

Limited Scopes of Repair: Black Reparations Strategies and the Constraints of Local Redress Policy



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We consider two local reparations cases—the Evanston Restorative Housing Program and Chicago reparations for police torture survivors. We argue that the programs are shaped by the differing political opportunities, the local context, and the social location of their advocates given that one was constructed within government systems in Evanston and the other largely by grassroots organizers in Chicago. Furthermore, both programs are criticized to varying degrees as being exclusive in their design and implementation. We term this exclusion a process of deliberative marginalization, whereby some of the most vulnerable and most directly affected beneficiaries of a redress initiative are left out of deliberations and implementation decisions about the initiative’s design. Subsequently, this study shows both the promise and constraints of reparations policy at the level of local government.

Keywords: reparations, social movements, racial justice, local and urban politics, policy advocacy

Reparations for historical injustices to Black Americans is a social movement and policy objective that reaches back centuries in the United States (Brooks 1999; Martin and Yáñez 2007). Defined as “a program of acknowledgement, redress, and closure for a grievous injustice,” reparations have been authorized by the U.S. federal government for

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1. The first author (Davies) conducted the Evanston case research (that included recruiting, interviewing, and coding the data on advocates and recipients), wrote the Evanston case portions of the article, wrote sections of

genocide against Indigenous and Native communities and for the Japanese internment during the Second World War—but, as of yet, not for the centuries of persistent and systematic harms done to Black people (Darity and Mullen 2020, 2). Indeed, decades of public opinion survey research show that vast majorities of the U.S. population consistently do not support Black reparations (Younis 2019). But what was implausible became imaginable after the 2020 protests decrying George Floyd’s murder by Minneapolis police and calling for redress for racial injustices. Since then, the political tide has shifted somewhat as the possibility of Black reparations receives unprecedented attention in public discourse and policymaking, particularly at the local level where cities, states, universities, and religious institutions are implementing racial redress programs for past harms done specifically to Black people (Cornish, Mehta, and Hale 2021).

In this article, we take the growing number of racial redress initiatives at the local level as an opportunity to explore variation in both the vision and implementation of Black reparations. This analysis helps to better conceptualize Black reparations as constituting not a singular or unified vision of redress but instead as constituting diverse visions and evolving strategies that vary depending on political context, political opportunity structures, and the diverse social locations and political priorities held by reparations advocates, activists, and beneficiaries.

At the same time, this analysis demonstrates how even very different approaches to advocating for reparations can suffer from deliberative marginalization, which we define as processes whereby the most vulnerable and central beneficiaries of a racial redress initiative are to some degree left out of critical deliberations and implementation decisions about the initia-

tive’s design. In other words, it is not only local historical legacies of injustice that influence which harms Black reparations programs are and are not designed to address, but also the positionalities and access of the stakeholders involved (for example, movement actors or would-be beneficiaries) and the extent to which those diverse stakeholders are able to participate (that is, to exercise voice and influence) in designing and implementing a reparations policy program. These factors, among them whose experiences are and are not represented in policy advocacy, shape the limited intervention possibilities of Black reparations as facilitated through the state.

We draw out this argument by analyzing two recent cases of racial redress—the Restorative Housing Program that addresses past housing discrimination against Black people in Evanston, Illinois, and the reparations ordinance redressing decades of police torture and abuse done to Black people in Chicago, Illinois, each the first of their kind to exist in the United States. We use mainly interviews with two types of actors: movement advocates for these reparations projects and those who were recipients or eligible recipients of reparations benefits in the programs, in addition to sociohistorical data (for example, city documents and administrative records, news articles, legal documents) to further historicize and contextualize each case. Ultimately, these case studies have implications for equity and inclusion in the design of racial redress initiatives.

BACKGROUND LITERATURE

The case for Black reparations is not new in the United States. At least since the U.S. government betrayed its promise to transfer lands to formerly enslaved people, a discourse and oral history tradition has endured in Black communities about the U.S. exploitation of Black labor,

the research design, acquired grant funding to support the study, and led and oversaw the team’s overall research schedule. The second author (Jackson) conducted the Chicago case research (that included recruiting, interviewing, and coding the data on Chicago activists and related stakeholders in Chicago), wrote most of the Chicago case portions of the article and sections of the research design. The third author (Knight) also conducted Chicago case research (that included recruiting, interviewing, coding data on, and writing the sections about survivors of police torture in Chicago), integrated the sections of the article, drafted the concept of deliberative marginalization, and wrote the introduction, background, case selection, part of the methods, and conclusion. All served as editors and revisers.

encroachments on Black freedom, and refusal to repay what is owed to Black people (Biondi 2007; Darity and Mullen 2020). This discourse found focus in the advocacy of the Reparations Committee of Descendants of United States Slaves, founded in 1955 by Audley “Queen Mother” Moore, which provided grassroots education on reparations to communities, activists, and scholars for the next several decades (Biondi 2007, 256–57). Subsequently, reparations discourse gained greater visibility in different streams of Black political thought, for example, among Black civil rights activists such as Martin Luther King Jr. (as cited in McCaulley 2023) and more recently among Black public intellectuals such as Nikole Hannah-Jones (2021) and Ta-Nehisi Coates (2014), notably in “The Case for Reparations.” Reparations has also been a particularly consistent goal and theme among U.S. Black nationalist and internationalist groups, from the Nation of Islam to the Black Panther Party to some segments of today’s Movement for Black Lives. Thus, as both a political project and objective that operates at the intersection of multiple Black political traditions, the contemporary reparations struggle can be said to incorporate two important approaches in the Black Radical Tradition—an economic analysis of White supremacy and the use of internationalist solidarity networks to define structural racism as a human rights violation (Biondi 2007, 258).

Still, despite greater support in the Democratic Party and in the U.S. House of Representatives, overall congressional support for Bill H.R. 40 (the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act) is divided, thereby making Black reparations elusive at best at the national level. Although relatively greater numbers of U.S. citizens supported reparations in 2020, two-thirds of U.S. adults oppose reparations in the form of land or cash payments (Blazina and Cox 2022). Indeed, the public is split regarding whether the United States should issue a formal apology for slavery (Younis 2019).

Some movement has occurred at the local and institutional levels, though at relatively modest scales. For example, the city of Asheville, North Carolina, committed \$2.1 million

toward reparations in July 2021, joining cities such as Providence (Rhode Island), Iowa City (Iowa), and Amherst (Massachusetts) in crafting a racial redress initiative (AP News 2021). Universities across the country have also begun a Universities Studying Slavery Consortium, with Georgetown University implementing a \$400,000 per year reparations plan to pay the tuition of descendants of those it enslaved and Harvard University committing \$100 million for reparations for its ties to slavery. Dioceses within the Episcopal Church have committed millions of dollars in reparations for the Transatlantic Slave Trade. At the state level, the California Reparations Task Force is currently considering several proposals, including one that would provide each Black resident of California with \$360,000 in direct cash payments (Breslau and Butler 2023). These programs are not without their critics. Notably, Darity and Mullen (2023, 201–202) argue that the notion of local reparations is “an impossibility, a virtual oxymoron,” because local and state budgets do not have the financial wherewithal to realize the goal of reparations, specifically with respect to addressing the Black-White wealth gap (for a landscape review, see Reneau 2024, this issue).

That said, reparations programs at the local level offer interesting insights because some local initiatives exist that redress injustices beyond or in addition to slavery. For instance, local initiatives have been implemented to redress racial discrimination and exploitation in the housing sector, particularly as related to redlining and the devaluation of Black property. These different types of reparations initiatives are important to study not only because they evidence the multiple forms that reparations can take, but also because many of these forms of racialized injustice (such as housing discrimination and exploitation and the harms of incarceration) may be traced directly from their origins to families and individuals alive today. This ability to directly trace racialized harms also partly addresses concerns raised in public opinion surveys about the difficulty of attributing responsibility and eligibility for the injustice of slavery several generations in the past (Jones 2022).

CASE SELECTION

This article investigates two such cases of racial redress initiatives in the Chicago area, an important site in which to explore differing approaches to racial redress given its histories of Black dispossession and racialized state violence. The area is also home to concentrated numbers of activists and organizers who have long advocated for reparations for Black people who have experienced violence and dispossession. The region thus enables the study of not one but two redress cases—one advanced by members of local government and the other by grassroots organizers and advocates. Together, these cases show how the idea of reparations takes on different meanings and emphases even among proximate Black reparative movements, depending on the context, nature of the harm caused, and who is affected. A single case can shed light on the dynamics of a given redress effort, but a dual case study allows for an additional level of analysis through which to examine processes that may persist but go underrecognized across settings, such as political marginalization.

The first case is in the city of Evanston, just north of Chicago, which has committed to providing redress for the city's history of anti-Black discrimination in areas of housing, economic development, and education. This is the first initiative of its kind that is a long-term program, originally a commitment of \$10 million over ten years.² Initially intended to be funded with tax revenue from recreational marijuana use, the first iteration of the program is the Local Reparations Restorative Housing Program. This program is designated to repair past discrimination in housing policy specifically. In its first wave of payments, the initiative provided grants valued at \$25,000 each for home repairs, mortgage assistance, or downpayments for a home in Evanston for sixteen recipients. Although city officials have expressed an intention to expand the program into other areas, including economic development and education, the program has received local and national criticism for being too narrowly fo-

cused and not enough of an intervention on the racial wealth gap to qualify as reparations (Mullen and Darity 2021; Perry and Ray 2021). Thus, the city has been criticized as “parading an ordinary housing voucher program as a reparations plan” (Darity and Mullen 2023, 201).

The second case is the city of Chicago's reparations ordinance, approved by the City Council in May 2015, which is the first reparations initiative in the nation to acknowledge and take steps to redress police torture. The “culmination of more than twenty-five years of collective struggle by torture survivors and their allies” (Baer 2020, 11), the reparations ordinance acknowledges that beginning in 1972 at least 120 Black people, mostly but not exclusively Black men, were kidnapped and tortured by Chicago police, coerced to confess to crimes they did not commit, and (for many) forced to endure decades in prison based on these false confessions (Chicago Police Torture Archive 2021; Kitchen, Jones, and McBride 2018; Ralph 2019; Reeves et al. 2019). Ultimately, the Chicago reparations ordinance included \$5.5 million to survivors of police torture (the original proposed amount was reportedly about four times that), free access to the city's colleges for survivors and their family members, the creation of a public memorial, a mandatory curriculum on the subject in Chicago Public Schools, a formal apology, and the establishment of a justice center on Chicago's South Side dedicated to addressing the effects of torture (Chicago Police Torture Archive 2021; Baer 2020, 11; Baer 2018, 771–74). Still, despite these victories, survivors including Mark Clements, Marvin Reeves, Anthony Holmes, and Darrell Cannon felt that these gains failed to constitute true reparations because they have not resulted in exonerating torture survivors who remain in prison and providing support to every torture survivor (Chicago Police Torture Archive 2021). As of January 2019, at least sixty-five known torture survivors remained incarcerated due to fabricated confessions or confessions extracted through torture methods (Pulley 2019).

Together, these two cases showcase a range

2. In 2022, the commitment grew to \$20 million over ten years, sourced from additional revenue from a real estate transfer tax.

of what racial redress policy can look like at the local level as well as equity-related factors that can affect the reach of its design and impact.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH

Our research process consisted of interviews with reparations advocates, movement actors, and recipients and eligible recipients (see tables A.1 and A.2 for a list and description of our interviewees). Between August 2022 and April 2023, we interviewed thirty individuals who occupied one or both roles. Roughly half of the interview participants were advocates, movement actors, or recipients of the Housing Restoration Program in Evanston, and the other half were advocates, movement actors, police torture survivors, or eligible recipients of what became the reparations ordinance for police torture in Chicago. In Evanston, we conducted sixteen interviews with Evanston City Council members, local faith leaders, recipients, bureaucrats, and detractors of the city's reparations initiative by Zoom, by phone, or in person. An additional fourteen interviews were conducted on Zoom or by phone with Chicago Torture Justice activists, movement lawyers, artists, alderpersons, community members, and activists and organizations involved in the We Charge Genocide campaign (Ransby 2018; We Charge Genocide 2014), in addition to police torture survivors who received compensation and who declined compensation. Each interview participant reviewed, signed, and received a copy of a consent form as required by our respective university institutional review boards.

We recruited interview participants through direct email and phone outreach via existing

networks as well as through referral or snowball sampling techniques. During the recruitment process and directly before each interview, we explained our research objectives and reviewed ethics procedures and protocols to protect the confidentiality of interview participants. Each institutional review board at our respective universities assessed and approved our research procedures. Interviews lasted roughly one hour and were recorded primarily on Zoom.³ Thereafter, with the support of two research assistants, we transcribed and coded the interviews using a mixture of initial coding aligned to our interview protocol and analytic coding based on emergent themes (Deterding and Waters 2018).⁴ Guided by the interview protocol, we triangulated our thematic analysis of the interviews with notes and reports from various resources, including newspaper articles, reports from the Reparations Committee, for Evanston, and archival data and reports from the People's Law Office and the Chicago Torture Justice Memorials, notably the Chicago Police Torture Archive (2021), for Chicago. Much of this triangulation work focused on the processes of structuring the reparations initiatives, local participation, and political and bureaucratic challenges.

FINDINGS

Our research into these two local initiatives—one focused on redress for housing discrimination in Evanston, and the other on redress for police torture in Chicago—highlights the contested nature of Black reparations at the local level. We find that the conceptualization, design, and advocacy and implementation strategies used in the reparations movements relate

3. Specifically, after completing a first layer of summative coding to determine the contextual details of the interview and to draw out background information about the interviewees, we engaged in a second layer of coding—thematic coding—to analyze the transcript for themes and concepts which illustrated the power dynamics, decision-making strategies, and challenges facing activists and organizers for Chicago Torture Justice and the Evanston Housing Restoration Program. The final layer of coding—structural coding—drew out key systemic and processual aspects of these reparations advocacy efforts. This final stage also focused on identifying key stakeholders, leaders, and interlocutors. Although most recruitment and interviews were conducted virtually, some research activities were also done in person. One of the authors, Davies, visited a community gathering and panel at Evanston's Second Baptist Church in October 2022 to recruit council members in person. Davies was also invited to an Evanston reparations recipient's home to conduct an interview.

4. Davies used Rev to transcribe her interviews; Jackson had research assistants help transcribe from Zoom interview transcripts; Knight used a transcription company to transcribe interviews with police torture survivors.

in particular to the political context and political opportunity structure, as well as to the extent to which actors of differing positionalities and priorities were or were not involved in the policy design. Across both cases, reparations movement advocates capitalized on political opportunities, or openings in the political structure (McAdam 1999; Meyer 2004; Tarrow 1998), that enabled them to realize many of their political goals.⁵ This observation reveals how the actions of reparations movement advocates are best understood in relation to the political context—the constellation of opportunities and constraints—that sparks or inhibits political contention (Meyer 2004, 128).

But even though priorities and strategies differed substantially between Evanston and Chicago, both reparations movements and subsequent racial redress initiatives featured some degree of deliberative marginalization in how responsive they were to those who were most impacted by racialized harm. The Evanston program was championed and shepherded by Black political elites and faith leaders within a more broadly affluent and progressive city. The first issue area of repair in that context was housing, and the strategies of action were to use existing institutional channels to build support and political will despite public concerns and critiques that the program is administratively flawed and not comprehensive enough to be considered reparations (for a detailed examination of how the Evanston initiative mobilized local progressive racial attitudes, see Newton and Nelsen 2024, this issue).⁶

Conversely, the movement for reparations for police torture in Chicago was led by long-

time activists who sought systemic redress by using extra-institutionalized avenues. Therefore, given that these actors were intervening in a broader history of racialized dispossession, the focus of the Chicago reparations ordinance was not only compensation but also investments in a torture justice center to address trauma, a curriculum to educate public school students, and a torture justice memorial to educate the public. Yet the scope of the Chicago reparations ordinance was constrained because incarcerated torture survivors among others were unable to give substantive input on the ordinance.

ORIGINS

In the next section, we discuss the policy design and advocacy processes for the Evanston and Chicago reparations programs.

Evanston: Working Within the System

The current redress initiative in Evanston was produced and shaped by a number of advocates and politicians in concert with city government. We can understand the Evanston policy as one that emanated from political officials and that was developed with some community input. The resolution was primarily the brainchild of former Evanston 5th Ward alderwoman Robin Rue Simmons, former alderman Peter Braithwaite, and former alderwoman Ann Rainey. Simmons, however, emerged as the most visible and vocal champion for the legislation. She remarked that coming to reparations as a local project was a revelatory process. She said, “It really was [my] twenty years of work in business and advocacy that made me

5. Social movement theorists propose that changes in opportunity structures, especially “openings” in the political structure, create contexts ripe for contention (McAdam 1999; Tarrow 1998). This framework has been referred to as the political process or political opportunity model. Proponents of this framework hold that political opportunities comprise stable—though not necessarily permanent or official—features of the political system that incentivize or discourage collective action by influencing people’s expectations of success or failure (Tarrow 1998, 77; McAdam 1999). According to this view, potential challengers to the established political structure are often excluded from full access or participation, or the policies that they support are not popular with the general public or those who are in power. That said, significant social change or broad change in the political structure can “significantly undermine the calculations and assumptions on which the political establishment is structured,” thus creating openings for challengers (McAdam 2004, 203).

6. According to Newton and Nelsen, the program appeased White residents’ desires to reinvigorate Evanston’s commitments to racial justice while sidelining Black residents’ concerns about how reparations funds should be distributed.

hyper aware of the oppression, the discrimination, the gaps in the Black community in every area of liveability, not just business and home ownership, but education and overall quality of life.”

When she was elected as an alderperson in 2019, she realized that “no more ordinary public policy, no additional programming without redress or reparations, even at a local level, would get us to the repair, equity, [or] justice that we deserve as a Black community.” As a supporter of H.R. 40 and reparations for slavery, however, she believed that addressing “hyperlocal harms” could be a point of repair for the Black community. In 2019, Simmons requested a memo from the Evanston City Council clerk, formerly Devon Reid, to explore the concept of reparations in Evanston.⁷ With the knowledge that Evanston did not have a history of slavery, the memo sought to understand the specific ways Evanston was implicated in anti-Blackness and discrimination.

Simmons then sent the idea to the Evanston City Council Equity and Empowerment Commission, at that time led by former alderperson Jane Grover. After a trip to South Africa, and inspired by their post-apartheid truth and reconciliation process, Simmons returned to Evanston with renewed vigor. The first public meeting on reparations was in April 2019. Simmons came armed with the memo prepared by Reid, as well as additional research she referenced from the Chicago-based think tank Metropolitan Planning Council (2018), a report titled “The Cost of Segregation.” Simmons knew that she needed to build support for reparations, and so she invited “advocates to come out that had been fighting long term for justice and repair,” a housing justice organization, and Chicago representatives from the National Association of Realtors. She also knew that she “needed leaders that people respected.” So, Simmons reached out to Illinois members of Congress asking for letters of support, and she engaged prominent organizations and commu-

nity members including the Thurgood Marshall Law Center, Judge Lionel Jean-Baptiste, and Reverend Michael Nabors of Second Street Baptist Church.

In her research, Simmons learned that, in 2002, the Evanston City Council had passed a supportive resolution for H.R. 40, the national proposed legislation that would consider the process of reparations at the national level (Evanston City Council 2002). Simmons used this history as well as the current reality of the racial wealth gap as a point to galvanize City Council and garner support for local redress policy. Simmons also built relationships with reparations advocates, including the Redress Network, the National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC), and Kamm Howard of the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N’COBRA). Simmons said that learning from these long-time advocates “matured” the work as she learned more about what reparations is and how it differs from typical public policy. She learned about the forms of reparations that are more than just a “cash check,” in addition to “international law standards and five components of reparations.”⁸

In November 2019, the Evanston City Council approved \$10 million dollars for ten years of funding for reparations in the areas of housing, education, and economic development, which would be paid for by a tax on cannabis revenue (Meadows 2019; Evanston City Council 2019). The project, however, hit a roadblock in 2020. Interviewees remarked that Evanston City Council had intended to delay reparations funding in light of the COVID-19 crisis. Simmons continued to push for reparations funding, countering that Black residents in Evanston would be most affected by COVID (Martinez 2020). This crisis, then, exposed the need for and provided an opportunity to advocate for reparations policy. Even so, in the following months, a long bureaucratic process would create new challenges.

7. Devon Reid, “Memo on Reparations,” City of Evanston, memorandum, April 18, 2019, <https://www.cityofevanston.org/home/showpublisheddocument/71150/637854525387270000> (accessed February 2, 2024).

8. Those five components include restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition, as articulated by the United Nations (2005).

Chicago: Organizing Outside the System

Contrary to the Evanston reparations case was the long-standing activist work outside city government led by members of the Chicago police torture justice movement. These activists used political openings in the city to promote reparations for the torture people experienced. Many of the people with whom we spoke, including organizers such as Alice Kim, Flint Taylor, and Todd St. Hill, noted that they were already active in efforts to end police violence, close supermax prisons, and free those on death row, such as Mumia Abu Jamal, before entering the local reparations movement in Chicago. Therefore, they saw the work of reparations for police torture as a logical extension of their broader efforts to end trauma and harm against Chicago's most vulnerable residents (G. Taylor 2016). Many of the organizing efforts these actors engaged in were also rooted in restorative practices that center the harm against communities rather than the institutions who frequently administer the harm.

These movement efforts had their origins in the 1980s. According to Aislinn Pulley, co-executive director of the Chicago Torture Justice Center, a grassroots community organization called Black People Against Torture formed during that time and constituted "really the very first organizing [effort] around torture in Chicago . . . when there were maybe 5 people at that time . . . that were being publicly acknowledged as torture survivors. It was through that [initial] organizing that [Jon] Burge [the police commander who oversaw many acts of police torture] was [eventually] fired." Pulley noted that this group worked to expose Burge's torture tactics and centered the experiences of survivors. "They [anti-police torture activists] really did the groundwork," she said. "They showed up for people's court dates. They were doing the organizing, marching, rallying."

The dynamic of working outside of, or in contestation with, the existing system shows through the political context and political opportunity structure within which the reparations ordinance was conceived and executed. To raise awareness of a reparations bill before the city, the Chicago Torture Justice Memorials (CTJM), a social movement organization

founded in 2010, supported several public actions in the fall of 2013 and winter of 2014 that included a rally outside of City Hall featuring dozens of volunteers from Amnesty International (Baer 2020, 202). CTJM also worked with We Charge Genocide—a formation of activists that prepared and gave testimony about police violence in Chicago to the United Nations Committee Against Torture—to consciously use and advance the language of reparations as necessary for accountability for police violence (G. Taylor 2019, 15; Ralph 2019; We Charge Genocide 2014).

The movement for reparations also benefited greatly when political opportunities opened after Chicago Mayor Richard Daley retired and former White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel was elected. So, in 2013, activists and organizers were able to put pressure on mayor Emanuel to publicly apologize for torture in Chicago. This acknowledgment was a sign of success for reparations activists. Moreover, as he faced a contentious reelection campaign in 2014 and the nationally publicized police killing of seventeen-year-old Laquan McDonald that year, Emanuel was eager to look progressive on matters of police violence. Subsequently, Emmanuel reportedly suppressed the video depicting the police shooting of McDonald while also beginning to negotiate with organizers about a reparations package (Baer 2020). These events overlapped with the police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, after which CTJM launched an insistent reparations campaign that included a protest march from the police headquarters to City Hall to hand Emanuel a forty-thousand-signature petition in support of reparations (Reeves et al. 2019, 286).

Subsequently, in 2015, Rahm Emanuel was forced into a runoff with Jesus "Chuy" Garcia. For Mariame Kaba and other organizers, this was a unique political opening within which to raise the issue of reparations as a potential agenda item for the two political candidates (see, for example, Kaba 2021; Chicago Police Torture Archive 2021). By putting pressure on Emanuel during the runoff season, organizers and activists forced him to engage with their framing of the reparations ordinance. As Pulley

recalled, “We did a targeted six-month campaign, and through that whole six months I did not believe we were gonna win. I was very much used to [the idea that] you fight for the principle of it, you know, and eventually we win. But not right now. I remember even being in City Council as it was being passed. I was just so, [pause] I was in so much disbelief.”

The Chicago reparations ordinance passed in May 2015 and marked a first-of-its-kind success whereby local movements, using the political opportunities available to them, forced concessions from city government in the form of a redress initiative for the harms of police torture and violence (Losier 2019).

Still, the focus on survivors’ lived experiences changed the dynamic around which issues were prioritized. Namely, it led to an emphasis on working for Chicago reparations beyond the constraints of the existing local government and with an eye to the needs and concerns facing survivors. For example, Alice Kim, cofounder of CTJM, was given the role of imagining how to hold the Chicago police who perpetuated torture accountable without relying on existing legal models. This political work was especially important following Burge’s conviction and sentencing. “Survivors are still suffering from the trauma of torture . . . people are still incarcerated,” Kim explained. “These are all things . . . that we knew prior to this. It wasn’t just like, okay, get Jon Burge convicted, and that’s the end of it. But with his [Burge’s] conviction, it [the issue of repair] just was staring us in the face in a way that you just can’t ignore.”

Thus, after Burge’s 2010 conviction for perjury and obstruction of justice in federal court, activists, organizers, and survivors alike were still wondering how to conceive justice and accountability given the models that previously existed. They began organizing to have the state commute the death sentences of those who had been wrongly convicted in relation to the Burge torture tactics. Although some sentences were commuted, most were usually only reduced to life without parole. This did not feel like justice for activists and organizers like Kim. “The system was still left intact in terms

of Jon Burge,” said Kim, who credited Stan Willis with effectively connecting the torture cases with the movement for reparations. According to Kim, Willis suggested that survivors of police torture should receive reparations benefits. This had never been conceived of before, but Kim and others were excited about the possibility. “Anything is possible if you can imagine it,” said Kim. “That’s the whole point. And I think that really helped. It helped free us in terms of thinking about what a reparations ordinance might look like.” From this imaginative process, the Chicago Torture Justice Memorials (CTJM) was born.⁹

These two cases exemplify how the process of local racial redress initiatives emerge directly from the organizing priorities of reparations movement actors who in turn make use of the political opportunities available to them. The design process of the Evanston racial redress program reflected the experiences, learning, and positionality of local Black politicians and other political elites; the conception of reparations for police torture in Chicago was reflected in the organizing history and evolving objectives of police torture justice activists. This comparative analysis shows how access and influence determine the process by which reparations programs materialize at the local level.

POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

The following section reviews the policy implementation processes for the Evanston and Chicago reparations programs.

Evanston: Reparations Meets Bureaucracy

When the program passed the Evanston City Council, it was time to figure out how to design the program and distribute reparations funds. Once they had established the fund and committed \$10 million of recreational cannabis sales tax, the Reparations Committee knew that they would, based on community feedback at meetings held in July 2019, prioritize reparations programming around housing, economic development, and education. Simmons remarked, “So then we had to figure out what’s the first initiative? How do we determine eligibility? How do we manage the program? Who’s

9. “Chicago Torture Justice Memorials,” “About,” <https://chicagotorture.org/about> (accessed February 2, 2024).

going to be a program administrator? Staff became very heavily responsible for the success of the roll out of [the program].” Thus the design of the reparations program was in the hands of the city government, and, for that reason, was beholden to the feasibility and legal constraints therein.

Councilmember Bobby Burns asserts that Simmons smartly focused first on securing funding for reparative legislation from the city council. After that, the programming and guidelines were to be determined by city staff in partnership with the Reparations Committee. This included (among others) former Interim City Manager Kimberly Richardson, Assistant to the City Manager Tasheik Kerr, and former Corporation Counsel Nicholas Cummings. City employees were responsible for figuring out eligibility as laid out by the program’s legal counsel and, as Simmons described it, finding a “narrowly tailored remedy” to the harm identified by the Reparations Committee. Cummings emphasized that, for the program to be constitutional, the city government needed to find evidence of historical discrimination against Black Evanston residents.¹⁰ Although Richardson felt some trepidation about the program, particularly how the city government could institutionalize long-term equity-building in Evanston, she proceeded with the work. Leading up to the implementation of the reparations program, she discussed the intense process of design and scrutiny to ensure that the program did not exclude or discriminate. Richardson discussed looking to other redress programs in American history to consider program design, including the “Japanese encampment and their subsequent reparations,” as well as “other communities, especially the Indigenous, and really looking at Indigenous lands that were municipal owned, [asking] how did that transfer happen? And what [were the] legal ramifications?”

After deep research and feasibility studies, Richardson delved into the possibilities of designing a housing program that redressed past

harm. Richardson also stated that in a discussion with another city employee they looked at a redlining map of Evanston and its census tract. Richardson recounted the conversation: “[She said,] ‘Take a look at the redlining map and look at the census tract. What do you see overlap?’ And when she sat there I was like, holy sh-t. It’s almost consistent to our U.S. census tract of where our low-income families still reside. It is almost identical to the redline[d] map. And I said, ‘Oh my goodness . . . I was like, I think we have a path now. I can see it. It’s housing, it’s related to this.’”

Richardson connected with Dino Robinson and the Shorefront Legacy Center and other community historians to ensure accurate historical framing. Robinson recalled putting together a report on Evanston’s history of racial discrimination (Robinson and Thompson 2021). The City of Evanston, he said, came to Shorefront, asking, “What did we do?” With the Evanston History Center, Shorefront responded by providing details about the city’s history of housing discrimination (among other forms of exclusion): Black Americans in Evanston were pushed out of their neighborhoods when a formerly Black residential area was zoned as a commercial district. Evanston also enabled redlining, which local financial institutions also adopted, resulting in the devaluation of property in Black areas and making it difficult for Black people in Evanston to secure home and business loans.

Thus Evanston’s history of racist zoning laws would be redressed through the Restorative Housing Program. The Reparations Committee selected 1919 through 1969 as the period of eligibility, applicable for Black residents that lived in Evanston at the time and their direct descendants. Richardson began to design the program and write the policy, modeling the program after other government housing programs. The city council approved \$400,000 for a racial redress initiative related to housing—allowing \$25,000 per recipient to be used for mortgage assistance, downpayment assistance,

10. Cummings noted in an interview that he relied on the Supreme Court case *City of Richmond v. J. A. Croson Co.*, 488 U.S. 469 (1989) which ruled against Richmond’s requirement that minority businesses be awarded 30 percent of the city’s construction contracts. The Court asserted that Richmond needed to provide clear and compelling evidence of past discrimination to justify the remedy.

funding for home improvements, or for the funds to be passed to a direct descendant (City of Evanston 2021). The program is intended to “Revitalize, preserve and stabilize Black/African-American owner-occupied homes in Evanston; Increase homeownership and build the wealth of Black/African-American residents; Build intergenerational equity amongst Black/African-American residents; and Improve the retention rate of Black/African-American homeowners in the City of Evanston” (City of Evanston 2023b).

However, one council member did oppose the program once it was decided that housing would be the focus in 2021. That was former alderwoman Cicely Fleming, who wrote in a later statement that the program was “reparations in name only” and “restrictive and only allows for limited participation.” Fleming was also concerned that the program was moving forward too quickly without enough community input.¹¹ Even so, the program moved forward.

The process of applying for housing reparations was open to three categories of individuals: ancestors, direct descendants, or Evanston residents that can provide evidence that they experienced housing discrimination after 1969. Ancestors were living in Evanston between 1919 and 1969 and were at least eighteen years of age at the time. Kerr said that some acceptable evidence includes “contracted purchase of home in Evanston, rental contract release, state check stub, tax return, W-2, social security statement, bills, library card, bank statement, obituary, birth certificates and others.” Direct descendants needed to prove their relation to ancestors living in Evanston during the allotted period. Reparations committee members and staff emphasized that they did not want to make the process complex or burdensome for those who wanted to apply. They also engaged

in public education on the process of applying for housing support. Burns affirmed, “It is not difficult to qualify, which is a good thing. When the application period was still open, I think every community center had at least one staff person that was trained to help people apply.” Ultimately, sixteen ancestors were selected to receive the first disbursement of \$25,000 each in January 2022 (Cahan 2022).

As they were designing the policy, Richardson and others were careful to incorporate the word Black rather than African American. When formulating the policy, Kerr reminded her that Evanston had a community of Jamaican descent that had lived in Evanston during the time frame of the housing discrimination. Richardson wanted to ensure that these individuals were not excluded from the possibility of receiving redress, given that this bill was rooted in housing discrimination against Black people living in Evanston—not reparations for slavery.¹²

In addition, part of the legal scrutiny and protection process meant that the city needed to be cautious about handing out \$25,000 and thereby making people vulnerable to tax liability and possible predation. Richardson says that for this reason, the program was initially designed to pay vendors or banks directly rather than place cash in the hands of recipients. As a result, joint partnerships for reparations were formed between the Evanston city government and private entities to facilitate and expand the opportunities for reparations. To help disburse funds and manage the program, the Reparations Committee decided to work with the Community Partners for Affordable Housing (CPAH), a local nonprofit organization committed to helping people “secure and retain” affordable housing.¹³ After recipients were determined, CPAH went to their homes and offered a quote for how much the

11. Cicely Fleming, “Statement on Resolution 37-R-27,” March 22., 2021, <https://www.cicelyfleming.com/blog/reparations> (accessed February 2, 2024).

12. This sentiment is reflected on the Evanston Local Reparations site, which affirms that the Restorative Housing Program “identifies eligible applicants as Black or African American persons having origins in any of the Black racial and ethnic groups of Africa” (City of Evanston 2023a).

13. Community Partners for Affordable Housing, “Our Mission and Values,” <https://www.cpahousing.org/about-us/our-mission-and-values/> (accessed February 2, 2024).

desired home repairs would cost. Contractors would then come and give additional quotes. Burns asserted that sometimes the CPAH quotes and the contractor's quotes were different, causing some frustration among recipients. Furthermore, that the most visible CPAH staff were White also caused suspicion among recipients and criticism of the program (though CPAH itself is a diverse organization). Richardson affirmed complaints that CPAH was not a Black-owned organization.¹⁴

Chicago: Building a Model from Scratch

By contrast, the development of the reparations ordinance in the Chicago police torture reparations case occurred outside government control, though in a complicated relationship with survivors of police torture, some of whom identified themselves via a public call by organizers. This meant that, rather than a top-down approach from government actors, the ordinance, which was crafted by those who were not directly harmed by Chicago police torture, was a result of conversations with and among Chicagoans who had stakes in the outcomes of those policies. At the same time, however, torture survivors who were incarcerated reported that they were not involved in nor fully informed about the process of designing the ordinance.

One of the key activists involved in drafting the Chicago reparations ordinance was Joey Mogul, who was embedded in social organizing related to prison abolition as early as 1992. In 1997, after leaving Chicago for a time, the activists returned and reconnected with the People's Law Office, a civil rights-based attorney collective that was fighting against state (including police) violence and working to free incarcerated people. It was in community with other lawyers, and organizers such as Stan Willis of the People's Law Office, that they learned how to conceive of reparations for police torture.

Willis seeded the idea of placing the Chicago torture cases on the international scene by focusing on the United Nations Convention Against Torture in 2006. For Mogul, it was critical to show that, even as grave injustices were being committed against incarcerated people at Guantanamo Bay, similar cases of torture were being committed on U.S. soil against U.S. citizens by the police (Mogul 2016). This exposure to an international framework laid the foundation for what became the reparations ordinance in Chicago. In conversations with international organizers and anti-torture activists, Mogul, who is White, learned ways to expand the vision for what could be considered reparative. Moving beyond cash payouts (one aspect of the reparations process), Mogul came to see that remembrance, archiving, and historicizing the experiences of victims of police torture would be central to the formulation of the reparations ordinance and its administrative processes.

In the late 2010s, members of the People's Law Office and other organizers began putting out a call for reparations. Essentially, they wanted not only to know how the community and survivors conceived of reparations, but also to draw out anyone who had been directly affected by the Burge torture tactics decades prior. Simultaneously, Mogul focused on the memorialization aspects of the reparations effort, initiating a call, along with artist Laurie Palmer, for potential reparations memorials. Before Jon Burge's criminal sentencing, Mogul and others worked to highlight the experiences of survivors. This is when the reparations ordinance was drafted as a potential memorial to survivors. As Mogul explained in an interview, "We ended up having an art exhibit in October of 2012 where we basically invited everyone to submit memorials, and we promised to put everyone's memorials up. And we did. And [we] had this exhibit at the Sullivan Art Galleries in

14. Furthermore, with an eye toward long-term planning for local reparations, reparations advocates constructed a nonprofit to raise and distribute funds for reparations in Evanston, the Reparations Stakeholder Authority of Evanston (RSAE) with logistical support from the Evanston Community Foundation. The RSAE is intended to fund reparations initiatives after the \$10 million over ten years from the Evanston City Government cannabis tax has run out. The RSAE board is term limited and is composed of members of "harmed" individuals in Evanston. The RSAE is composed of Simmons, Reverend Michael Nabors, Pastor Monté Dillard, Alderman Peter Braithwaite, Henry Wilkins, Spencer Jourdain and Dino Robinson.

the School of the Art Institute, and that's when I drafted the reparations ordinance as a speculative memorial. And I never thought in my wildest dreams we'd file it."

This initial draft of the reparations ordinance became the basis on which the final policy was built. Mogul opened the policy design process to community members, survivors, activists, and other organizers invested in the reparations struggle in Chicago. They sought feedback about the types of policies community members found critical to redress harm. One of the early revisions was expanding the reparations ordinance to include language regarding the teaching of Burge's actions and truth-telling in Chicago schools. Even though activists who had not been directly affected by torture had not originally conceived of this policy initiative as a potential way to redress the harm, it was in community with Black Chicagoans, especially survivors, that this aspect of the reparations ordinance became solidified. It was also during this phase that drafters removed any policies from the ordinance that would (or could) potentially feed the prison system. Calls to prosecute Burge's underlings were therefore excluded from the ordinance. In effect, writing the ordinance became at least partly rooted in an abolitionist ethos. And in 2013, the Chicago reparations ordinance was filed "as a way to frame the [reparations] conversation."

CRITIQUES AND RESPONSES

Though both programs were carefully designed and implemented, both have received critiques from potential beneficiaries. These critiques demonstrate the limits of creating racial redress policies through government systems.

Evanston: Pushing Program Alignment with Reparations Goals

Each initiative has received criticism that it falls short of its reparative mandate. In Evan-

ston, an ongoing source of contention revolves around whether the Restorative Housing Program can be considered reparations. One city council member voted against the program because they believed that it was not truly reparations, but most of the dissent has been directed at the design and implementation of the program, particularly its slow disbursement process. In addition, according to former corporation counsel Nicholas Cummings, community members wanted more "holistic repair" even though the city was legally constrained in its options for redress (see Newton and Nelsen 2024, this issue).¹⁵ Some interviewees suggested that the Restorative Housing Program should garner more participation from the local Black community to ensure that the policy's design more appropriately reflects their long-term interests.¹⁶ Others felt that the rhetoric of reparations for a housing-focused program would distract from and undermine more systems-focused approaches to address racial inequities. In addition, cannabis funds alone were not enough to fund the program. To solve this issue, the Reparations Committee sourced additional funds from Evanston's real estate transfer tax, and the financial commitment of the program was able to double to a \$20 million commitment in 2022 (Castro 2022).

City council member Bobby Burns reports that much of the pushback has come from those who prefer cash payments. "They're not wrong," Burns said. "I do think that in order for this to be reparations, that direct cash benefits or something like it . . . needs to be part of it." This is because, in Burns's view, the harmed group ideally must be the one to determine how the repair should look (see also Edwards et al. 2024). This problem also came to a head when two ancestor recipients, siblings Kenneth and Sheila Wideman (ages seventy-seven and seventy-five, respectively) each qualified for the \$25,000 benefit but did not own a home and did

15. Monique Newton and Matthew Nelsen (2024) offer a detailed examination of the Evanston program as an example of a "politics of expedience" that moved the policy through government quickly despite local critiques.

16. For example, advocate and long-time program opponent Bennett Johnson, age ninety-three, has presented his own reparations plan called the Freedom Plan, which would focus on long-term implementation of Black reparations through the establishment of multiple new institutions. Johnson disagreed with the structure of the existing program—namely the home mortgage assistance aspect and whether the structure was durable over time.

not have any descendants to whom they could pass the money (Castro 2023a). After a public appeal from the Widemans, at a Reparations Committee Listening session on March 2, 2023, Simmons proposed a resolution that would grant the Widemans cash payouts of their funds.¹⁷

On March 16, the committee reconvened to discuss amending the reparations program with the option for cash payment (Castro 2023b). Councilmember Devon Reid pushed for the program to allow for unrestricted cash payments. “Let’s let them make decisions for themselves and for their families that will help them build generational wealth and live their healthiest years to come,” he argued according to the *Evanston Roundtable* (Castro 2023b). The committee therefore decided to open the option of cash payment to all ancestors, and on March 27 the Evanston City Council approved direct cash payments of \$25,000 as a part of the program. This option, as well as additional staff support, cleared a path to the growth of the program. As of that October, the program had spent more than \$2 million and disbursed payments to ninety-one more residents.¹⁸ More than half of this amount (around \$1.2 million) was disbursed in the form of cash payments to fifty Ancestors.

Although this is hopeful news indicating that the program is responsive to critiques, broader questions about the program’s accessibility, efficiency, and effectiveness linger. Over the course of the program, processing the reparations funds has been slow, and seven ancestors passed away before they were able to receive funds from the Restorative Housing Program (Castro 2023c). Furthermore, if Evanston intends to bridge the racial wealth disparity, averaging \$300,000 per person, then the city would need roughly \$3.3 billion for the estimated eleven thousand eligible Black residents; Evanston has an annual budget of \$300 million (Darity and Mullen 2023, 201). Despite the program’s ambitions, it remains to be seen

how the city will meet the scope and urgency of the racial wealth gap.

Chicago: Missing the Input of Incarcerated Torture Survivors

In Chicago, torture survivors who were then incarcerated shared that they were not asked for input on the reparations ordinance. This absence of incarcerated torture survivors’ voices and priorities mapped onto what the ordinance did not include—a route out of prison. Instead, incarcerated torture survivors were offered only monetary support, and, if they accepted the monetary benefit, forfeited their right to civil restitution in the future. As a result, at least some people declined receipt of the cash payment. As one torture survivor, now exonerated, said, “I didn’t take the reparations, because when they offered me the reparations, I was just transferred to [another prison], and . . . the catch was, ‘Let’s get these guys in prison, and give them this little money and . . . if you take this money, then the city of Chicago is no longer responsible for financial obligations’ . . . And another catch was we’re gonna give you an apology, say ‘Oh we sorry,’ and give you a hundred and something thousand dollars . . . but you still in prison . . .”

Another torture survivor, also now exonerated, also declined the reparations benefit, saying,

I wish I had been part of the original conception because I had some thoughts on what should have been the “ask” as opposed to what turned out to be the “ask”. . . . It [the reparations benefit] was never presented to me in a way for me to contribute to it. It was more presented as these are what’s being sought as opposed to what do you feel about this or that, or what do you think it should be? It was something for me to apply to as oppose to participate in. I was locked up for twenty-five years at that time—and I think it [the reparations benefit] tantamounted to something

17. Councilmember Devon Reid opposed the motion, believing that all Ancestors should have a cash payout option; all others approved and Krissie Harris abstained because she is related to the Widemans.

18. Tasheik Kerr, “Ancestor Reparations Recipients Disbursement Update,” City of Evanston, memorandum, October 5, 2023, <https://cityofevanston.civicweb.net/document/211619/Ancestor%20Reparations%20Recipients%20Disbursement%20Up.pdf> (accessed February 2, 2024).

like \$4,000 a year [for every year of my incarceration]. So to me it wasn't worth the trade-off, plus, again, it didn't offer freedom for me. It didn't offer relief in my situation. It was just a monetary thing in the sense that it really didn't change my living condition . . . so I chose not to take it. It just didn't make sense for there to be acknowledgment of wrongdoing, yet [no] offer a relief [from prison]. There was a monetary relief but not a situational relief. You acknowledge a wrongdoing but didn't correct it. I'd rather [have] freedom than \$100,000.

Statements such as these underscore the mismatch between the priorities of those torture survivors who were most vulnerable and the priorities as outlined by the drafters of the reparations ordinance. Monetary compensation is valuable but, as emphasized, is incomparable to the freedom for which these individuals struggled.

These cases provide critical insights about how reparations relate to conditions of freedom. If, as Elizabeth Wrigley-Field (2024) argues, time is the best proxy for freedom, then a reparations package that redresses police torture and the lack of freedom suffered by imprisonment would necessarily include a mechanism for relief from imprisonment in addition to the other benefits outlined in the Chicago reparations ordinance. The absence of such relief in the ordinance reveals much about how the inclusion and marginalization of different stakeholders' positionalities shape what ultimately is and is not included in racial redress policy.

Other survivors who were not then incarcerated raised related concerns. In July 22, 2015, torture survivor David Bates posted a copy of a letter to the People's Law Office on the Better Government Association's Facebook page that criticized the People's Law Office and City of Chicago for in his view negotiating a deal without knowledge and participation of torture survivors and their legal counsel.¹⁹ This observation was corroborated, for instance, by another torture survivor and cash payment recipient

who said, "Well, to tell you the truth, we [survivors] really didn't have a say so in the reparations package. I didn't even know that they were negotiating a reparations package." In his statement, Bates stressed several exclusions that existed in the negotiated deal. "The deal does not include [or address the imprisonment status of] victims who remain in prison," he wrote. "Furthermore, the offer of clinical services [and] free education for the victims of Jon Burge, as well as teaching the Chicago Public Schools about Jon Burge would not be as important as being given stability and [being] made whole." Many police torture survivors, Bates explained, "are well into their 50's and 60's and for the most part, their children are beyond college and are adults. The majority of the victims of Jon Burge are homeless, poor and have been without employment since returning to society." Although access to the Chicago City Colleges extends broadly to torture survivors' families and the Chicago Torture Justice Center was established to address many of the issues identified above, the veracity of Bates's observations remains.

Notwithstanding the impacts that each initiative and racial redress movement has had on people's lives and local politics, neither the Evanston Restorative Housing Program nor the Chicago reparations ordinance is perfect. Beyond the administrative delays, narrow scope, and usage constraints, the redress program in Evanston is vulnerable to profound critiques that it simply does not take substantial steps at closing the Black-White wealth gap, and thus is not reparations. Conversely, the Chicago ordinance did not include what, for many police torture survivors, was the basis of any reparations package: relief from imprisonment. Surely jurisdictional barriers existed; the reparations ordinance was established at the city level, whereas the Illinois prison system is a state-level institution. A more fundamental concern, though, may be the seeming lack of robust input from incarcerated or formerly incarcerated torture survivors concerning what key priorities should be included in the reparations ordinance. Theoretically, robust partici-

19. David Bates, to Better Government Association, "Burge Torture Reparations Scam," Facebook post, July 22, 2015, <https://perma.cc/ZM3P-Z8W5> (accessed February 2, 2024).

pation from this stakeholder group might have motivated more debate and consideration about what a mechanism of relief from imprisonment could look like and how to navigate the cross-jurisdictional and interagency dynamics of such a policy change.

CONCLUSION

In short, the proliferation of racial redress initiatives at the local level can be understood as outcomes of racial justice movements that occur outside as well as through government. The Evanston Housing Restoration Program and Chicago reparations ordinance, both the first of their kinds in the United States, are two notable examples of redress initiatives that derived from local advocacy or movements. Both cases demonstrate how local actors, political elites, and long-time racial justice activists, mobilized a defined community of stakeholders to realize policy change that would redress past harm against Black communities. Observing the political terrain, these politicians and activists capitalized on the political opportunities available to them, such as using a past city resolution in support of reparations or a mayoral election, to prevail over local government to invest resources in establishing each racial redress initiative. Whereas the Evanston case illustrates processes of working through local government, the Chicago case demonstrates how those outside the institutionalized power structure can organize to expose harm and sustain that political organizing over time to build popular political power that forces concessions from local government.

Yet these cases also show how reparations movements and subsequent policy programs can reify some of the very dynamics they seek to disrupt. Reparations advocacy and redress policy design in Evanston was elite driven, whereas the reparations ordinance in Chicago did not address the key concerns of the most vulnerable survivors of police torture. We describe processes such as these as examples of deliberative marginalization that ultimately, and perhaps unintentionally, result in a deliberation and design process that is inaccessible to the most affected stakeholders given the constraints of local government and policy processes. These patterns should be unsurprising

in light of what we know about the power dynamics in social institutions and social movements (see Cohen 1999; Han, McKenna, and Oyakawa 2021; Terriquez 2015) and the long histories of racialized exclusion that these movements and hard-won initiatives are confronting (see Losier 2019; K. Taylor 2019). But they nonetheless provide insights on which to build.

Juxtaposed with one another, the redress movements in Evanston and Chicago demonstrate how the social location of movement actors and stakeholders relates to which resources are mobilized, which strategies are deployed, and whose priorities are centered in local movements advocating for racial redress. The example of incarcerated survivors of police torture is a negative case that further underscores this argument. Although some survivors of police torture said that they did not have a full opportunity to weigh in on the design of the Chicago reparations ordinance, incarcerated survivors of police torture also faced profound structural barriers owing to their imprisonment that hindered their participation; these individuals, who have since been exonerated, said they were only presented with the choice of whether to opt into a redress initiative that was missing the feature most important to them—a route out of prison. Consequently, one can observe how dynamics of race, class, and historical exclusion can affect the design and reparative possibilities of racial redress initiatives.

Thus a critical intervention we make in this study is to show how the development of policies based on reparations movement goals and ideals is often limited in its capacity to respond to harms that have remained unaddressed because of White supremacy and anti-Black discrimination. Because reparations policies require institutionalization within the same systems that are often responsible for enacting anti-Black structural violence and legislation, it is difficult to imagine that radical or transformative change will come from these policies alone, especially if they are incremental policy-based solutions. As a result, such policies will often fall short of the expectations of organizers and survivors of injustice even as they remain integral milestones on the path to a more just future.

In the end, a comparative study of these two cases offers several important lessons for research and policymaking. Even as each redress initiative may be viewed as a model to outside reparations advocates, analysts can also observe that each initiative faces profound institutional constraints that need to be further explored. The Evanston Restorative Housing Program has a ten-year commitment from the city but is quite limited in its scope because of its modest level of benefit and slow pace of distribution. There is also a possibility that the Evanston initiative's modest benefit amount, coupled with its focus on homeownership, may place unintended participation barriers on non-middle-class Black beneficiaries. Researchers might explore the participation barriers in racial redress initiatives in greater depth. Reparations advocates and policymakers would also do well to consider these issues and perhaps conduct disparate impact analyses of the implementation of redress initiatives. Finally, given the limited resources of local jurisdictions, advocates and policymakers might wish to make concrete stipulations and plans that address how local redress initiatives would fit in with, and not replace, more robust reparations programs in the future at the federal as well as regional levels (see Darity and Mullen 2023).

The Chicago reparations ordinance and movement from which it derived also offer important lessons for researchers, reparations advocates, and policymakers. Perhaps the most important lesson is that the harms of state violence and criminalization are in fact critical to Black reparations; these harms are a domain where racial redress initiatives can be established and that need to be explored in more depth by reparations advocates, policymakers, and scholars as part of a "legacy of interrelated ongoing harms" (see Bilmes and Brooks 2024; for an example, see McKay 2022). At the same time, the Chicago case also provides a clear example of how structural barriers can shape whose perspectives and priorities are and are not represented in the design of a racial redress policy. Empirical research has been done on related dynamics, revealing that advocacy groups tend to prioritize the interests of the most advantaged (Strolovitch 2007) and that a variety of participatory models are possible that can shift power imbalances (Fung 2006; Jayadev and Moore 2022; Simonson 2016). This knowledge base could be useful to apply and to extend to the case of racial redress and reparations initiatives, given the deep-seated histories of harm and exclusion that these initiatives seek to disrupt.

Table A.1 Evanston Participant List

Interview Participant	Role or Position
Nicholas Cummings	Evanston City Corporation Council
Tasheik Kerr	Assistant to the city manager
Councilmember Clare Kelly	Councilmember (not on Reparations Committee)
Louis	Recipient, ancestor
Sarah*	Recipient, ancestor
Robin Rue Simmons	Reparations committee member, former Fifth Ward alderperson
Councilmember Bobby Burns	City councilmember, current Fifth Ward alderperson
Morris "Dino" Robinson	Evanston historian, former executive director of Shorefront Legacy
Matthew Feldman	Board of Trustees and Treasurer for Evanston Community Foundation, and Leader of Reparations Group at Beth Emet Synagogue
Rabbi London	Rabbi at Beth Emet Synagogue
Reverend Michael Nabors	Reverend at Second Baptist Church, Evanston NAACP President
Kimberly Richardson	Former interim assistant city manager
Sol Anderson	President of Evanston Community Foundation
Bennett Johnson	Community member
Ella*	Recipient, ancestor
Mary*	Descendant, pending recipient

Source: Authors' tabulation.

Note: Interview participants included current and former Evanston City Council members ($n = 3$); local faith leaders ($n = 2$); recipients ($n = 3$); pending recipient ($n = 1$); bureaucrats ($n = 3$); critics ($n = 1$); other advocates and supporters ($n = 3$).

* pseudonym to protect confidentiality.

Table A.2 Chicago Participant List

Interview Participant	Role or Position
Todd St. Hill	Chicago-based activist
Laurence Ralph	Researcher and anthropologist, advocate, torture justice writer
Alice Kim	Cofounder, Chicago Torture Justice Memorials
Aislinn Pulley	Co-executive director, Chicago Torture Justice Center
Flint Taylor	Attorney
Joey Mogul	Attorney and cofounder of Chicago Torture Justice Memorials
Laurie Palmer	Artist and advocate
John Conroy	Journalist, torture reporter, and advocate
David Yellen	Lawyer, court-appointed to identify reparations beneficiaries
Clarence*	Formerly incarcerated activist who organized alongside police torture survivors
Cecil*	Police torture survivor who accepted compensation
Russell*	Police torture survivor who accepted compensation
Roy*	Police torture survivor who declined compensation
Eli*	Police torture survivor who declined compensation

Source: Authors' tabulation.

Note: Interview participants included Chicago torture justice activists ($n = 5$); movement lawyers ($n = 2$); We Charge Genocide coalition members ($n = 2$); artists ($n = 1$); scholars ($n = 2$); police torture survivors who accepted and declined compensation ($n = 4$). Some roles are overlapping.

* a pseudonym to protect confidentiality.

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