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The Influence of the *Chicago Defender* on the Great Migration

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Dedication

This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to my lovely parents. Who have been my source of inspiration and gave me strength. To My father may his soul rest in peace. He who encouraged me to pursue master studies again. To my lovely mother for her love who continually provide me with her moral, spiritual, emotional, and financial support.

To my adorable niece HIDAYA Baya

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Abstract

The research tackles the influence of the *Chicago Defender's* newspaper on the Great Migration. The aim is to explore the role the *Chicago Defender* played in African American migration to the North. The research adopts a combination of research methods to realize the research aims. The historical approach is used to establish a comprehensive historical review about the *Chicago Defender* and the Great Migration. Moreover, qualitative method is crucial to present a consistent research based on reliable and related data about the topic. This dissertation aims to present strategies and tools the *Chicago Defender* used to promote for the great migration. Moreover, we seek to detect the roles both the paper and the great migration played in the African American history. The research found that the *Chicago Defender* used a unique style of journalism to attract black readers. The founder Robert Abbott used his journal as tool to fight for African American rights and freedoms. Furthermore, the Great Migration had long lasting implications for America. The great migration changed the demographic structure of America and raised national awareness about the African American experience with discrimination. The dissertation also found that the influence the *Chicago Defender* played in the great migration was not planned. Nevertheless, the paper used the public opinions' readerships to raise awareness about equality for all races and blacks in specific.

Key words: The *Chicago Defender*, African Americans, Negro Press, Racial segregation, The Great Migration, Northern Drive.

المخلص

يتناول البحث تأثير صحيفة مدافع شيكاغو على الهجرة الكبرى. الهدف هو استكشاف الدور الذي لعبته جريدة مدافع شيكاغو في هجرة الأمريكيين من نوي الأصل أفريقي إلى الشمال. تعتمد الأطروحة على مجموعة من مناهج البحث لتحقيق أهداف البحث. يتم استخدام النهج التاريخي لإنشاء مراجعة تاريخية شاملة حول مدافع شيكاغو والهجرة العظمى. علاوة على ذلك ، تعتبر الطريقة النوعية ضرورية لتقديم بحث متسق يعتمد على بيانات موثوقة وذات صلة بالموضوع. تهدف هذه الرسالة إلى تقديم الاستراتيجيات والأدوات التي استخدمها المدافع للترويج للهجرة الكبرى. بالإضافة إلى اننا ، نسعى للكشف عن الأدوار التي لعبتها كل من الصحيفة والهجرة العظيمة في تاريخ الأمريكيين نوي أصل أفريقي. وجد البحث أن المدافع شيكاغو استخدمت أسلوبًا فريدًا من الصحافة لجذب القراء السود. استخدم المؤسس روبرت أبوت مجلته كأداة للنضال من أجل حقوق وحرية الأمريكيين من أصل أفريقي. علاوة على ذلك، كان للهجرة الكبرى آثار طويلة الأمد على أمريكا. الهجرة الكبيرة غيرت الهيكل الديموغرافي لأمريكا وزادت الوعي القومي بتجربة الأمريكيين من أصل أفريقي مع التمييز. وجدت الأطروحة أيضًا أن التأثير الذي لعبه مدافع شيكاغو في الهجرة الكبرى لم يكن مخططًا له. ومع ذلك، استخدمت الصحيفة قراء الرأي العام لرفع مستوى الوعي حول المساواة لجميع الأعراق والسود على وجه التحديد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المدافع شيكاغو ، الأمريكيون الأفارقة ، الصحافة الخاصة بالسود ، الفصل العنصري ،

الهجرة الكبرى ، الطريق الشمالي

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General Introduction

The United States has a lengthy history of wars. One of its primary problems, known as "Racism," is the negative ideas and attitudes against racial or ethnic groups. African Americans desired to live in a better environment after the Civil War. They also wished to be granted citizenship rights. Nevertheless, they were subject to regulations and rules (Wilkerson). The majority of African Americans lived in the south of America. The south is famously recognized by the Jim Crow rules application. As a result, African Americans began moving northward in great numbers by the mid of the 20th century. The Great Migration was the term used to describe the movement of African Americans from the south. It had an impact on the general population in the North (Stroman).

As American citizens throughout history, black people have battled for their civil rights. They used many tools to make their voices heard. However, those ways did not make an impact on the public opinion. The black press is one of the political resources used to fight of black people, amplifying their voices, and demands (Chay and Munshi). The *Chicago Defender* is one of the most successful newspapers in American history. The newspaper succeeded to promote for African American civil rights movements. In addition, it played a role in the Great Migration. This exemplifies the black press's political role in black history. Robert Sengstacke Abbott founded the *Chicago Defender* on May 5th, 1905. Black Americans benefited significantly from the newspaper's publications (Ross and McKerns).

One of the factors that led blacks to migrate to the South was the *Chicago Defender*. To the dismay of white Southerners, as war production ramped up, recruiters persuaded Blacks to move North. Advertisements praised the prospects present in the cities of the North and West. They were featured in black publications, particularly the

widely read *Chicago Defender*. The great Migration received attention through the media outlets and thanks to the *Chicago Defender's* support. The dissertation explores the role that the *Chicago defender* played during The Great Migration. The fundamental aspects of this research is establishing historical background about the *Chicago Defender* as newspaper. The inquiry will also provide a historical framework about the great migration as movement, its motives, reasons, and consequences are the centres of the research. The dissertation seek to examine the role both the great migration and *Chicago Defender* played in African American history. In addition, the influence the *Chicago Defender* played in the great migration.

Statement of the problem

Politics hits differently from one area to another in America. African Americans chose to move to the north for economic and family considerations. The choice to migrate to the south contained political implications for both the political system and the African Americans. The great migration presented an excellent opportunity for African Americans. The north of America featured job opportunities, better life environment, and unlocked black American's ability to participate as full citizen and to fight for their rights. *The Chicago Defender* newspaper is well known for its strong campaign in favour of the Great Migration. The latter resulted in over one and a half million southern blacks migrating to the north from 1915 to 1925. The defender praised life in the north and highlighted the dangers of remaining in the openly segregated south. To aid with the migration process, the newspaper supplied rail schedules and job listings (Grant).

The proposed research seeks to investigate the ways *The Chicago Defender* used to promote, influence and convince African Americans to move from the South to the North of America. Moreover, the study looks to discover *The Chicago Defender's*

portrayal of the North. In addition, the research investigates the reasons behind the reference of the north as the Promised Land. Nevertheless, the goal of the study is to explore the role *Chicago Defender* played in African American migration to the North. Finally, the study strives to find the benefits the great migration played for African Americans and the significant part the *Chicago Defender* played in black history.

Research questions

- How did the *Chicago Defender* influence and promote African American's Great Migration to the North?

This main research question shall be investigated through the following secondary questions:

- What are the arguments used to advise African American?
- How did it portray the south?
- What role did the *Chicago Defender* have in African American migration to the North?

Research objectives

The research at hand aims to discover the contribution of the *Chicago Defender* in the African American history. Moreover, we seek to discover the way the great migration served the African American cause. The great migration altered the demographic state of the North. It also changed the political status of African Americans. Furthermore, this research studies impact of the *Chicago Defender* on the great migration. In addition, we seek to examine the causes that made the *Chicago Defender* a political power for African Americans.

Rationale of the Research

The motives behind the selection of this research topic are numerous. First, to study one of the influential newspapers in black history. Moreover, to investigate the

tactics Mr. Abbott used to help his fellow black Americans. Furthermore, to establish a link between the defender's publications, the increase in its readerships and the growth of the migration rates to its peak. Finally, the proposed research will establish an extensive study for the great migration. It will provide a different perspective for the great migration' impact on African Americans' history.

Research Methodology

This thesis uses a combination of research methods. The historical method is used to provide a historical framework for both the great migration and inception and the *Chicago Defender* newspaper. The use of this approach helps to construct an organized historical overview for the variables at hand. The qualitative approach aids to select appropriate and related materials for the study. Moreover, the interpretative approach attempts to link between the *Defender's* publication, the increase of the number of black migrants to the north, and the change of African American's political and social status. Finally, the thesis relies on primary and secondary sources to build reliable and consistent argumentations. Books, journals, and articles on the subject are analysed extensively.

The research used different sources from journals, articles, books and websites. We used few websites such as the national American archive as sources of information about the Great Migration. Consequently, we mentioned the number of paragraphs that information were summarized and paraphrased from those sources.

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter focuses on examining the African American experience and motives that led to the Great migrations. For the second chapter shall try to present the factors that set the foundation of the *Chicago Defender* and its characteristics. The third chapter tries to correlate between the *Chicago*

defender and the great migration. The focus is on the role and influence both variables played in the African American historical changes.

Chapter one

The Great Migration

Introduction

One of the phenomena that changed the course of the African American experience is the great migration. The Great Migration is the relocation of more than six million African Americans from the southern cities to the north. The Great Migration had fundamental aspect in changing the world view about the American nation. American constitution is characterized by its amendments that encourage and call for individual freedoms and human rights. In contrast, the suffering of black Americans with racial discrimination and prejudice contradicted the American constitution.

This chapter presents an extensive background about the Great Migration. Motives and reasons behind this move will be discussed. Furthermore, the chapter seeks to examine the social, political, and economic reasons that led blacks to leave the south. Migration emerged in form of two waves. Therefore, the research will examine those waves and their historical context. Moreover, the chapter studies the social and political implication of the Great Migration and the *Chicago Defender* stance about it.

1.1. Historical background: African American Experience

According to Milton Sernett in his book, *Bound for the promised land* migration is a recurrent theme in American history. American national character is closely linked with European migrations to America (Sernett 01). As land based on immigration the U.S benefited culturally, economically, and socially from several waves of migration throughout history (Smith, par.01)

An individual who transfers to another country is referred to as an immigrant. On the other hand, the act of moving from one place to another inside the country is

referred to as migration (Smith, par.07). Immigration is the process of becoming a permanent resident or citizen of another nation. The United States of America witnessed major waves of European immigration during the colonial era and the 19th century. Migration is a term used to denote a change in a person's or a group's place of residence. Migration of people is regarded as a key factor in the transformation of lands and continents in their entirety. The racial, ethnic, and linguistic composition of their populations represent some of these transformations (“Human Migration”).

Black Africans arrived in the land of America during the middle of the sixteenth century through the slave trade. The origins of slavery as a business dates back to the eighth century, when Moorish merchants used people as merchandise. In America, the slave trade flourished and became a lucrative enterprise. Slave markets were notorious for their brutality and lethality. A minute percentage of Africans were transported to the north of the United States, while the remainder were sent to the south. Slaves were able to maintain and fortify their cultural identity. African Americans made significant contributions to the economy and infrastructure by building roads, canals, and cities (An overview, par. 01-05).

Slavery meant poor living conditions, hard work and humiliations for black people. However, for plantation owners slaves represented a significant labor hand on large tobacco, cotton, and rice plantations. The American south expanded westward thanks to the economic booming of cotton. The cheap black labor became a trend and led to hereditary slavery. The slave trade was banned in 1800's. Yet, slave population kept growing in America that it reached for about four millions (Mauk and Oakland 97).

The Emancipation Proclamation, delivered by President Lincoln in 1864, effectively emancipated all slaves in Confederate states. With the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, slavery was formally abolished after the South lost the

war. Although they did so reluctantly, the Southern states continued to oppress Black Americans despite the abolishment of slavery by finding ways to get around it (“Great Migration”, par. 05).

The reconstruction era represented a hope for blacks. It was supposed to supervise the return of southern states to the union. The act aimed to realize blacks’ civil rights protection. It also sought to integrate freed slaves into southern society. However, reconstruction was seen as a “tragic era” due to white southerners. Whites called themselves redeemers and refused equality with blacks. Consequently, southern states became segregated states with Jim crow laws. Whites became powerful and had the upper hand to oppress blacks. The society became divided by race regardless of one’s education or wealth. Thus, the birth determined people’s destiny (Fremon 18). Jim Crow laws prohibited whites and blacks from traveling together and any type of relations or contact in orphanages, hospitals, and public transportation. This segregation persisted even after death. Negroes had their own cemetery and funeral businesses. Jim Crow evolved beyond a collection of laws. It referred to a way of life that included many restrictions on African People. These humiliations were, in some respects, worse than slavery (Fremon 20).

1.2. Motives and Reasons Behind The Great Migration

After the Civil War, a terrorist organization known as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was formed with the goal of preventing African-Americans from exercising their newly won freedoms. For instance, they intimidated Black people into refraining from voting or running for office by using violence. The Ku Klux Klan Acts were passed in 1871 to address their actions, which led to a reduction in their dominance. In the 1920s and 1950s, the Klan made a comeback, but it carried on its underground activities. They propagated an extreme kind of racism, and numerous lynchings took place, mostly in

Southern states. There is an estimation that approximately 4,000 African-Americans have been lynched times between 1882 and 1968, according to historians (Tolnay 213). African Americans suffered financially to provide for themselves before the Great Migration occurred. One of the characteristics of the South is its agricultural nature. One of the systems white southerners was the sharecropping system that rendered African Americans landless (Tolnay 214).

Southern economy was characterized by its agricultural nature. Black Americans worked in cotton plantations as main labor force and it became a profitable crop. The introduction of new machines for plantation owners led to blacks' unemployment. Alongside to the boll weevil disaster that caused blacks to lose their wages and ruined south's cotton crops (Fermon 42). Nevertheless, Occupational segregation existed in southern towns. Cities also concentrated male labor in low-skilled jobs and female labor in domestic services. These living conditions continued to serve as a disincentive for black people in the South to look elsewhere for opportunities. Giving context to the great migration is heavily influenced by economic hardship and inequality (Tolnay 214).

Education was another reason that led black parents to think about living elsewhere. Schools for black children suffered from shortage of resources. Furthermore, white southerners made sure that schools calendars are abbreviated for their own benefits. Black children were used to work in fields instead of attending classes during the harvest and planting seasons. Children could not resume their studies in higher educational levels due to the unequal opportunities. Moreover, black Americans suffered from the Jim crow laws even in their daily life. African Americans were segregated even in facilities and public accommodations (Grant 53). Jim Crow laws caused behavioral restrictions, political disfranchisement, and racial violence.

Northern American employers relied on European immigrants as a working force. However, during the First World War era America passed a series of acts to restrict European immigrations. These policies forced northerners to consider southern blacks as labor (Tolnay 215).

1.3. The Great Migration and Its Waves

During the twentieth century, African Americans made a substantial decision that had long lasting effects in American history. In the beginning of the mentioned era, African Americans chose to migrate from the rural South of America to the North (Schlichting et al 287). It was referred to as the Great Migration honoring its demographic impact and significance in American and black history (Tolnay 210). African Americans moved to the North and the Mid-West of America. Their destinations were cities such as Chicago, Connecticut, Detroit, Cleveland, or Philadelphia, Hartford. The huge number of Africans leaving the south represented a biblical exodus by the end of the Second World War. This mass exodus was referred to as journey for finding the “promised land” (Schlichting et al 288).

The term “Promised Land” signifies the new beginning for African Americans. Furthermore, northern cities suffered from decline of labor force. The decline was caused by the restriction of immigration policies and the departure of thousands of European workers. Consequently, the shortage of labor became critical and made Northern labor agents recruiting southern blacks. It can be said that North presented a land of promises for southern blacks (Sernett 38).

The migrants used different means to migrate and faced issues with their move. Due to prejudice in the supply of transportation services and their lack of means, migrants were frequently restricted in their capacity to relocate. Travel by train and boat was common in the early years of the Great Migration. In later years, more people

travelled by car. The parallel streams demonstrated the reliance of migrants on easily available and reasonably priced modes of transportation (Grant 47). The great migration emerged through two phases the first one during the war years and the second one during the 1920's (Sernett 37). Scholars still debate about the start and the end of the great migration.

1.3.1. The First Wave of the Great Migration

The first wave of migration began roughly between the years 1910 and 1940 (Tolnay 213). As northerners began to demand workers, migrants began to pour into northern cities. During the Great Depression, the rate of migration slowed (Grant 44). During the 1929–1939 Great Depression, which severely affected African Americans, migration halted. Since there were few jobs available, many African-Americans were eager to move north when the Second World War presented employment opportunities (“Great migration”). Nonetheless, by the 1940s, there were over a million migrant Southerners living outside of their homes.

1.3.2. The Second Wave of the Great Migration

It is estimated from 1940' to 1970's the migration resumed. The number of blacks going north increased again. By the end of the migration over six million African American were poured in the north of America. The second wave of migration occurred, as Black communities grew large enough to exert political influence (Grant 45). One of the most important demographic changes to affect American society was the great migration. The widespread emigration had a number of effects, including the loss of the south's sizeable native population and work force. Yet, it led to an increase in population across the board in northern cities. It is conceivable to say that it provided a new, drastic rearrangement of the African American population. Not all black movers, however, crossed regional lines during this new era of black movement. Some people

looked for housing that was safer and more comfortable in the suburbs, or just a better area in the heart of the city. All of these displaced African Americans had the desire to improve their quality of life in a new area, city, or neighborhood, and the readiness to move in quest of that chance (Tolnay 210).

1.4. The Great Migration: Political and Social Implications

Black immigrants from the South settled in almost every region of the North and West. However, as the Great Migration progressed, distinct migratory streams emerged, and as a result, there was a considerably larger concentration of migrants in some areas. Large metropolitan centers in the Northeast and Midwest were particularly well liked destinations throughout the Great Migration, with the surge of southern migrants producing a major expansion in the black populations of cities like Chicago, Detroit, New York, and Philadelphia (Tolnay 216).

The great migration was a geographically widespread event that not only affected the north but also the west and less developed areas outside of the south. African Americans were drawn to the north and west because of the economic prospects there. On the other hand, they were driven out of the south due to racial discrimination, political marginalization, and unfavorable working circumstances. The United States' racial composition drastically changed because of migration, which was one of its effects (Schlichting et al 09). Political balance in industrial and urban centers could shift as a result of changes in the demographic population. In the US South, voting rights for African Americans were not granted. White Southerners utilized grandfather clauses, poll taxes, and literacy tests to deny African Americans the right to vote (Schlichting et al.10).

Political parties had a role to play during migration waves. During the First wave of Great Migration, both Democrats and Republicans made an effort to gain African

Americans as supporters. Nonetheless, since the New Deal, the Democratic Party has developed into the group best positioned to address the problems of Black Americans living outside of the US South. Black Northerners began supporting the Democratic Party around 1936. African Americans started joining the ranks of Democrats later on. This demonstrated the departure from discriminatory practices. There is little indication that labor unions openly supported and promoted African Americans' quest for racial equality (Schlichting et al.11).

Black migration boosted racial equality demands and sparked pro-civil rights action in areas outside of the South. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is a civil rights organization that prompted for African Americans justice and civil rights. The NAACP promoted racial and economic liberalism in a class-based coalition with the CIO. The NAACP exerted pressure on northern Democrats to advance the civil rights agenda as a result. Progressive parts of the white population learned about the harsh conditions in the South. In addition to Black voters effort this had a significant impact on the African American cause (Schlichting et al.11).

1.5. The *Chicago Defender* Stance about Great Migration

The Chicago Defender, which was sold in the shops and was frequently discussed. *The Defender*, the most widely distributed black newspaper in the South, had a reputation among its readers as a fearless voice for what it dubbed "the race." Editor Robert Abbott featured Pullman porters, barnstorming black baseball teams, and performers prominently in his pages. By 1916, these "travelling salespeople" had helped the *Defender* establish a strong following in villages and cities throughout the South. When opportunities became available in Chicago, the *Defender* became the most outspoken advocate for migration, urging "all to move north." Newcomers earning jobs

would bring money into the town and supply votes for black lawmakers, who had finally gained a seat in the legislature in 1915. Numerous notifications alluding to people fleeing towns and cities, as well as front-page articles about the exodus, conveyed to readers that migration was more of a social experience than an individual act. Abbott even established a date, May 15, 1917, for a "Great Northern Drive" (Grossman).

Conclusion

The great Migration was an exodus that represented the extent to which African Americans resort to escape racism in the south. The great migration was a regionally significant event that not only affected the north, but also the west and less developed regions outside of the south. African Americans migrated to the north and west because of the economic opportunities there. In contrast, they were expelled from the south due to ethnic prejudice, political marginalization, and deplorable working conditions.

In the chapter, a general overview of the Great Migration was presented. African Americans moved to the north in order to live decent lives and to flee the Jim Crow laws system that existed in the south. Due to the *Chicago Defender's* support, large numbers and media attention marked the first wave of migration, which lasted from the 1910s to the 1940s. The second wave began following the Great Depression and grew gradually in response to the needs of the job market in the northern cities. Black southerners from the Great Migration formed a concentration in northern cities. The Black Belt was the name of the concentration. Public and political sentiment changed how African Americans were perceived and demanded equal rights for all. The chapter serves as a key connecting factor between the significance of the Great Migration in African American history and the *Chicago Defender*.

Chapter Two

The *Chicago Defender*: An Early African American Newspaper

Introduction

African Americans represent the negative and dark side of America's history. They spent over a century trying to strive for American citizenship. The Negro press did not play an effective role in fighting for Blacks' rights until the establishment of the *Chicago Defender*. Robert abbot an African American individual experienced the same prejudice that his fellow black suffered from. As a lawyer and intellectual fighting and promoting for the African American cause and situation in the north was necessary.

The chapter at hand presents an overview about one of the successful journals in the history of black press. Moreover, it sets the fundamental aspects of the paper and the power it held thanks to its founder Mr. Robert Abbott. In addition, the research presents the essential rules and principles the paper worked under. Furthermore, the chapter presents an extensive reading about the *Chicago Defender* style of journalism. In addition to its success in appealing to the African Americans. Additionally, the *Chicago Defender* openly supported the great migration. The research introduces the reasons, strategies, and ways used to uphold the great migration

2.1. Historical Framework : The Birth Of The *Chicago Defender*

African Americans struggled for 100 years after the Civil War. They were deprived of citizenship and the opportunity to vote. Furthermore, some whites' racial beliefs and tyranny resulted in bloodshed, particularly in the American South. Following the ratification of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, And Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, blacks were granted citizenship and liberties. However, white people in the south refused to coexist with black individuals due to racist attitudes. Consequently, they employed tactics and violent efforts to oppress blacks and

abuse them. As a result, black southerners faced a lengthy journey to protect themselves from the end of the Civil War until the passage of the Voting Rights Act on August 6, 1965, (Clayton 2).

The practice of journalism involved writing about current affairs by reporting on incidents, events, and issues. It is the arrangement, the transmission of news, the related commentary, and the feature elements (Duignan 01). The Black press is a word that dates back to the 1800's. The term "Black Press" refers to African Americans' attempts to convey their social, economic, and political concerns to the public. They aspired to depict African Americans' battles to overcome the legacy of slavery, prejudice, and establish equality and fairness. Black individuals were prohibited from the chance to publish in the standard public media outlets, primarily newspapers. Their sole channels for intergroup communication and expression were religious, social, and fraternal organizations (Wilson par. 01).

In 1827, a group of notable free African American residents from states along the Eastern seaboard met in the residence of Bostin Crummell in New York City. They wanted to talk about how they could transmit their ideas to the rest of the world. The conference heralded the birth of the Black Press. The decision to start publishing the first newspaper published by Black Americans was made in the winter of 1827. The first Black Press journal was referred to as "Freedom's Journal" (Wilson par.01-02).

The *Chicago Defender* is an African American newspaper. Robert S. Abbott established it in 1905. Its articles engrossed predominantly on promoting the African American cause and transmitting the white's subjugation of African Americans (Augustyn, par. 02). Robert Abbott began his journal in a little kitchen in his landlord's apartment. He put \$25 into his journalistic venture. The press produced 300 copies. Furthermore, the *Defender's* first editions were four-page, six-column handbills. It

comprised local news articles as well as clippings from various publications that Abbott had gathered himself (*The Chicago Defender*).

Robert Abbott started the newspaper because he believed in the power of the press and wanted a venue for expressing his views to the public. Three other Negro newspapers were running in Chicago at the time the *Chicago Defender* was founded. Abbott distinguished his publication with innovative journalism. After four years of operation, the *Defender* was set to protect Black people's rights, which helped it gain popularity (Vander 4).

The Chicago Defender centered its publishing on the prejudice and violence that black people had to deal with in Chicago and other nearby locations. The more readers it attracted, the more risky subjects were covered (Vander 20). Black Americans read the weekly publication nationwide, not just in Chicago. The majority of its copies were directed to the South (Woods et al.). White distributors refused to carry the journal to the south; therefore, the paper was passed around by hand. The underground Pullman porter network was used as mean to deliver the journal. Its networks were located in northern urban areas like Harlem. The publication was accessible to hundreds of thousands of black Southerners. Many southerners saw the paper as a fighter for their cause and a guide to leave the south for a better place (*Remembering the Chicago Defender* par.01).

The *Chicago Defender* covered local issues involving whites' oppression of African Americans from 1905 until 1912. Yet, as the publication acquired popularity, its circulation increased from 300 copies per issue to about 500,000 at its height. Abbott made the decision to advocate for black people's rights in 1912. The *Defender* increasingly intensified the emphasis on the national civil rights movement. This change reveals, at least in part, the *Defender's* recognition that it was no longer just a regional

newspaper but one with a national audience. The racial predicament of Black Americans nationwide piqued the curiosity of its readers. Most importantly, the *Defender* showed an awareness that racism and the violation of civil rights was not just a local or state issue. The problem was largely caused by a federal government that was unwilling to utilize its authority to defend the Negroes (Vander 20).

2.2. Motives behind the *Chicago Defender* Foundation

One of the biggest and most significant African American newspapers in the country is the *Chicago Defender*. The poet Langston Hughes referred to the newspaper as «the journalistic voice of a largely voiceless people». The *Defender* attained a circulation of 250,000 in the 1920s and enjoyed popularity among African Americans, particularly in the Deep South. Because it advocated for racial equality, the paper was frequently prohibited from being sold on newsstands in that region of the nation. The paper called for equality, which was viewed as "dangerous" request (Thornton 40).

On November 24, 1868, Robert Abbott was born on the suburbs of Savannah, Georgia. His mother was a free woman who worked as a hairdresser, while his father was a dependable slave butler on a nearby plantation. Due to his skin tone, Robert has experienced racism since he was a little child. Growing up, he saw people draw color lines as well as the ban from interracial relations with people from lighter complexion. He made the decision to move to Chicago after failing to earn money and land a job. After doing odd jobs for a while, he thought back to his stepfather's comments on journalism. As a result, Abbot wanted to start a Black journal. His exposure to racism and experience made the notion of a newspaper more realistic (Vander 01).

The *Chicago Defender* gave Robert Abbott the chance to reinvent the black press and stand up for Negroes' rights. Abbott's opposition to racism was regarded as one of the crucial factors that distinguished his paper from others in American history.

Abbott experienced hardship because of his race (Vander 10). *The Chicago Defender* was regarded as one of The Black Press's most potent publications. According to Abbott, racism is an inhumane practice humans should abolish it. Robert's growing conviction motivated and stressed on him that the racial union of humanity was inevitable. Through his weekly, he aimed to inspire his fellow black people to rise above racism and claim their right to equality. Nonetheless, Abbott desired the world to be conscious of the injustices his people suffered and continue to undergo. He attempted to depict racism and violent deeds towards his people in his journal. Furthermore, he wanted to promote the notion that regardless of skin color, everyone is unified as a human race. In addition to the premise that everyone ought to be treated equally (Whitmore 08).

The *Chicago Defender* sought to improve black people's living circumstances. Consequently, the paper aimed to educate Negroes about their rights. It focused on elevating the African American community. Political representation and participation were key elements the paper addressed and promoted for its readers. It is to say that the *Chicago Defender's* aims were to fight for equality, freedom, political representation, and fight for racial pride. The paper sought to improve every aspect of the African American's life as basic human rights and freedoms regardless of the skin color (Woods et al. 01). Evidently, Abbott's primary interest was the advancement of his race, and he utilized the *Defender* to spread the word about his agenda to a larger audience (Stroman 66).

Robert Abbott was a supporter for black people's rights. During the 1900's, the American south was still running with Jim Crow legislations. Lynching and other acts of general violence were common, and there was a significant amount of hostility toward the Black people in the southern U.S. It was at this pivotal juncture in American

history that Abbott persuaded the Black population in the South to leave the hardships of the South behind. Going to the north was solution to pursuit a new and good life in the North. Abbot the *Chicago Defender's* influence to promote for the Migration towards the North (Hauad 02).

2.3. Principles and Rules of the Newspaper

Abbott started his newspaper on the grounds to assist his fellow African Americans. He promoted the *Defender* as the "world's greatest weekly" magazine. Robert S. Abbott claimed that he consciously chose the name "*Defender*" to stress the role his newspaper will have as an "advocate of black progress and an adversary of racism". Abbott's original motto, "American Race Prejudice Must Be Destroyed", it can be seen in the banner of the *Defender* today (Hauad 01)

The paper was established on the principles to destroy American race prejudice. Furthermore, to fight for African Americans' constitutional rights. Moreover, to expose white southerners' crimes and methods used to oppress African Americans. In addition to promote the notion of the unity of the human race and taking pride in one's race. Nevertheless, the foundation of the *Chicago Defender* was set to raise the role of black press as a political tool that fights for the voiceless blacks (Thornton 41).

2.4. The Portrayal of the North

After the abolishment of slavery, African American hoped to live in better conditions as the constitution of the USA supported their claims and rights. However, the reconstruction era was an utter disappointment for African Americans. The majority of black people were living in the south of America. Blacks suffered from white's subjugation and racism. Social injustice, color lines, racist social and political conditions made life in the south for African Americans unbearable. Violence, lynching, Jim crow laws, unsatisfactory crop settlement, and the absence of legal redress in courts

caused social outrage among African Americans (De Santis 467).

The *Chicago Defender* used sensationalism and strong headlines in its publications. The *Defender* was the greatest supporter for the great migration. Consequently, it used details to convince its readers about the benefits of the North. The *Defender* used ways to assert the advantages of going to the North. First, the *Defender* covered oppression incidents such as lynching, murder, and rape that blacks suffered from by the hands of white southerners. This method was used to expose and indicate that black's freedom cannot be realized in the American south. In addition, to imply that the North is the land that guarantees black is liberties without the threat of slavery, tyranny, and malicious violence (De Santis, 484-485). The *Defender* is credited with organizing "The Great Northern Drive," a three-month campaign that encouraged southern African Americans to migrate in large numbers to the North, during the year 1917. Stunning headlines like "GOOD-BYE, DIXIE LAND," "NORTHBOUND THEIR CRY," "SAVED FROM THE SOUTH" were used to catch the readers' attention (Ross and McKerns 58).

The *Chicago Defender* also addressed the injustice that blacks faced in the south in its editorials. Southern Blacks' went through an unjust judicial system, exploitation of workers, and unequal wealth distribution. In essence, the *Chicago Defender* depicted the contrast between the forced situation most black people in the South had to lead and the promises of the American Dream in unflinching terms. It was suggested that the North is the land that realizes equality premises. The defender evidently used captions such as "Come North, Where There Is More Humanity, Some Justice and Fairness." It can be suggested that the *Chicago Defender* portrayed the North (Chicago particularly) as the Promised Land where freedom, equality, and justice are present for African Americans (De Santis 481).

The *Chicago Defender* in its campaign of supporting the great migration covered stories about the north cities like Chicago. Its coverage included job opportunities, new desegregated schools, political representation by local black politicians. As result, African American viewed the north as a land of hope for better life environment (De Santis 481). The *Chicago Defender* frequently wrote editorials and news articles on hate crimes involving white people against black people and urged its southern readers to openly retaliate. But during this time, the paper's unwavering appeal for northern migration out of the "RACIST AND CURUPT SOUTH" attracted the most national attention (Ross and McKerns 58).

2.5.Ways and Tools the *Chicago Defender* Used to Promote the Great Migration

The *Chicago Defender* exposed cruel acts committed by white segregationists and made audacious declarations in its quest to abolish racial discrimination in America. The Chicago Defender was credited by academics as being one of the main advocates for the relocation of Black Americans north during the First World War (Ross and McKerns 59). The *Defender's* journalism was reminiscent of William Randolph Hearst's. The use of spectacular blood-red headlines in the manner of yellow journalists defined the style. In order to influence its audience, it also use vivid and disturbing pictures. (Thornton 41). In his paper, Abbott rarely referred to individuals of color as "Black" or "Negro." He referred to them in the Black community instead by the phrase "race people" (Hauad 03).

Black southerners were encouraged to migrate to the north through strategies that stimulated the great migration. Abbott, the publisher of the *Chicago Defender*, set up affordable rail prices to encourage migrants to travel in groups. He also focused on reporting on tales of successful African Americans who settled in the North. Furthermore, the defender published letters from migrants praising the benefits of living

in the North. Moreover, the paper posted job vacancy advertisements and transportation schedules to aid black people's movement (Ross and McKerns 60).

2.6 The Impact of *The Chicago Defender's* Articles

The Chicago Defender used a variety of stories and advertisements to encourage black people to move north, expanding its impact on a greater scale. African Americans began migrating north, particularly to the metropolis of Chicago. A greater percentage of black immigrants from the South settled along railroad tracks. As a result, the city of Chicago underwent a demographic transformation, giving rise to the "Black Belt." As a result of the movement, the south lost its labor force. For white southerners, this led to discontent. *The Chicago Defender* in particular was one of the northern black journals that was viewed as seditious and subversive (Hauad 04).

The expansion of the black population led to widespread perceptions that it overwhelmed an already overburdened metropolis with even more problems. *The Chicago Defender* articles also had the effect of significantly altering the appearance of African Americans, which was another result. The community shifted from rural southern laborers to urban northern workers. The defender symbolized opportunities and the availability of freedom in the north. Also, in the process it attracted official scrutiny (Hauad 05).

Conclusion

The chapter discusses details about one of the renowned newspapers in the history of black press. The research at hand provided a historical background about the *Chicago Defender*. It focused on the circumstances of its foundation and elements that encouraged Robert Abbott to use journalism as a tool to voice his opinions. The paper was founded during the First World War era. The editorial sought to fight for African American oppression and prejudice in the south. The Jim crow laws were effective in

the south of America. This led to marginalization of African Americans, denial of job and educational opportunities as well as their disfranchisement. As consequence, the *Chicago Defender* aimed to expose all violence and subjugation the race suffered from.

In its quest to elevate the African American community the paper used sensationalism and striking images to display the deeds of white southerners. Another strategy the *Chicago Defender* used was its call for quality and unity for all human beings. The *Defender* encouraged the great migration openly via its articles. The weekly depicted the north as haven that suits African Americans. The black southerners saw northern states as a promised land where freedom, equality, and democracy lie. During the 1914 black southerners moved in a bulk to the north mainly to the city of Chicago. The movement led to the Black Belt which is the concentration of black immigrants in a form of a belt.

The *Chicago Defender's* journal articles had short and longstanding outcomes for both the African Americans and America as nation. Blacks' immigration led to the change of demographics of northern cities. The north started to become crowded as a result. For the south, whites expressed discontent as they started losing their labours to the great migration. The *Chicago Defender's* style of reporting and outspoken determination made it appeal to the masses. In addition, to the popularity and national attention it achieved as a fighter to eliminate race prejudice. To sum up, the chapter presented an extensive overview about the *Chicago Defender* as newspaper. It also indicated the influence of its founder's persona on the paper's aims and interests. Furthermore, the research attempted to present fundamental aspects about black press and its role in African American history.

Chapter three

The Role of the *Chicago Defender* in The Great Migration

Introduction

The Great Migration displayed the African Americans willingness to fight for their rights. The *Chicago Defender* newspaper is considered as an outlet that represented and voiced Afro-Americans' struggles with racism. This chapter presents the correlation between two major elements that reshaped African Americans history. The chapter sheds light on the advantages the Great Migration presented for black Americans. Moreover, the chapter seeks to establish a link between The *Chicago Defender's* promotion of the Great Migration and its impact on African Americans. Furthermore, the chapter examines the role of the *Chicago Defender* on the Great Migration through its sensational technique of journalism. Another element the research aims at is to present major pros and cons of the great migration. In addition, the role of the *Chicago Defender* newspaper in changing the population distribution of the north will be investigated as well. The Great Migration did not just change the demographic facet of America but also made the local issue of racism as a national problem that needed to be solved. The chapter intends to explore the way these occurrences changed and helped the abolition of racial segregation in America.

3.1. Benefits of the Great Migration for African Americans

The Great Migration of Black Americans caused many changes and benefited them to some extent. A process transformed the economic, social, and political fabric of American society. The great migration changed the formation of the regional problems of race and socio-political equality into a national issue. Furthermore, migration allowed African Americans to have a role in the elections of northern political leaders in contrast to the south where they were disfranchised. It contributed to the emergence of a

generation of black leaders who fought for Afro-Americans' full citizenship rights (Crew34).

African Americans faced less difficulty of voting in the North. African-Americans gained political sway thanks to their collective vote and individual empowerment. Additionally, African-Americans could protest and voice their opinions without worrying about retaliation. The Civil Rights Movement eventually resulted from this activism. The Great Migration was ground breaking because it allowed African-Americans to establish a new position for themselves. The Great Migration caused a significant demographic transformation in American cities that profoundly affected African-American society, history, culture, and politics while also having a broader overall historical impact (“Great migration”, Par.02). The effects of the demographic transition were substantially amplified. It was because hundreds of thousands of African American migrants relocated in northern urban centers (Crew 34).

3.2. The Role of *Chicago Defender* in The Great Migration

According to Katherine Bitner, the *Chicago Defender* played a vital and representative part for the Negro press in the migration. She points out that promoting the Black exodus to the American North was a form of resistance to the circumstances in the South. Additionally, Bitner claims that the *Defender's* involvement in the migration was less deliberate than some historians have claimed. A discussion about prejudice in the black community contributed to the *Chicago Defender's* support for the Great Migration. The *Chicago Defender's* founder, Robert Abbott voiced his opinions and stance on the struggle of African Americans. *Defender's* articles provided updates and information on the magnitude of migration as well as the nuanced reasons for and responses to it. The articles expressed Abbott's position on several facets of migration. Furthermore, they portrayed his viewpoint on the significance of the migration. His

articles painted the migration as an active and constructive form of protest. The topic of migration served as a springboard for Abbott's commentary on the nature and effects of racial discrimination on Black, White, and American culture (Bitner 20-23).

The Great Northern Drive, which Abbott referred to as a mass exodus, occurred in May 1917, and this is when the newspaper's influence peaked. The promotion of the drive sparked an instant response, and it reduced the labor force in the South. In addition, one of the highest rates of migration to the North was established during the two-week northern drive period. The *Chicago Defender's* stories were renowned and inspired new racial unity and solidarity. With the help of articles about the north, the *Chicago Defender* was able to relocate 50,000 disadvantaged people from the boll weevil-ravaged South to the pleasant climate of the North. Later, over 900 letters from black Southerners expressing their desire to leave the region were received by a Negro welfare agency. The *Chicago Defender* was mentioned in a number of the messages, either directly or indirectly. As a result, it illustrated the value of the newspaper in a community united by a racial connection. Yet, it was denied from comprehensive and objective coverage by the white press. (Bitner 23).

3.3. The *Chicago Defender's* Promotion For The Great Migration

The *Chicago Defender* newspaper contributed to the migration of tens of thousands of African Americans to Chicago during the first half of the 20th century. The Great Migration of black Southerners to the urban North was influenced, moulded, and given voice as a result. Additionally, it developed a sense of place and served as a crucial window into Chicago politics, culture, and daily life. The *Defender* was more than just a local newspaper; it was also a source of ideas and viewpoints that inspired black people all around the country. The *Defender* both moulded and contributed to the Great Migration to Chicago. The exodus sparked fresh social, political, and religious

groups, all of which made their way into the newspaper. The *Defender* promoted the careers of prominent Chicago residents in a variety of professions by harnessing the energy of "the Black Metropolis." Along with Louis Armstrong, Muddy Waters, and political figures Archibald Carey and William Dawson, this list also included the authors Richard Wright and Gwendolyn Brooks as well as musicians ("Remembering the Chicago", par.07)

3.4. Pros and cons of the Great Migration

Due to the *Defender's* extensive support for the great migration, Chicago train tracks became filled with black migrants. Consequently, this led to referring to it as "the Black Belt". That area became the home for many African American migrants. Chicago's black population rose by an astonishing 148% between 1910 and 1920, totalling 109,458 individuals. The *Defender* also took it upon itself to publish job openings and want-ads from regional firms as well as details on housing and social life, rather than letting this new immigrant community fend for itself (De Santis 13).

In the North, the Great Migration gave rise to the first sizable urban black communities. Between 1910 and 1930, the black population in the North increased by about 20%. Some of the highest increases were observed in cities like Cleveland, New York, Detroit, and Chicago ("African American", par. 03). The great migration changed many aspects in northern cities. The cities in the North that the migrants from the South travelled to became centers of artistic, social, and cultural exchange. Thousands of African Americans experienced first-hand the Harlem Renaissance, an artistic movement that spanned numerous northern cities ("The Great Migration (1910-1970)").

Over time, African Americans experienced significant negative effects from the Great Migration. The flow of African American migration caused and exacerbated racial residential segregation. African Americans suffered due white prejudice.

Consequently, economic and social mobility were severely inhibited. Southern migrants settled in urban areas characterised by racially segregated labour markets and limited housing availability. This resulted in a considerable amount of White migration to the suburbs, fundamentally altering these cities (Calderon et al. 02).

Migrants were not always welcomed by locals of despite the encouragements of newspapers like the *Chicago Defender*. The towns up north, both black and white urban dwellers were concerned about the effects of so many newcomers. Occasionally, tried to deter migrants from entering. Racial prejudice was present in northern cities, though not to the same extent as it was in the South. Additionally, when employment was available, it was typically at the low end of the pay scale and the occupational pecking order (Crew 36). Restrictive conditions were put in place to ensure that racial discrimination became an obstacle for African-American upward integration. Migration was met with some resistance. Redlining, restricted covenants, higher housing costs, ghettoization, and violent race riots were a few of these restrictive practices (The Great Migration).

3.5. The Influence of the Great Migration on the North

During the 19th century, the Great Migration shifted the balance in the North. To illustrate, through the Great Migration, the demography of the North was altered. When African Americans migrated towards the North, they inevitably changed to safe haven they were seeking. Hence, the Great Migration portrays one of the most curial moments in the American history, for it did not only impact the demography of the northern states. It brought fundamental changes in society, economy, and culture. African American who migrated from the South were attracted to the North and the West. Yet, as time passed other areas such as the Northeast and the Midwest, became the centre of intention to many Southern African Americans (Tolnay 209).

The numbers of African Americans rose in Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, and

New York, unlike the west, which was quite unpopular until after 1940. Black Southerners began to migrate to Western cities when the United States of America entered World War II. The development of the defence industry on the West Coast was accelerating, which resulted in Southern migration toward those particular areas. Since the defence industry was centred in large cities, southerners who migrated there formed communities that were considered 'urban'. That is to say, the density of the population in those specific areas elevated because black southerners migrated to secure financial stability (216).

Like many southern cities that provided great opportunities for black southerners, Chicago was an attractive place. Chicago's image that was painted by the *Chicago Defender* made it an important place for all southern blacks who sought freedom, safety, and equality. In other words, "Chicago was their Mecca" (Grossman 84). During the Great Migration, African Americans were fascinated by Chicago. Within 54 years, Chicago embraced over 500,000 out of the 7 million who left the South. African Americans represented only 2 percent of the population in Chicago. However, after the Great migration the percentage of black elevated up to 33 percent. Migration impacted Chicago long before the Great Migration began. Since the 1940's, African American who migrated from the South lead to the expansion of the black communities in Chicago. Like many cities in the North, Chicago provided very few opportunities for unsatisfied African Americans until the first World War. During the time, Chicago prompted freedom from discrimination. Yet, occupation for them was scarce, for the jobs which needed less skills were taken by the immigrants coming from East and South Europe. That changed during the First World War when immigration from Europe slowed. The industry in Chicago needed labor force. Thus, the doors were opened for African Americans, which encouraged them further move from the South (Grossman).

Conclusion

Throughout history, African Americans struggled in the American South for years. During the Antebellum South, they experienced slavery, which meant they had no basic rights as individuals. In fact, they were not even seen as such during that time. They were merely a convenient tools that prompted the southern economy. The situation for African Americans did not change after the civil war and during the reconstruction era. They were killed and lynched by white supremacist who could not accept them as free individuals in the southern society structure. During that time, the *Chicago Defender* brought comfort and hope for them. It gave them a voice to speak their experiences and their history. Hence, they cherished that newspaper for it outlined them a future many did not believe was possible. It encouraged them to leave the south and head north where life was safer. *The Chicago Defender* was one of the most significant elements that sparked the Great Migration of African American to displace to the north.

General conclusion

This study studied the significant role of the *Chicago Defender* in the Great Migration. The focus was on the newspaper's ways to promote and influence African Americans to migrate northward. Through three comprehensive chapters, the dissertation presented a historical background of the Great Migration and the African American experience. Moreover, the research studied the origins and characteristics of the *Chicago Defender*, and the newspaper's strategies to encourage African Americans to move to the North.

The research indicates that the *Chicago Defender* played a fundamental role in assisting the Great Migration by providing a platform for African Americans to display their stories, struggles, and aspirations. The *Chicago Defender* functioned as weapon to fight for African Americans freedoms. The paper advocated for equal rights and opportunities for African Americans. The *Chicago Defender* did not focus only on promoting migration, but it also aimed at empowering African Americans to fight for their rights and improve their socio-economic conditions.

Moreover, this work portrayed the profound impact of the Great Migration on the demographic landscape of the United States. African Americans migration to Northern cities reshaped the social, cultural, and economic structures of these regions. The exodus African Americans into the North challenged the prevailing stereotypes and prejudices. It gradually changed the perception of African Americans as inferior race.

To conclude, the research underlines the vital part of the *Chicago Defender* in promoting the Great Migration and its consequent effects on American society. It functions as an evidence to Black press's power and the role of media outlets in altering and changing the historical course of black Americans. The *Chicago defender* gained wide range recognition and the support of public opinion. Furthermore, this

demonstrated the historical significance of the *Chicago Defender* and the Great Migration. Both helped on larger scale African American in their struggle for equality.

It can be concluded that the *Chicago Defender* did not intend to promote the Great Migration. However, the stigma and media attention The Great Migration gained represented the perfect opportunity to display the dismay and suffering of African Americans in Southern states. It can be said that this research tried to present the role of one the significant black newspapers in the African history. Moreover, the dissertation presented a new overlook on the role of the press in changing people's perspective and views.

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