

G. Robinson as our sociopathic icons. The other is that of Jane Addams, who introduced the idea of the Chicago Woman and world citizen.

It was Chicago that brought forth Louis Sullivan, whom Frank Lloyd Wright referred to as “Lieber Meister.” Sullivan envisioned the skyscraper. It was here that he wanted to touch the heavens. Nor was it any accident that young Sullivan corresponded with the elderly Walt Whitman, because they both dreamed of democratic vistas, where Chicago was the City of Man rather than the City of Things. Though Sullivan died broke and neglected, it is his memory that glows as he is recalled by those who followed Wright.

What the nine-year-old boy felt about Chicago in 1921 is a bit more mellow and seared. He is aware of its carbuncles and warts, a place far from heaven, but it is his town, the only one he calls home.

Nelson Algren, Chicago’s bard, said it best: “Like loving a woman with a broken nose, you may well find lovelier lovelies. But never a lovely so real.”

This text was originally published in *Touch And Go: A Memoir* (New York: New Press, 2007) 19-28 and is reprinted here with permission from the Studs Terkel Estate.

City, School, and Image: The Chicago School of Sociology and the Image of Chicago

Terry Nichols Clark, Daniel A. Silver, and Stephen W. Sawyer

Saul Bellow wrote, “there were beautiful and moving things in Chicago, but culture was not one of them.”¹ Yet by 2009, the Director of the National Endowment of the Arts could say: “Mayor Daley should be the No. 1 hero to everyone in this country who cares about art.”² How do these old and new images of the arts interact with Chicago’s social makeup? If the arts were not central to Chicagoans in the early twentieth century, arguably arts, leisure, and entertainment became key drivers of urban transformation by the end of the same century. The implications are broad as many changes are not unique to Chicago. The growth of twenty-five to thirty-four-year-olds in Chicago’s three-mile downtown, relative to its suburbs, was larger than any other US city between 1990 and 2000. Many, especially civic and political leaders, felt that four months of summer entertainment, joined to more neighborhood festivals than any other US city, helped attract these new young persons.

The highly visible, city government–sponsored arts activities were a conscious effort to celebrate, extend, and transform Chicago’s powerful ethnic traditions, rooted in its neighborhoods. They built on images of Chicago with long and deep histories, forged in no small part by the sociologists who became known by the name of their city, the Chicago School. Yet as the city has changed and grown more aesthetically sophisticated, so too have its

sociologists, who continue to seek out ways to represent and imagine the local contexts in which contemporary social life unfolds, however globalized, networked, and digitized it has become.

Much has been written about the birth and influence of the Chicago School of Sociology. Less noted is the reciprocal relationship between the city, the style of social research, and the school that ultimately took its name. The city imprints its character on the school; the school produces a “Chicago way” of understanding cities. Distinctive representational and analytical techniques emerge, which feed back into the self-understanding of the city. We highlight key elements in this circuit of city, school, and urban imaginary, which persist to this day.

Several factors make Chicago distinct. These features played a strong role in forming Chicago social thinkers and their ways of analyzing cities. They continue to have resonance for understanding the urban culture, politics, and policies of the twentieth-first century, and in thinking about the continued legacy of the Chicago school of sociology.

Catholicism

Chicago remains the largest major US city with a strong tradition of Catholicism. As of 2006, the average Chicago zip code contained between two and four times as many Catholic churches as the average Los Angeles or New York zip code. White Protestants, on the other hand, were under 20 percent of the population throughout much of the twentieth century. This is not to say that Protestant elites and related reform movements have been absent—Chicago’s Catholic tradition was drastically shaken, for example, in the 1984 mayoral election of Harold Washington, who led a coalition of Protestants (African-American and white), Jews, and “Lakefront Liberals” against the Catholic establishment. Even so, Catholic culture and social practices have enjoyed a high level of legitimacy within Chicago, relative to most US cities.

Particularism

One of the key results of this Catholic legitimacy has been the emergence of a city built on strong neighborhood identities, woven together by personal relations. Obviously, the city has been rife with racial and ethnic segregation: in housing location and in politics, with ethnic slating of candidates, local parades, and jealously guarded neighborhood autonomy.

Aldermen classically made zoning decisions for their wards, granting or withholding building permits, sometimes indefinitely—unthinkable in a city with an at-large, good government ethos. The continual flow of immigrants from around the world has filled neighborhoods with new character, but ethnically and culturally distinct neighborhoods remain stronger and more politically legitimate in Chicago than in most US locales. Consider some distinctive Chicago slogans: Don’t make no waves, don’t back no losers; We don’t want nobody nobody sent; Chicaga ain’t ready for reform.³

Localism

Chicago has been home to consistent claims that the state and national governments are distant, alien, even irrelevant to what really matters, namely local respect, turf, and “juice.” Within the city, Chicago politics builds on a microcosmic battle between fiercely independent wards and ward bosses and the centralizing tendencies of city hall. Though the myth of an autonomous local political sphere is belied by events as distant as Daley I’s role in the Democratic Convention in 1968 or as recent as Rahm Emanuel’s rapid transition from the White House to the mayor’s office, the ideal of very local politics has maintained a powerful hold in Chicago’s self-understanding. Indeed, seniority as a principle for political slating could lead to sixty-year olds being sent to Washington as freshmen congressmen. Likewise in Chicago, Rahm Emmanuel’s decision to leave his federal position as chief of staff for a local mayoralty could count as “moving up in the world.” This reverses the normal view that local government is secondary. To build legitimacy in the Chicago political scene, one must see the city as an end in itself.

Popular Cosmopolitanis

The main traditions in Chicago are not original, but hark back to such locations as County Cork, Puerto Rico, Krakow, or Mexico City. Restaurants and churches, neighborhood schools, bars and precinct captains have carried on these distinct traditions. A “big shouldered” acceptance of grit and crassness thus built on a snub-the-proper-folks attitude, and encouraged popular labels such as Hinky Dink Kenna, Bathhouse John, and Fast Eddy Vrdolyak—three powerful aldermen/bosses. The recent television series *The Boss* built its suspense around a vision of Chicago politics as a hard-hitting high-wire game between local ethnic, black, and other Catholic groups and a take-no-prisoners mayor. This attitude is epitomized in the speeches of Mayors Daley I and II. They were proud to speak Chicago Public School English, as are many CPS

teachers. Hugh Hefner's Playboy empire exported Chicago's bawdy tradition globally. Still if "Chicaga" pronunciation was traditionally mainstream in at least Chicago politics, others still protested, like upscale *Chicago Magazine* which ran a profile on "Da Mayor," citing his diction and pronunciation as evidence that he was as corrupt as his father.⁴

The populist culture of beer and brats meant little focus on public art and aesthetics as public policy issues. This inattention was dramatically reversed in the mid-1990s, when public art and aesthetics were embraced with a dynamism impossible most elsewhere, at least in the United States. Drawing explicitly on the cultural planning traditions of European cities such as Paris, this embrace of culture and aesthetics by City Hall exploded onto the scene around 1995, after the blockbuster success of the Art Institute's Monet show, ostensibly the largest in the world. Flower gardens, wrought iron fences, arts districts, entertainment venues, and public art blossomed. Still, these innovations appropriated themes from Chicago's first *Cultural Plan*, developed as part of Harold Washington's initial agenda in 1986, which itself carried forward core Chicago ideas such as the strong charismatic individual artist who gives voice to local neighborhood cultures.⁵ Even the fabulously post-modern Millennium Park bears the Chicago mark of local turf, divided up as it is into separate zones within which major donors controlled decisions about design and public art.⁶

Openness, Charisma, and Clientelism

The lack of an inherited early American elite and emergence of a frontier character pushed Chicago to sell itself, almost from the beginning, as a place where you could, and had to, make it on your own. Early boosters like John W. Wright insisted that it was Chicago that would make the East, not the other way around. In this context, new Chicago elites emerged quickly, borrowing from the East, but oftentimes leaving Venice and jumping over Manhattan to land directly in "plastic Chicago," as one of the great Boston Brahmins, Henry Adams, famously claimed in his chapter on Chicago.⁷ With weak planning and minimal regulation, the best and worst architecture co-exist on the same block in Chicago. One of the great urban plans of the United States, Burnham's 1909 *Plan of Chicago*, rooted in the hierarchical principles of European urban planning, could be produced in the same city where Rudyard Kipling suggested: "There was no color in the street and no beauty—only a maze of wire ropes overhead and dirty flagging stones under foot."⁸ Although non-governmental civic leaders long fought over the issues, individual ambition and personal charisma often trumped general planning and holistic aesthetics. Perhaps represented in recent years by

Trump Tower, greed and unbridled individualism were the labels of those who did not look more deeply—probed by Frank Norris's *The Pit*, Steffans' *The Shame of the Cities*, Brecht's *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*, Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, or Saul Bellow's novels.

The huge political machine gave organizational form to this network of strong leaders. It fueled the ambitions of gangs, big corporations, real estate developers, options traders, and mayors to "make no little plans." Some international locations are similar to Chicago in this regard. Thus China today is a paradise for visionary architects and planners, who build unfettered by citizen protest and zoning found in Europe. In contrast, Chicago developer Sam Zell, visiting Israel, told the Jerusalem *Times* in 2004 that there was so much red tape that he refused to work in Israel.

Persistent Ethnic Politics

Ethnic politics have aligned in distinctive ways with class politics. In the heart of the Chicago Renaissance, a realist literary movement that would influence the Chicago School of Sociology, socialist Carl Sandburg penned poems in ethnic Chicago on "the dago shovel man." More recently, Barbara Ferman (1996) has explored the implication of this pattern by contrasting Chicago with Pittsburgh; all issues in Chicago from recycling to schools were (traditionally) redefined as questions of turf, power, and race/ethnicity.⁹ The term "Yuppie" was transformed in Chicago to label a new "ethnicity" invading the city. In Washington or even New York "yuppies" were part of the normal establishment. Not in Chicago. The idea that less articulate, blue-collar citizens held distinct values and preferences, that would not necessarily disappear with political reform, education, or Americanization, legitimated a distinct, explicit focus on ethnicity as interpenetrating all aspects of life and politics. No yuppies in my bar!

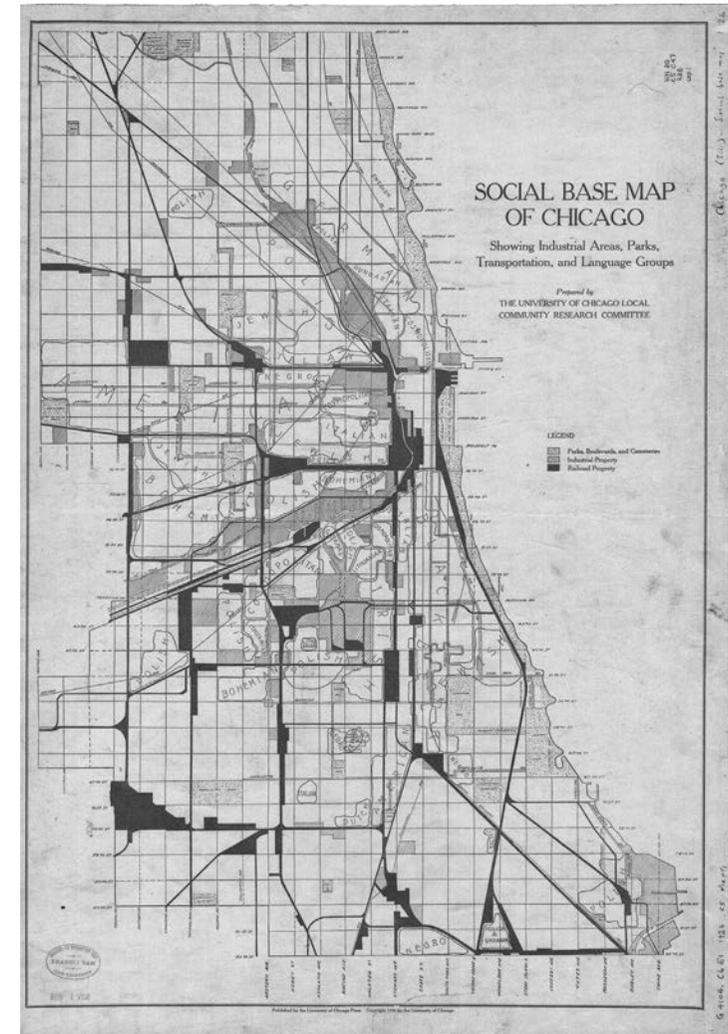
Pragmatic Relativism

This everyday acceptance of ethnic/national/cultural distinctiveness led to an anthropological cultural relativism and mutual tolerance—"You deliver your precinct, and I'll deliver mine"—that does not support the revolutionary moralistic aspirations of New England abolitionists, or David Dubinsky's Russian union organizers in New York City, or Caesar Chavez's Mexican farm workers in southern California. Still, this non-ideological, traditional style changed with Harold Washington after 1984. His implantation of reform from a black protestant/civil rights background brought the

traditional machine to its knees. It redefined the core of Chicago politics and laid a foundation for new rules of the game. If Chicago politics traditionally was defined by non-ideological, personalistic, exchange, since Harold Washington, politics and policy have become more explicit and sometimes even ideological. But pragmatism remains a leitmotif: it is no accident that the pragmatist school of philosophy, championed by Chicagoans such as John Dewey, G.H. Mead, and Jane Addams, took root in a city where practicality has long been a hallmark. Jane Addams specifically innovated by using general appeals to the public invoking moral concerns to address new issues, in a manner prefiguring work in these four volumes.

These features of the city strongly informed the Chicago style of social research. Robert Park's foundational *The City* is a seminal case in point. There is the strong emphasis on locality: for Park, the neighborhood, not the workplace, is the expression of the "common ties of humanity."¹⁰ Similarly, for Park, in contrast to the Marxian tradition of class analysis, in the "last analysis" social organization rests on the "church, school, and family."¹¹ Numerous Chicago dissertations pursued these themes, which became key source documents for Cohen.¹² Chicago authors were equally fascinated by the rougher and popular sides of urban culture, examples of which the city offered in abundance: hobos, taxi-dance halls, gangs, ghettos, slums, and the like. The locality of social and cultural life was central to their vision: Park viewed the city as organized not only economically but also into "moral regions" where people with common temperaments and tastes congregate, whether for a "horse race or a grand opera."¹³ Chicagoans, moreover, sensitive to a world of open possibility, did not conceive organizations as things and structures but as groups and processes, perpetually growing, ossifying, stagnating, adapting in conflict and cooperation with one another.¹⁴ G.H. Mead's social psychology stressed interaction, play, improvisation, and the social cultivation of individuality. And Chicago authors, inspired by W.I. Thomas's classic *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, saw machine politics not as aberrant but as a natural response to the wrenching dislocations caused by mass migration from rural farms to megacity.

If Chicago social interpreters were concerned with Chicago topics, they were equally adept at developing analytic techniques to disclose the Chicago aspects of social life. Early Chicago social researchers made visual renderings of the city, especially maps, crucial to their work. Ernest Burgess's famous maps of concentric circles depicted the city as nested sets of geographically specific occupation and lifestyle zones. He also led in producing some of the first maps in the United States using census tract data. Burgess's concentric circles became iconic in their representation of ideal-typical spatial relationships pur-



Published by the *Chicago Sun-Times*, October 28, 1968.

portedly defining the ecology of all cities. Heavily criticized for their seeming determinism, exacerbated as the number of "anomalies" and divergent urban structures grew, these were not the only sorts of maps Chicago research produced. Another key type were community-area maps. These visualized the city as distinct cultural worlds, defined by the shared identity and self-understanding of community members, not by jurisdictional boundaries or ideal theory.¹⁵

Similarly, Chicago authors produced maps covered with dots representing the local incidence of different groups, organizations, and behaviors (hobos, ethnicities, dance halls, rooming houses, homicide, alcoholism, depression, divorce). These would often join specific organizations and individuals with

the community-area maps to produce a more dynamic picture in which multiple groups and people flow across space, and local identity arises out of concrete interactions. For instance, Frederic Thrasher's 1927 study plotted more than 1300 gangs and their clubhouses across the city and mapped their local turfs. St. Clair Drake's 1940 *Churches and Voluntary Organizations in the Chicago Negro Community* went further, showing both the locations of individual churches and their members, within and beyond their neighborhoods. The "neighborhood" in these depictions emerged at once as a real source of identity and constraint on action but also a permeable boundary that did not fully determine the interests or contacts of its members.



Published by the *Chicago Sun-Times*, October 28, 1968.

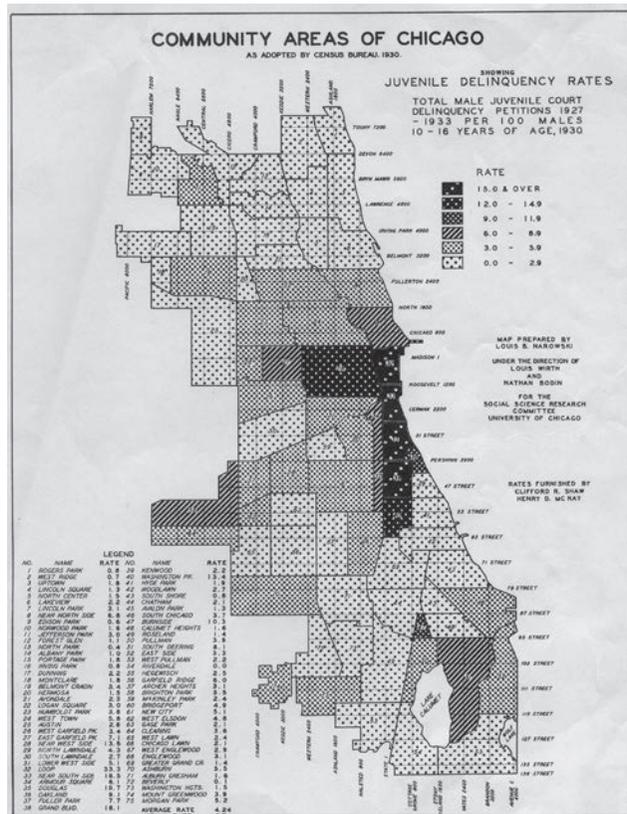
Likewise, as Chicago students fanned across the city, they refined the techniques of urban ethnography, enacting Park's dictum that the same "patient methods which anthropologists like Boas and Lowie have expended on the study of the life and manners of the North American Indian might be even more fruitfully employed ... in Little Italy on the lower North Side in Chicago."¹⁶ Harvey Zorbaugh's *The Gold Coast and the Slum* perhaps realized this contextual and interactive Chicago approach to social process most fully. According to Abbott:

The story of the Near North Side involves not only long-term processes like changes in economic structures and in the composition of the immigrant population, but also shorter-term ones like local succession in neighborhoods and even more rapid ones like the turnover of residents in rooming houses. Spatially, the interactional field involves not only the large-scale differentiation from and interdependence of this whole area on the city, but also shorter-range phenomena like the intermingling of church congregations produced by parishioner mobility and the economic interdependencies of the various subsections of the Near North Side itself.¹⁷

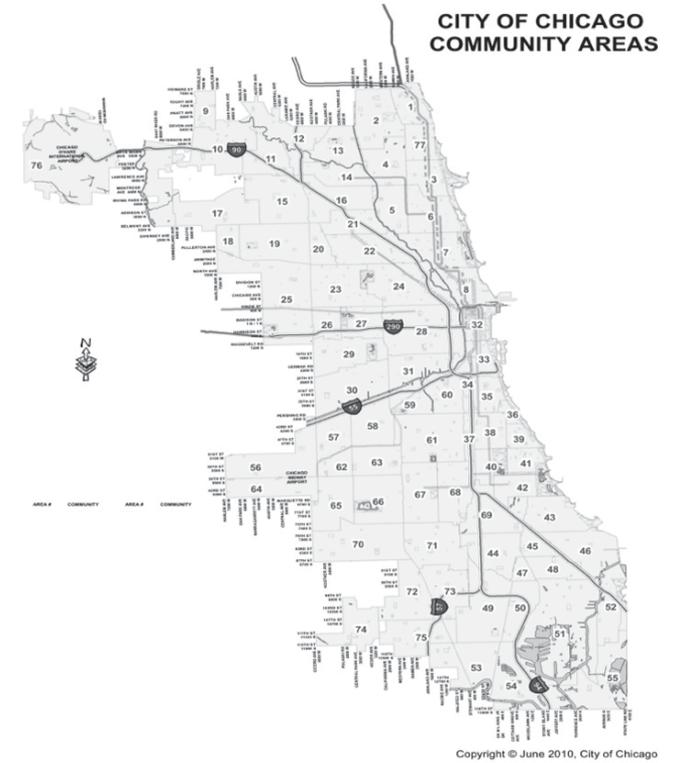
These various representational techniques sensitized the Chicago school and their readers to the locally textured and contextual character of life.

The "Chicago ways" of representing the city all have shaped urban perception in their own right. Richard Wright himself noted how deeply Chicago's sociologists inspired him. "It was not until I stumbled upon science that I discovered some of the meanings of the environment that battered and taunted me."¹⁸ Literary critic Carla Cappetti suggests the connection extends to a "generation of writers in the 1930s." Through close readings of books by James Farrell, Nelson Algren, and Wright, she shows how "characters ... walk along the streets that the sociologists charted, join gangs that they studied, encounter problems that they explained, and come to the sorry ends they foretold."¹⁹

The influence of the community area maps has proven especially persistent, continuing to this day to shape Chicago policy and perception. Nearly a century later, the names Burgess and his collaborators gave to the seventy-five community areas they found are still the City of Chicago's official designations, and the boundaries they assigned continue to inform city policy and research. This example neatly illustrates the feedback loop between city, school, and image. Burgess and his students "saw" community areas around the city as self-created communities, social products of the Chicago ecology. Their maps gave those communities names and pro-



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vided means for representing them cognitively. Those representations and names in turn came to define many of the city's official policies and much of its on-the-ground self-understanding, as a patchwork of communities with distinct identities.

Despite, and perhaps because of, the continuing expansion of globalization, communication, and mobility, these Chicago styles and topics of thought endure. Evidence abounds that neighborhood, community, and local culture persist (sometimes in novel forms)—not to mention patronage and strong personalities—even amidst a chorus of claims about the death of distance, the demise of community, and the massification of life.²⁰ A steady stream of urban work continues to flow.

Our new Chicago approach, however, explicitly adds arts and culture and moves to higher levels of abstraction. It does so by decomposing local culture into symbolic dimensions of meaning (such as self-expression, glamour, tradition, or transgression) that combine in multiple scenes that harken back to classical literary and social theory concepts (such as

Community and Urbanity), analyzed with local data across the United States, France, Spain, China, and beyond.²¹ The study of race, class, gender, and ethnicity are enriched by adding cultural and aesthetic specifics like neighborliness and self-expression, measured with hundreds of specific amenities like Baptist Churches, community centers, art galleries, and tattoo parlors. The roots of these scenes of neighborliness on Chicago's South Side are shared with rural midwestern and southern areas of the United States, yet the analytical goal remains true to the Chicago spirit captured by Richard Wright's statement quoted above: to discern the city as an overlapping array of emotionally charged, value-laden environments, that can batter and taunt but also excite and elevate.

Scenes analysis explicitly seeks to overcome the under-emphasis on the arts by social scientists generally as well as in Chicago, by articulating how and where culture interpenetrates other processes like population and economic growth. Arts activities and their links to neighborhoods and politics are elaborated Silver and Clark's "Buzz as an Urban Resource."²²

Ethnographies such as Richard Lloyd’s *Neo-Bohemia* (on Wicker Park) or Andrew Deener’s *Venice* (on Venice, Los Angeles) document the ways of life that characterize iconic arts neighborhoods, subjecting them to the same close scrutiny that earlier researches had applied to Jewish quarters, the Gold Coast, or the Slum. Such studies carry forward the Chicago focus on local collective processes but add that many contemporary neighborhoods encourage themes such as unique style, individual spontaneity, and personal expression, play key roles in artistic and cultural production chains, cultivate novel aesthetics such as “grit as glamour,” and operate under newer principles of prestige, where coolness and “subcultural capital” are conditions for employment and crucial signs of status. Sampson’s *Great American City* continues the more birds-eye tradition of mapping neighborhood concentrations of distinct groups and activities, showing how artist clusters track internet usage, and suggesting that new forms of “cosmopolitan” social engagement continue to be grounded in specific locations, even as communication technology connects people around the globe to one another. New Chicago research is multilevel and multicausal, situating individuals in neighborhoods, neighborhoods to one another and their surrounding cities, and to the wider world—all at once.

In these and other ways, urban social science still shows a Chicago impact. Perhaps more important than the specific topics, however, is the way of seeing. Thanks to the early Chicago-school circles, maps, and ethnographies, one can find the “Chicago dimension of life” in studies from Los Angeles to Nashville, from Bogota to Beijing. The school, that is to say, in assimilating Chicago into a mode of social scientific representation, both gave the city a way to cognize itself and produced portable techniques for extending that conception globally.

1 Saul Bellow, *Humboldt’s Gift* (New York: Penguin, 1975), 69.

2 Chris Jones, “Daley’s Chicago a model for nation, says NEA boss,” *The Theater Loop* (blog), *Chicago Tribune*, October 22, 2009, http://leisureblogs.chicagotribune.com/the_theater_loop/2009/10/new-nea-chief-lauds-daley-arts-policy-says-model-for-nation.html#at.

3 The first two are titles of books by Milton Rakove published in 1975 and 1979; the third is a slogan shouted at political rallies, on the floor of City Hall, and emblazoned on t-shirts.

4 Jonathan Eig, “Da Rules,” *Chicago* 48, no. 11 (November 1999): 115-17, 136-44.

5 Terry N. Clark and Daniel Silver, “Chicago from the political machine to the entertainment machine,” in *The Politics of Urban Cultural Policy: Global Perspectives*, eds. Carl Grodach and Daniel Silver (New York: Routledge 2013), 28-41.

6 Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *Millennium Park: Creating a Chicago Landmark* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

7 Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography* (Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1918 [1906]), 340.

8 Rudyard Kipling, *American Notes* (New York: M.J. Ivers & Company, 1891).

9 Barbara Ferman, *Challenging the Growth Machine*, (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 1996).

10 *Ibid.*, 24.

11 *Ibid.*, 24.

12 Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1991-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

13 Park and Burgess, *The City*, 43.

14 Andrew Abbott, *Department and Discipline: Chicago Sociology at One Hundred* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

15 Robert B. Owens, “Mapping the City: Innovation and Continuity in the Chicago School of Sociology, 1920–1934,” *American Sociologist* 43, no. 3 (2012): 264–293.

16 Park and Burgess, *The City*, 3.

17 Abbott, *Department and discipline: Chicago Sociology at One Hundred*, 202.

18 St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, introduction to *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, by Richard Wright, xvii-xviii (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970 [1945]).

19 Carla Cappetti, *Writing Chicago: Modernism, Ethnography, and the Novel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 2.

20 Dennis R. Judd and Dick W. Simpson, eds., *The City, Revisited: Urban Theory from Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Robert J. Sampson, *Great American City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

21 Daniel Silver and Terry Nichols Clark, “The Power of Scenes: Quantities of amenities and qualities of places,” *Cultural Studies* ahead-of-print (2014): 1-25; Stephen Sawyer and Terry Clark, “La politique culturelle et la démocratie métropolitaine à l’âge de la défiance,” *Politiques culturelles 21: Débats et enjeux en Europe*, eds. Guy Saez et Jean-Pierre Saez (Paris: Editions de la découverte, 2012).

22 Daniel Silver and Terry Nichols Clark, “Buzz as an Urban Resource,” *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 38, no. 1 (2013).