Experiences in Place
The political effects of geographically-targeted school policy changes

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How Do Citizens Respond to Policy Change?
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“Mayor Rahm Emanuel closed . . . schools in “low-income neighborhoods” for “underutilization.” I’m no politician but I do know that schools underutilized are schools underfunded . . . We will continue to fight . . . until justice is served to our children on a platter.”¹

¹Parent at Dyett High School, 2012
How Do Citizens Respond to Policy Change?

- Schools are community-anchoring policy institutions
- Connected to a specific geography
- Most people have significant interactions with them
- Closures are disruptive and unpopular, and generate opposition
Models of Policy and Action

- Democracy: Attitudes $\rightarrow$ Policy
Models of Policy and Action

- Democracy: Attitudes $\rightarrow$ Policy
- Feedback: Policy $\rightarrow$ Attitudes
Models of Policy and Action

- Democracy: Attitudes $\rightarrow$ Policy
- Feedback: Policy $\rightarrow$ Attitudes
- “Negative,” place-based policies in marginalized communities?
Experience in Place Model

Policy Intervention

Community at T1: Low Information, Low Participation
Learning & Organizing
Community at T2: Higher Participation, Informed Political Attitudes
Given a geographically-targeted policy,

- Mobilization higher near policy focus
- Greater changes in behavior/attitudes near policy
- ...especially oppositional politics

Test Case: School Closures in Chicago, 2012-2013
Timeline: School Closures and Chicago Elections

2010 • “Before”
2011 • Emanuel Election 1
2012-3 • Wave of School Closures
2012 • School Board Referendum 1
2015 • Emanuel Election 2
2016 • “After”
Closures: Concentrated in Black Communities
Observable Implications

Attitude Shifts

- Near Closures $\rightarrow$ Opposition to Closures $\rightarrow$ Negative Evaluations of Mayor
- Near Closures, Reduced Support for Emanuel
- Near Closures, Increased Participation

Mobilization

- Near Closures, Higher Participation
Analytic Strategy and Data

Before and After Comparisons

- Election Results (from Chicago Democracy Project)
- Participation Measures (from CCES)

Proximity to School Closures

- Distance to a closed school (for Election Results)
- Co-location in a ZIP code (for CCES)

Proximity to Closed School $\rightarrow$ Change in Behavior
Changes in Election Results
Political Participation Shifts

CCES, 2010 and 2014 Waves

• 4 participation measures: Meeting Attendance
• 3 groups: AfAm in Closure ZIPs, AfAm not in Closure ZIPs, Non-AfAm
• Compare Shifts: Difference-in-Difference
Closures Prompted Increased Participation

Changes in Participation by Closure Status, 2010–2014

- AfAm, Closure ZIPs
- Afam, Non–Closure ZIPs
- Non–Afam

Category of participation:
- No Partic.
- Total Partic.*
- Meeting
- Sign
- Work
- Donate $
Political Participation Shifts

CCES, 2010 and 2014 Waves
- 4 participation measures: Meeting Attendance
- 3 groups: AfAm in Closure ZIPs, AfAm not in Closure ZIPs, Non-AfAm
- Compare Shifts: Difference-in-Difference

Estimated effect of School Closures: 19 percent shift in Meeting Attendance
Elected School Board Referenda

Local Ballot Measures to Change School Board

- Shift from mayor-nomination to elections
- Non-binding
- Precinct-level organization to get on ballot
- Ultimately, strong support where it was
Precincts Near Closed Schools Were More Likely to Mobilize

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Precinct Type</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>Near Closures (%)</th>
<th>Middle-Distance (%)</th>
<th>Far from Closures (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobilizing</td>
<td>2647</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>48.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>De-Mobilizing</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Always Mobilized</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Never Mobilized</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Total Precinct Fragments and percentages in each ballot measure category. Proximity categories are top-third, middle-third, and bottom-third of distance between precinct fragment centroid and nearest school closure.
Closures and Meeting Attendance Drove Negative Schools Evaluations for African Americans Only
Turnout Emanuel increased slightly more near closed schools.
Support for Emanuel Fell More Near Closed Schools
Support for Emanuel Fell More Near Closed Schools

![Graph showing the relationship between miles to the nearest closed school and change in Emanuel vote, 2011-2015.](image)

**Shortname**: Experiences in Place
Election Changes, 2011-2015

Based on Regression Framework:
Results Summary: Proximity to Closures

Mobilization

- 11% Increased Meeting Participation
- 10% Increased Mobilization on 2015 School Board Ballot Measure (per mile)
- 1% relative increase in local election turnout, 2011-2015 (per mile)

Attitude Shifts

- Negative Evaluations of Schools Among AfAm
- Negative Evaluations of Mayor
- Greater Decreased in Electoral Support for Mayor, 2011-2015
Place-based policies have localized political effects
Policy changes inform and mobilize communities
Countervailing effects of disorganizing policy itself?