridgeport to "protect the neighborhood" from protestors (Kim 2020). Electorally, Michael Bilandic (who eventually became mayor after Richard J. Daley's death) served the 11th ward. Next, Patrick Huels served as alderman from 1977 to 1997, and when he retired, Mayor Richard M. Daley

appointed James Balcer to finish the rest of Huels' term. Balcer served as 11th ward alderman from 1997–2015, then Patrick Daley Thompson (grandson of Richard J. Daley and nephew of Richard M. Daley) was elected in 2015 and remains its representative.

The 19th ward is another Irish Catholic community of mostly white city workers. Former alderman Jeremiah Joyce, Sr., was a longtime ally of Mayor Richard J. Daley. This ward was initially the largest Irish rival to Daley's 11th ward in the 1940s and 1950s. But after Richard J. Daley became mayor, the wards became strong allies. By 1983, 19th Ward Alderman Shehan engineered the second largest ward vote total for Richard M. Daley, who lost that year's mayoral election to Harold Washington. Since then, the ward has consistently been represented by white Irish men, many being former police officers. The current alderman is Matthew O'Shea, a former city worker who campaigned on a "law-and-order" platform. Like Bridgeport, the white neighborhoods tied to the 19th ward (Beverly and Mount Greenwood) are known for tension with Black communities. In 2019, racially charged flyers were left on cars all over the 19th ward reading "No White Guilt," and in 2016, after the release of the police killing of LaQuan McDonald, residents of Mount Greenwood staged a "Blue Lives Matter" protest. In the 2016 and 2020 presidential races, these three wards cast the most votes for Donald Trump in Chicago (Bauer 2020).

#### *Black Democratic Submachines*

This group of wards were home to some of Chicago's first Black communities to align themselves with the Mayor Richard J. Daley's political machine. Daley provided thousands of patronage jobs in city and county government to the leaders of these Black wards in exchange for their support or silence regarding the mayor's positions against civil rights, anti-war protests, and economic development (Cohen and Taylor 2001).

The 4th ward encompasses the Kenwood neighborhood, known for a long time as one of the more affluent and predominantly Black neighborhoods in the city. It is anchored by the University of Chicago to its south, and in the early 20th century, it was home to many rich businessmen (Fremon 1988). The ward is currently represented by Sophia King, who was endorsed by President Barack Obama and appointed by Mayor Rahm Emanuel in 2015. The ward previously was represented by now Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle and Judge Timothy Evans. City council members representing this ward have risen to more powerful positions in city and county government.

Ward 7 includes the South Chicago neighborhood and is adjacent to the old U.S. Steel South Works, one of the largest and most important steel factories in the Midwest. The ward was heavily foreign-born into the late 1950s, particularly Polish. It is now majority Black and Latinx, containing the oldest Mexican community in Chicago, dating to around 1910. The 7<sup>th</sup> ward has been represented by members of the powerful Jackson family (relatives of activist Reverend Jesse Jackson). Sandi Jackson, wife of Jesse Jackson, Jr., represented the ward from 2007–2013. She was preceded by Darcel Beavers, daughter of the preceding alderman William Beavers, whose family have been friends and allies of former mayor Richard J. Daley since the 1960s.

The 8th ward is made up of the Avalon Park and East Chatham communities. These areas were predominantly immigrant, middle-class areas, but saw significant Black in-migration in the 1960s and 1970s. The ward has been majority Black since the 1970s. Ward 8 has been represented by the powerful Stroger family. John Stroger held office and eventually became president of the Cook County board from 1994–2006 through his alliance with Mayor Richard M. Daley. Todd Stroger (John's son) also went from alderman of the 8<sup>th</sup> ward to Cook County president in 2006, taking over the position for his retiring father. Like the 5th ward, the Black city council members in the 8<sup>th</sup> ward have been promoted to more powerful positions in city and county government through their loyalty to both Mayor Daleys across multiple familial generations.

*Lakefront Liberals*

This final group, known by Chicago area journalists as the “lakefront liberals,” represent some of Chicago’s wealthiest yet politically independent communities. Historically, these groups have leaned to the far left of the political spectrum on issues concerning race, LGBT rights, and policing. These wards, by virtue of their privileged white and upper-class positions, have been granted more autonomy over their affairs and remained largely untouched by redistricting for nearly a century.

The 43<sup>rd</sup> ward is considered young, busy, and upscale. It includes parts of Lincoln Park, Old Town, and the Gold Coast. It was initially a German Democratic machine stronghold and then became independent during the countercultural movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the 1980s, it became a “yuppie area,” a neighborhood for young white urban professionals. It has been anchored by DePaul University since 1898 as well as the popular Second City comedy club, the Chicago Historical Society, the Chicago Academy of Sciences, and Francis Parker School, one of the most prestigious private schools in the city. The 43<sup>rd</sup> ward, while economically prosperous, has been represented by independent-minded far left liberals. When alderman of the 43<sup>rd</sup> ward William Singer ran against Richard J. Daley for mayor in 1975, he was backed by Black leaders and the *Chicago Sun-Times*. His successor was independent Martin Oberman, who fought to curb police spying that violated civil rights in the 1960s and was a supporter of Harold Washington (the city’s first Black mayor). Edwin Eisendrath (served 1975–1987) established himself as truly independent of any faction as he came from a wealthy well-connected family. Next, came Vi Daley, who represented the 43<sup>rd</sup> ward from 1999 to 2011 until her retirement. She was one of the most consistent supporters of Mayor Richard M. Daley—no relation—voting with him over 90 percent of the time.

The 44<sup>th</sup> ward includes parts of Lake View, Wrigleyville (where the Chicago Cubs baseball franchise plays), and Boystown. Full of high rises, it has one of the highest population densities in the city. Dick Simpson, a minister from the Wellington Avenue church and political science professor, was alderman from 1971 to 1979. He created the 44<sup>th</sup> Ward Assembly, a neighborhood government for people to have a voice, and led the 1974 ordinance to outlaw redlining. Bernard Hansen served the ward from 1983–2002 and claimed neutrality in the council wars of the 1980s (when the majority white city council resisted every proposed ordinance of the city’s first Black mayor Harold Washington). However, Hansen generally voted with the Vrdolyak bloc. After his retirement in 2002, Thomas M. Tunney, his hand-picked successor, became Chicago’s first openly gay alderman. Tunney founded and led the Lakeview Center Business Association and white Crane Wellness Center. Tunney is considered an ally of the Mayor’s office.

The 46<sup>th</sup> ward includes parts of Uptown, Wrigleyville, Boystown, and Lake View and is over half white, a fifth Black, and is divided between upper middle-class residents and those in poverty. Before 1987, its aldermen came from the Democratic organization, but with some independent tendencies. Chris Cohen (served 1971–1977) never officially broke off from the Daley machine. During the 1980s council wars, Alderman Orbach of the 46<sup>th</sup> ward (served 1983–1987) tried to appear neutral, but sided with the Vrdolyak bloc on every significant issue. Harold Washington-backed candidate Helen Shiller defeated Orbach and became one of the first wards to break away from Vrdolyak’s bloc. Shiller advocated for diverse and inclusive affordable housing. When she chose not to run for reelection in 2011, her seat was filled by James Cappleman who has continued to advocate for affordable housing in the ward.

The 47<sup>th</sup> ward is partially made up of Andersonville and Ravenswood, famous for its manor houses, and home to former Mayor Rahm Emanuel. This ward has also been home to both prominent Republicans and members of Richard J. Daley’s administration. Republican Joe Hoellen, Jr., whose father previously served as an alderman in the ward, was elected in 1947. Richard J. Daley attempted to oust Hoellen from the ward by supporting candidates running against him but failed, and Hoellen served until 1975. His successor, Eugene Schulner, was also Republican (served 1975–2011). Ameya Pawar, who defeated Schulner’s hand-chosen successor, was alderman from 2011 to

2019 and the first Asian and Indian American council member. After choosing not to run for reelection, Matt Martin, another advocate against professional politicians and a member of the Progressive and Black Caucuses, won office. The ward has continued to be a base for predominantly white and wealthy politically independent communities.

The 48th ward contains Chicago's second largest concentration of Asians, but the area was historically dominated by Russian immigrants in the 1940s. The ward has been represented by Harry Osterman, who was the legislative aide to Mary Ann Smith (preceding alderwoman and appointee of Mayor Richard M. Daley). Before her was Harry Osterman's mother, Kathy Osterman. All 48<sup>th</sup> ward city council members prior to Kathy Osterman were Republicans.

The 49th ward is anchored by Loyola University Chicago and is home to the busy commerce of Clark Street. Alderman Paul Wigoda, who served from 1959 to 1964, was an important Richard J. Daley ally. Esther Sperstein, the daughter of Jewish immigrants, was elected in 1975, then David Orr served from 1979–1990 as a vocal ally of Harold Washington. Alderman Orr became the face of the “lakefront liberal” who opposed the Daley political machine. Joe Moore became alderman in 1991 and was chairman of the City Council Committee on Housing and Real Estate, overseeing city housing policy and all transactions involving city-owned real estate. Moore was defeated in 2019 by Maria Hadden, an independent on the Progressive Caucus, LGBT Caucus, and Black Caucus. Like other lakefront liberal wards, the 49<sup>th</sup> ward has been home to left-leaning independents who often oppose corruption and discrimination on the basis of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Nevertheless, these wards have never heavily interfered with the Mayor's major growth-oriented policy agendas.

The 50th ward in Chicago's North Side has historically been home to a European Jewish enclave. Spanning the neighborhoods of West Rogers Park and West Ridge, the ward was home to one of Chicago's last Republican city council members, Jack Sperling, from 1955 to 1973. Bernard Stone (who switched from Republican to Democrat several times during his tenure as city council member) was a strong ally of corrupt Alderman Ed Vrdolyak and served the ward from 1973–2011. The ward is currently represented by Debra Silverstein, who was endorsed by Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

Overall, the wards in each of these three categories were represented by aldermen (many appointed by mayors) who have been loyal to the mayor's office throughout the years, or were white and wealthy enough to occasionally disagree with the mayor's office without punishment (Simpson, Rossi, and Gradel 2020). According to data compiled by Simpson ([Buyuker, Mouritsen, and Simpson 2014](#); [Simpson and Kelly 2006](#); [Simpson et al. 2016](#); Simpson, Rossi, and Gradel 2020; [Simpson et al. 2011](#)), the elected officials representing these short-journey wards voted in favor of 85 percent of the Mayor's proposed ordinances from 2002–2020. Although some of these wards (namely lakefront liberals) have had moments of dissent, they have not been vocal resistors to the city's racial and economic order.

### *Transactional Redistricting*

From 1910–1970, Milwaukee aggressively sought to annex suburbs to increase its tax revenue and land mass. Milwaukee's suburbs fiercely resisted to avoid taxation and remain separate from Milwaukee's growing Black populations ([Gurda 1999](#)). [McCarthy \(2009:197\)](#) described Milwaukee's suburbs as predominantly white areas “nervous about the influx of African Americans” and “bitter at the city's annexation program.”

In response, Milwaukee used redistricting to incentivize annexation. The city promised suburbs their own ward in the city council upon incorporation into the city. This promise aimed to ease suburbs' racist anxieties by providing representation, power, and influence over city policies. Redistricting, thus, contributed to Milwaukee's annexations of the suburban towns of Lake and Granville in 1956. Milwaukee provided Lake the 19th ward, and Granville the 20th (see [Figure 9](#)). News coverage of Milwaukee's redistricting in the 1950s revealed a plan to reduce the size of the city council from 27 to 19 seats due to population decline. When Granville agreed to annexation, the city

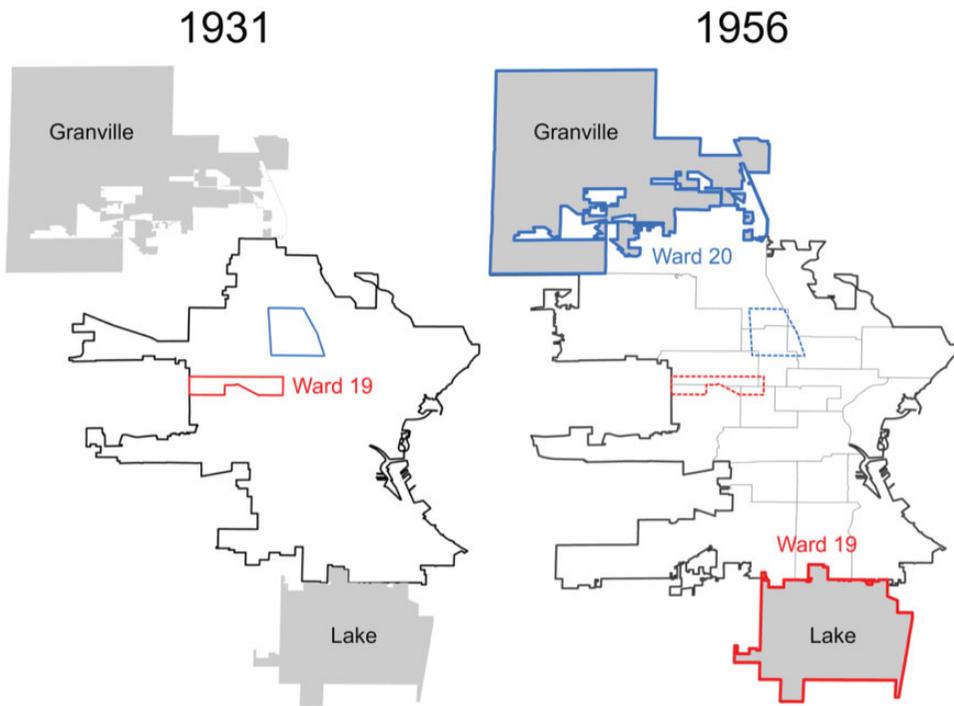


Figure 9. Milwaukee Teleporting the 20th ward to Granville and 19th ward to Lake in 1956

council amended the plan such that the council was reduced to 20 (instead of 19) wards, with Granville receiving the 20th ward (Milwaukee Sentinel 1950).

Although the 1956 redistricting split the areas where the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> wards' residents lived across numerous districts, the majority of ward 19 (53.5 percent) moved to the 5<sup>th</sup> ward, and the majority of the 20<sup>th</sup> (49.9 percent) moved to the 7<sup>th</sup> ward. The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* made no mention of any politically motivated cracking or packing. Instead, a 1956 article described the redistricting as pitting incumbent aldermen against one another, with an alderman of the teleported 20<sup>th</sup> ward (William Keppler) running against 7<sup>th</sup> ward incumbent Martin Schreiber. Schreiber defeated Keppler and went on to hold office for 32 more years. The alderman of the teleported 19<sup>th</sup> ward (Robert LaBelle) ran against the 5<sup>th</sup> ward incumbent, but neither won, as newcomer Irving Rahn ended up winning the race.

Most important, since the 1956 redistricting and annexation of Lake and Granville, these communities have become firmly entrenched in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> wards. After annexation, both Granville and Lake elected their former town mayors (Vincent Schmit and John Budzien) as their aldermen in the Milwaukee city council. Since 1956, a former town leader, resident, or legislative aide has served as aldermen of Granville and Lake in the Milwaukee city council. Thus, the ties between elected officials and these annexed communities have gone uninterrupted.

Both Granville and Lake continue to be politically conservative. Alderman Budzien (of Lake) was a fiscal conservative who eventually quit the finance committee because he opposed bond financing (“2 New City Health Units Proposed” 1959). The fact that Budzien could resign from the committee in protest, as well as challenge the mayor's office by threatening to run for mayor, without punishment illuminates the greater degree of independence and autonomy that local government affords to wealthier white communities. The lack of punishment for Alderman Budzien's protests represents a stark contrast to the way Chicago and St. Louis responded to its most outspoken Black city council members. When Budzien retired and was replaced by Alderman Robert Anderson, Anderson quickly became Common Council President, despite being only the second alderman from the Lake area

since its annexation. City council members from Lake and Granville were also quickly appointed to powerful city council committees, such as its judiciary committee in 1961 to resolve disputes with suburbs (“Three to Tackle Boundary Issue” 1961).

Milwaukee has provided Lake and Granville greater power over development projects both inside and outside of their respective wards. This began when these suburbs negotiated the terms of their annexation. In exchange for providing tax relief and access to the water supply, Milwaukee wanted Granville’s industrial sites, railroads, and acres of vacant land for residential and commercial development (Wing 1956). As a result, in 1964, Granville was the site of the first of several “city within the city” industrial park projects (Gurda 1999:390).

When Milwaukee’s socialist Mayor Frank Zeidler sought to construct public housing in 1957, Granville played a significant role in blocking construction. Mayor Zeidler hired urban renewal planners to recommend areas for public housing construction that were less expensive than downtown, but the planner (with the help of white city council members) did not recommend public housing. The planner said, “In terms of cost and size, I found areas on the north and northwest side [Granville]. But in terms of acceptability, they are not satisfactory.” The planner based his assessment on “interviews of the town.” The planner went on: “there was opposition because public housing must admit minority group tenants.” The hired planners and Granville’s alderman Vincent Schmit agreed that Granville land should be zoned for industrial use as opposed to residential use, a move that prevented public housing construction in Granville (“Plans to Build 130 Dwellings” 1958).

Ultimately, the Council passed a compromise that split Granville into half industrial and half residential zones, but agreed that the residential zones not be used for public housing. Instead, ranch-style homes were constructed in the area by private developers. In 1961, a \$10,000,000 petroleum terminal to be used by oil companies was constructed in the industrially zoned part of Granville (Norris 1961).

These cases illuminate the privileges that the local government provides to white and wealthy communities through redistricting. Ward redistricting for Lake and Granville unfolded like a consensus building exercise, where parties negotiated to arrive at a mutually shared agreement. In cases where elected officials protested or interfered with the city’s policy priorities, they were not punished. Instead, the city listened and responded to their wishes, a finding that supports Ray’s (2019) theory of racialized organizations, as whiteness operated like a legitimating credential within Milwaukee city government. These cases demonstrate how race and class serve as foundations through which city government approaches the redistricting of affluent white communities.

## IMPLICATIONS

### *Redistricting as Socially Controlling Urban Space*

This article advances efforts to integrate race and class with urban spatial processes of social control. For decades, this field has devoted attention to how elites manipulate or transform space to subjugate (Lipsitz 2011; Neely and Samura 2011), exploit (Desmond and Wilmers 2019), segregate (Duneier 2016; Massey and Denton 1993), or displace low-income minority populations (Roy 2019). Municipal redistricting represents another important site to investigate the racial and economically motivated manipulation of space to preserve local political order. Specifically, studying redistricting advances an emerging literature on the racially motivated manipulation of municipal administrative boundaries, such as Purifoy’s (2019) research on the relationship between racialized municipal exclusion and environmental racism. While Purifoy (2019:3) focuses on the impacts of municipal boundary changes, our article extends her work to municipal ward boundaries, which similarly reflects the state’s transformation of administrative space to produce “racial contours of space and place.”

These findings also have implications for theories of the racialized state (Bracey 2014; Omi and Winant 2015). While studies of state race-making projects are plentiful, these studies tend to focus on the state intervention in communities rather than on how the state regulates or manages actors

from within its organization. This includes potential threats from elected officials seeking social change or reform. For example, by redistricting and appointing new Black candidates to newly teleported wards in the south side, Mayor Daley not only diluted William Dawson's political influence but also prevented the growth of Black wealth. Dawson ardently supported and defended economic enterprises in segregated Black communities, and the dissolution of his power further eroded efforts to protect formal or illicit Black economic enterprises.

Our study also demonstrates the usefulness of Neely and Samura's (2011) framework for the study of race and space. By studying space as fluid, contested, and socially constructed, scholars can better identify spatial state practices aimed at preserving local racial and economic interests. The four practices identified in this study (suppressive redistricting, disciplinary redistricting, remunerative redistricting, and transactional redistricting) are far from a complete description of the ways redistricting can be used for political purposes. Adopting and advancing Neely and Samura's (2011) framework, as well as the mixed methodological approach of our study, would help researchers uncover more state spatial practices.

### *Rethinking the Racial Gerrymander*

Redistricting scholars have defined racial gerrymandering as efforts to improve enfranchisement and representation of Black and Latinx voters in political districts, and scholars have debated the efficacy of protecting and drawing "race-conscious" districts (Pildes 1997; Stephanopolous 2012). By conceptualizing race, or race-making, as a state project unfolding through the construction of space (Bracey 2014; Neely and Samura 2011; Omi and Winant 2015), our study illuminates how race operates in redistricting through the social control of anti-racist or anti-capitalist elected officials, in addition to the total number of minority voters. As shown in the history of Chicago's powerful Black submachines, Black political representation on the city council was not eradicated, but transformed into wards that were home to Black elected officials who supported Mayor Daley's vision of the city's racial and economic order.

The practice of redistricting, therefore, involves not only adjudicating partisan conflict through data on individual voter characteristics; it can also involve the application of race and class-biased ideologies aimed at reinforcing or transforming the local political order. Our findings in Black Chicago and white Milwaukee powerfully demonstrate this. As a result of ward redistricting, Chicago maintained numerous majority-minority wards. At the same time, however, ward redistricting was completed in a way that supported the election of Black officials who opposed rather than supported civil rights legislation in the 1960s and 1970s. Similarly, Milwaukee's annexation of Lake and Granville helped the city's pro-growth coalitions rid the city of socialist influence after decades of socialists in the Mayor's office. Each of these historical redistricting practices continue to shape the race and class based political order of these cities to this day.

From a methodological standpoint, our study also contributes to the redistricting literature by demonstrating the utility of mixed method approaches to the study of historical redistricting patterns, grounded in comparative-historical methods (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003) and exploratory data analysis (Tukey 1977). Exploratory analysis can generate discoveries of hidden ways that redistricting has been used to transform the relationship between elected officials and their communities at the city, state, and federal level. The key to this inductive methodological approach is to embrace description and data visualization to discover questions that require additional qualitative data or historical inquiry. Descriptive quantitative analysis combined with archival research or interviews can be a useful approach for redistricting researchers to develop a broader lexicon of redistricting practices, as well as new ways of conceptualizing partisanship beyond a focus on the nation's two dominant political parties.

## CONCLUSION

The study is not without limitations. First, we focus on city councils and not state legislative bodies or the U.S. Congress. The extent to which these practices unfold at the level of county, state, or the federal government remains an empirical question. Second, by focusing on districts that traveled great distances (or not at all), we have not come close to describing the full extent of manipulative redistricting practices. Third, the majority of historical documents available to unpack this history were documents, reports, or biographies written about key individuals such as powerful politicians or community activists. The reliance on historical reports of individuals' actions likely oversimplifies the networks and structures involved in ward redistricting decisions. We hope these limitations, coupled with the intriguing discoveries from this study, motivate scholars to build on our effort for the purposes of developing a sociology of redistricting.

With respect to policy implications, civic groups and policymakers almost always ask redistricting researchers the following: What is the fairest way to draw districts? This article suggests that civic groups and policymakers are asking the wrong question. Redistricting or gerrymandering is not a problem for which there is a cure. As we hope to have shown, redistricting should be understood as an organizational process of social control. When policymakers, scholars, or activists propose redistricting reform, they are actually proposing a transformation in the ways local governments socially control the relationship between their elected officials and communities. Thus, the real question civic groups and policymakers are asking is: how to produce fair systems of social control?

Our findings suggest that, in the absence of change in how cities redraw their ward boundaries, ideologies of race and class will continue to shape remap efforts. This means that elected officials or communities with recent histories of opposing unregulated economic growth or racial equality should be concerned about being targeted for suppressive or disciplinary redistricting practices in the remapping effort to come after the release of 2020 census data. Combatting race and class biases in remapping efforts will require increased transparency, public debate, and the democratization of map-making technologies. By providing citizens and communities more opportunities to influence the remap process and engage elected officials, cities can get closer to producing fair maps on the basis of race and class.

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