

# **Sociology Fights Organised Crime: The Story of the Chicago Area Project**

Original article

## **Sociology Fights Organised Crime: The Story of the Chicago Area Project**

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**Abstract:** This article studies the Chicago Area Project (CAP). Specifically, it studies the work of CAP in three of Chicago's Italian immigrant communities: the Near North Side, the Near West Side, and the Near Northwest Side during the early 1900s. This article argues that the work of CAP prevented many young people from pursuing a life of organised adult crime and that research conducted in these communities has provided information crucial to our understanding of crime and delinquency including support for both social disorganisation and differential social organisation theory. The data for this research comes from published sources, newspaper accounts, and the CAP archives located in the special collections libraries of the University of Illinois, Chicago and the Chicago History Museum. The findings indicate that much of what we know about combating delinquency areas and the cultural transmission of delinquent values is based upon research conducted in Chicago's Italian neighbourhoods, yet there is no mention of the Italian community's efforts to fight juvenile delinquency in the scholarly literature, nor is there a recognition that the presence of adult criminality was a necessary element in Clifford Shaw's original characterisation of social disorganisation theory.

**Keywords:** The Chicago Area Project; Clifford Shaw; Illinois Institute for Juvenile Research; The North Side Civic Committee; The West Side Community Committee; The Near Northwest Side Civic Committee

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## **Introduction**

Anyone familiar with the delinquency literature has heard of the Chicago Area Project (CAP). Research conducted by the Illinois Institute for Juvenile Research (IJR) in conjunction with CAP has had a profound effect on our understanding of juvenile delinquency and crime in general. Led by Clifford R. Shaw, IJR was responsible for a series of remarkable studies on juvenile delinquency

including Delinquency Areas

(1929), *The Jack Roller* (1930), *The Natural History of a Delinquent Career* (1931), *Brother's in Crime* (1938), and *Juvenile Delinquency in Urban Areas* (1942, 1969). Grounded in the Chicago School of Sociology, Shaw's theories on the relationship between urban social structure and delinquency are a mainstay of the sociology literature. His theories, for the first time, tied delinquency to the ecological characteristics of urban areas and not the cultural traits of urban immigrants. CAP was founded on the belief that communities could reduce juvenile delinquency by improving neighbourhood life. It has been said that in spite of its fame, little is actually known about the operations of CAP (Schlossman and Sedlak, 1983). For example, of the communities that participated in CAP, three—the Near North Side, the Near West Side, and the Near Northwest Side—were all Italian communities and located in Chicago's "River Wards" where organised crime was a daily fact of life. While relatively unknown, the importance of CAP in preventing young people from pursuing a career in organised crime cannot be underestimated. Nowhere else in Chicago were young people faced with the daily example of the integration of bootleggers, gangsters, and vice entrepreneurs into the established political structure, and nowhere else in Chicago did the local Italian immigrant community confront this problem head on. This is their story. It begins with a review of CAP then moves on to discuss each of the community "committees" that were formed in Chicago's inner-city neighbourhoods and their contribution to controlling crime as well as our understanding of the causes of crime and juvenile delinquency. This article also recognizes the contributions of the Catholic Church whose local parishes played an important part in the delinquency prevention and community betterment efforts of CAP in these areas. In fact, the introduction to the revised edition of Shaw and McKay's (1969) book *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas* states that the character of the entire movement in any particular community was greatly affected by the relationship between CAP staff workers and the local parish priest.

## **The Chicago Area Project**

The criminologist James Short wrote in the Introduction chapter of Shaw and McKay's

1969 edition of *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas* that the true story of the Chicago Area Project (CAP) has never been told, and may be beyond recapture. Some forty years later, Short's conclusion still rings true. Virtually all of the early participants have passed away and little has been written about the early days of the project. Those interested in CAP's original community committees must rely solely on musty manuscript collections such as those at the Chicago History Museum and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Although worthwhile documents, they are limited. This article will attempt to fill this void by reconstructing the crime conditions that contributed to delinquency in these three Chicago neighbourhoods at the time of the CAP program.

The Chicago Area Project can trace its roots to the Institute for Juvenile Research. Originally established as the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute in 1909, the institute trained child psychologists, and contained the nation's first child guidance clinic (Leslie, 2011). In 1917, the name was

changed to the Institute for Juvenile Research. In 1926 a sociology department was created within the institute headed by former Cook County juvenile probation officer and University of Chicago graduate student Clifford Shaw. The sociology department studied, treated, and supervised problem children and parolees. It provided the first systematic challenge, by sociologists, to the dominance of psychology in public programs for the treatment and prevention of juvenile delinquency (Schlossman and Sedlak, 1983).

Until this time, work with troubled youth in Chicago was largely carried out by outside benefactors who set up settlement houses and other agencies to “uplift” the urban poor. The idea that the poor could help themselves challenged commonly accepted practice. By 1950, nine Chicago communities responded to Shaw’s call for the establishment of self-help community programs (Ferguson, 1950). They included: the Russell Square Committee, the North Side Civic Committee, the West Side Community Committee, the Near Northwest Side Civic Committee, the Mexican Civic Committee of the West Side, the West Side Civic Committee, the Southwest Side Community Committee, the Hegewisch Community Committee, and the Midwest Youth and Community Committee.

While each of these community committees tackled a wide variety of social problems, each also focused on the problem of juvenile delinquency (Ferguson, 1950). Through a special arrangement with the Cook County Juvenile Court, each community committee assisted in providing supervision of juvenile probationers in order to help them gain membership in non-delinquent groups and help reorient their activities around the conventional aspects of community life. This was accomplished through the involvement in committee sponsored youth activities and summer camp attendance. In contrast to the methods employed by traditional casework oriented social agencies, CAP sought to prevent delinquency through community involvement, and sought to utilize established neighbourhood institutions such as churches, ethnic societies, and social clubs to assist in promoting the welfare of local children and the social and physical improvement of the community (Burgess et al., 1937).

In 1934, CAP was incorporated as a private non-profit organisation, with its own board of directors, separate from IJR (Leslie, 2011). It was incorporated in order to secure state aid and private funding to assist Chicago’s low-income areas in establishing groups or committees which could, themselves, tackle their own communities’ problems (Chicago Federation of Community Committees, 1952). In 1939, the State of Illinois established the Division of Delinquency Prevention in the Department of Public Welfare, which provided salaried workers for CAP (Kramer, 1966). The Division of Delinquency Prevention was transferred to the newly created Illinois Youth Commission in 1953. Working with Shaw at both IJR and CAP were a number of research sociologists, the most prominent of which were Henry D. McKay, Solomon Kobrin, Harold Finestone, and Anthony Sorrentino.

Using an elaborate process of plotting the home addresses of over 100,000 juvenile delinquents processed by the juvenile courts in Chicago between 1900 and 1927, Shaw and his colleagues

determined that several Chicago neighbourhoods produced a vastly disproportionate number of delinquents (Schlossman and Sedlak, 1983). Youthful offenders were concentrated in four areas: the overwhelming Polish sections of South Chicago that surrounded Russell Square Park, the predominately Italian Near North and Near West Sides, and the black ghetto in the South Side. In 1932, Shaw chose Russell Square to test his innovative ideas about community organisation and delinquency prevention and the Chicago Area Project was born. Soon the program was extended to Chicago's Near North, Near West, and Near Northwest side Italian communities. The Italian communities differed from Russell Square. While all four had high rates of delinquency, the Near North, Near West, and to the lesser extent the Near Northwest sides of Chicago were located in the city's infamous "River Wards" where social conditions were the worst and the adult criminal element was organised and integrated into machine politics, a fact that had serious implications for juvenile delinquency.

Working at IJR, Shaw and his colleagues found that the areas of the city that produced a disproportionately large number of delinquent boys were predominantly made up of recent immigrants from the rural areas of Europe and the American South (Kobrin, 1951). As a group, the people living in these areas were generally on the bottom rungs of American society, and had the greatest difficulty adjusting to the urban industrial order. While immigrant parents held on to their native culture, their children sought to adapt to American society creating conflict between generations. This conflict affected the ability of many parents to control the activities of their children, who were often attracted to street life in Chicago's inner-city areas. Pulled by the influences of the street, young boys were more interested in billiards, bowling, cards, and girls than the culture of their mother country (Sorrentino, 1977). The lack of legitimate opportunities in slum areas, and the presence of young adult criminals, also provided these children with illegal opportunities for advancement and status attainment that were otherwise not available. Given the conditions of social life within these areas, delinquency was viewed by CAP as a natural outcome of social learning and not the cultural traits of the individual boy or a manifestation of a malfunctioning personality. Specifically, delinquency was believed to be adaptive behaviour on the part of male children of rural migrants, acting as members of adolescent peer groups, in an effort to find meaningful adult roles unaided by the older immigrant generation and under the influence of criminal role models for whom the inner city furnished a haven.

It was against this backdrop of the integration of criminal and conventional values that the North Side Civic Committee, the West Side Community Committee, and the Near Northwest Side Civic Committee were formed; and it was against this backdrop that some of the most important sociological work ever conducted in the field of delinquency research was carried out. The very concepts of social disorganisation, delinquency areas, and the cultural transmission of delinquent values found their voice in the work conducted by CAP in these neighbourhoods. Sure there were other neighbourhoods with delinquents. Clifford Shaw's choice of the Russell Square community to be the first participant in CAP bears this out, but Russell Square was not the a centre of machine politics and Russell Square did not have a tradition of organised adult criminality. Nowhere else in Chicago were the members of the local community faced with the challenge of stemming

recruitment into organised adult criminality, and nowhere else in Chicago was this challenge accepted by community residents.

## **North Side Civic Committee**

The North Side Civic Committee was the second community to join the Chicago Area Project. It served the area between Fullerton Avenue on the north, Division Street on the south, the Chicago River on the west, and LaSalle Street on the east (Chicago Area Project, 1955). The area comprised a number of different neighbourhoods, each with its own social organisation. The North Side Civic Committee classified the southern section as a “zone in transition.” The central and northern sections were described as primarily lower-middle class. The western section, along the industrial belt hugging the Chicago River, was characterized as a slum. The eastern section was, for the most part, a transient neighbourhood filled with residential hotels and single-room apartments.

The area was one of the low-rent districts of Chicago (Romano, 1940). It had been a place of first settlement for various immigrant groups and successively occupied by the Irish, Germans, Swedes, Italians, and Negroes from the American south. As each group prospered, they tended to move out of the district and were replaced by more recent immigrant groups. By 1910, over 13,000 Sicilians and other Italians lived in the area (Vecoli, 1983). Little Sicily or Little Hell, as the Sicilian community was known, was centred along Sedgwick Street from Division to North Avenue. The name Little Hell predated Sicilian immigration and was derived from the frequent rows and disturbances that occurred in the area (Chicago Daily Tribune, 1875). As early as 1875, knifings were common and the police often traced burglars and their plunder to the neighbourhood, which was largely Irish at the time.

In 1916, the Chicago Daily Tribune described Little Sicily as “the world’s most desperate spot” (Chicago Daily Tribune, 1916). The Local Community Research Committee of the University of Chicago reported in 1928 that the neighbourhood was “tough” and that the only recreation available to the Sicilian was the street and the poolroom. Children held crap (dice) games on the street, tossed pennies, and went on junking expeditions (Chicago Area Project, 1940). Thrasher (1927) defines junking as picking up some discarded object to sell or appropriating (stealing) the unguarded property of others.

The area was also physically conducive to lawlessness. Dilapidated buildings, dark and dirty alleys, broken streets, and disorganised living conditions all contributed to crime in the area (Local Community Research Committee, 1928). As early as 1930 rumours of the coming of public housing caused landlords to neglect their property leaving buildings in disrepair (Chicago Area Project, No date). Poor transportation and the barrier of the Chicago River also helped to isolate the area from other sections of Chicago.

In his landmark book, *The Gold Coast and the Slum*, Harvey Zorbaugh (1929: 5) reported that Little

Sicily had the greatest concentration of poverty in Chicago. Zorbaugh (1929: 198) described the area as a community that was in the process of “disintegration” where the church, school, family, and government had ceased to bear any influence upon community life. Existence there, he stated, was “without the law and without the mores of the larger society, a classic case of social disorganisation.”

Sicilians, like other immigrant groups, came to Chicago to find work. The legend grew that if a man could not “make it” in Chicago, he could not make it anywhere (Philpot, 1991). While the economic advances of earlier immigrants, including Northern Italians, allowed them to move to newer areas of the city, Sicilians and other new immigrant groups settled in the working class slums that had sprung up adjacent to the factories surrounding the Chicago River. Sociologists referred to this semi-circular belt between the downtown business area and the more desirable neighbourhoods of Chicago as the “zone in transition” (Burgess et al., 1967). It was here that the poor settled to gain a foothold in American society; and it was here that social conditions were the worst in the city. Sociologists at the University of Chicago described these areas as disorganised. They were disorganised to the extent that local families suffered from poverty, sickness, poor housing, and the difficulties of adjustment to urban life.

Little Sicily also had a reputation for crime. During the early 1900s, Little Sicily was the centre of Black Hand extortion in Chicago. The Black Hand was not a criminal organisation, as many believe, but a method of crime in which unsuspecting victims were simply sent a letter demanding money upon threat of violence. A recent study of 261 Black Hand crimes in Chicago found that over one-third (90) occurred in and around Little Sicily (Lombardo, 2010). In spite of its notoriety, the Black Hand crime wave only lasted for several years. Diligent action by the Chicago police and the White Hand Society, a group of Italian-American business and community leaders, brought Black Hand crime to an end.

The end of Black Hand crime, however, did not bring an end to crime in Little Sicily. In 1920, the Volstead Act ended the sale of alcoholic beverages in the United States. Although illegal, there was still a great demand for liquor. This demand was filled by various gangs around Chicago. Little Sicily was no exception. In Little Sicily, bootlegging was under the control of the Aiello brothers (Chicago Daily Tribune, 1927). The Aiello’s owned a bakery at 473 West Division Street in the heart of the community. They were a large and extensive family of nine brothers and numerous cousins. The Aiellos were fiercely independent and spurned the advances of the Capone mob, which was attempting to consolidate all illegal liquor traffic in Chicago. Eventually war broke out between the competing factions. Within a year, a dozen men were killed in Chicago’s Little Sicily neighbourhood and \$75,000 worth of property was firebombed as the Aiello and Capone forces battled for control of the liquor business (Chicago Daily Tribune, 1928).

Bootlegging in Little Sicily, like the rest of Chicago, eventually came under the control of Al Capone. After defeating the Aiellos, the Capone Syndicate recruited members of Little Sicily’s Gloriana Gang, a notorious group of burglars and holdup men, to distribute alcohol in the area

(Chicago Crime Commission, 1951). The gang derived its name from its leader, Charles Gloriana. Deputy Police Commissioner John Alcock described the Gloriana gang as the most dangerous band of criminals ever to infest Chicago. Three members of the gang, Dominick Nuccio, Dominick Di Bella, and Dominick Brancato, collectively known as the “Three Doms,” worked to bring much of the Near North Side’s illegal gambling under crime syndicate control and became prominent members of the Chicago Outfit, the traditional organised crime group in Chicago (Chicago Daily Tribune, 1953a).

Gangs were common in the area. Touring the streets of Little Sicily in 1935, a University of Chicago student reported that numerous packs of young men huddled together on street corners and in little storefront clubhouses (Sayler, 1935). Twenty clubs with a combined membership of 966 boys and young men were found in a six- by nine-block area. While some were organised purely for sports, others were organised for political purposes helping to get out the vote at election time.

Little Sicily was also within walking distance of the vice district centred along North Clark Street in Chicago. Clark Street was “Honky Tonk USA” (Lindberg, 1991). Saloons, cabarets, and rialtos marked every block on Clark Street from Grand Avenue to Division Street. Clark Street was also the site of the Sands, one of Chicago’s original turn-of-the-century tenderloin districts. As late as 1953, the Chicago Crime Commission reported that there were 165 “clip joints, burlesque bars, assignation houses, and gambling joints” in the Clark Street area (Chicago Daily Tribune, 1953b). That same year, the Chicago City Council’s “Big Nine” Emergency Crime Committee found a direct connection between Democratic alderman Mathias “Paddy” Bauler and gambling in the district.

It was in response to these desperate conditions, that the residents of Little Sicily joined the Chicago Area Project and formed the North Side Civic Committee in an effort to improve their community. The North Side Civic Committee’s history can be traced to a group of young men known as the Owl-Indians Social Athletic Club (Chicago Area Project, 1933). The Owl-Indians began as a boy gang at Seward Park in the heart of the community during the early 1920s. They were named after the park’s lightweight boys’ basketball team. The Seward Park Indians were the bigger boys. As they grew older, the Owl-Indians incorporated as a social athletic club and sponsored various athletic and social programs (Romano, 1940). They played baseball, basketball, and other sports, and also sponsored picnics, dances, and neighbourhood parties.

The president of the Owl-Indians was a dentist named Angelo Lendino (Chicago Area Project, 1933). In September 1935, the Owl-Indians were invited by Joseph Lohman (who later became sheriff of Cook County) of the Institute for Juvenile Research, to join the Chicago Area Project. The idea was to use community members to fight delinquency through improved educational and recreational programs for youth and the improvement of the physical and social conditions of the community. One month later, at Doctor Lendino’s request, seventy-five men gathered at the boy’s gymnasium in Seward Park. They were lawyers, policemen, machinists, physicians, truck drivers, carpenters, storekeepers, barbers, public officials, ditch-diggers, and tailors. The Chicago Area

Project offered them a chance to make things better in their neighbourhood and they accepted the challenge. As a result, the North Side Civic Committee was formed with Doctor Lendino as its president.

The North Side Civic Committee wasted no time in setting up programs throughout the community. Seventeen subcommittees were formed to improve conditions in the area including committees on delinquency, civic responsibility, recreation, health and sanitation, and camping (Local Community Research Committee, 1928). A vocational guidance committee was formed to seek out employment opportunities for young men and adults (Romano, 1940). There was also an education committee established to recruit high school graduates to teach in the area's public schools. Two research sociologists, Guy Procaccio and Joseph Puntill, employed by the Illinois Department of Public Welfare, were assigned to the program (Chicago Area Project, 1955).

While the North Side Civic Committee sought to generally improve conditions in the area, delinquency prevention was at the heart of their program. Former parole officer and North Side Civic Committee member Fred Romano (1940) wrote that the area's history of vice and crime had established traditions of delinquency that were transferred from the older boys to the younger boys. Young boys were being trained in crime as they grew up in the neighbourhood and learned delinquency in the same manner that children in more fortunate circumstances learned conventional forms of behaviour. Additionally, the delinquency rate in the Near North Side had remained the same no matter which immigrant group inhabited the area. That is, the rates of juvenile delinquency remained relatively constant despite successive changes in the ethnic composition of the population.

The fact that each ethnic group experienced the same rates of delinquency highlighted the fact that the illegal activity carried out by young people in the district was not related to their ethnic background. It also supported the Chicago School argument that delinquency was the result of social structural conditions. Children living in Chicago's Near North Side, or any of Chicago's other so-called delinquency areas as described by Clifford Shaw (1931), were no different than children living in other parts of the city except for the fact that they lived with adult criminals and an absence of socially acceptable opportunity. Romano (1940) reported that Near North Side parents were confronted with almost insurmountable obstacles in their efforts to provide opportunities for their children. Not only did the parents lack the financial resources to provide a better life for those in their care, but they were also confronted with conflicting attitudes and standards of community behaviour, which made it difficult to properly socialize their children. Parents in the Near North Side were confronted with poverty and a lack of wholesome opportunity, and also faced the presence of organised adult criminals, machine politics, and seedy vice rialtos, all attracting the attention of the teen-age boys and young men of their community.

The North Side Civic Committee fought juvenile delinquency by providing young people with alternatives to crime and delinquency. A 1938 study by the Chicago Recreation Commission reported that 3,100 boys, girls, and young men were participating in the programs sponsored by

the North Side Civic Committee (Burgess, 1942). Committee members worked with Chicago Park District officials to remodel Seward Park; they worked with the Chicago Police Department to open a game room and craft shop on the third floor of the Hudson Avenue police station; and they worked with the Chicago Board of Education to improve conditions at Little Sicily's Jenner School (Local Community Research Committee, 1928). In addition, the North Side Civic Committee created a summer camp program for local children in cooperation with the Salvation Army and the Italian Welfare Council. Cub Scout and Boy Scout troops were established, softball and basketball leagues formed, and educational trips were taken to Chicago museums and zoos.

The North Side Civic Committee also sponsored an eleven-day carnival at Saint Philip Benizi, the local Catholic parish, to raise money to redecorate the church. Saint Philip Benizi was founded in 1904 as a mission by the Servite (Servants of Mary) Order to administer to the needs of the growing Italian and Sicilian community (Koenig, 1981). In 1916, Father Luigi Giambastiani became the pastor of Saint Philip Benizi, which was now a Chicago parish. Father Giambastiani remained at Saint Philip's for the next fifty years and played a major role in the activities of the North Side Civic Committee.

The North Side Civic Committee also worked with the neighbouring Immaculate Conception Parish to build a children's playground at 1500 North Park Avenue. The playground was built by the members of the committee and the residents of the neighbourhood, who contributed all of the labour and 90% of the materials (Chicago Area Project, 1955). The playground contained a field house with space for the office of the North Side Civic Committee. The committee also built a playground at 419 West Evergreen and named it the "Lendino Playground" in honour of Dr. Lendino.

Chicago's Near North Side, and in particular the Little Sicily community, was chosen to participate in the Chicago Area Project on the assumption that the social life of the community and groups like the Owl-Indians could support such a program. This social life is best described in the words of Dr. Lendino himself. Referring to Little Sicily, he wrote:

Perhaps nowhere else in the city is there to be found a neighbourhood where as many people know each other as they do in our district. We have to a very great extent the same kind of warmth, friendliness and intimacy in our community life that was to be found in the small towns of Sicily from whence our parents came (Whyte, 1943).

So successful was the work of the North Side Civic Committee that it had a major impact on the field of sociology. Zorbaugh's study of Little Sicily supported social disorganisation theory and the emerging Chicago School of Sociology, which viewed crime as the result of the failure of social control in community areas. This lack of control was brought about because community institutions such as the church, school, family, and local government ceased to function effectively. William Foote Whyte (1943), a noted sociologist from the University of Oklahoma, challenged this position after observing the work of the North Side Civic Committee. He concluded that no one who reads

of the activities of this group can help but conclude that Zorbaugh neglected to see some of the most significant features of life in the area. This statement had a profound effect on the field of sociology and has led to the recognition that even distressed neighbourhoods can have an effective social organisation of their own.

In 1940, the City of Chicago approved plans to demolish a portion of Little Sicily and replace the homes there with low-rise public housing (Saint Phillip Benizi, 1954). The initial plan was received with some enthusiasm by area residents. Only a small section of the community was to be raised, and jobs and new housing would be created for local residents. The new housing development would even be named after the Italian-born nun, Mother Frances X. Cabrini, who had worked tirelessly to serve Chicago's Italian community. In addition, many of the families who would eventually move into the public housing units would be Italian.

Fred Romano, chairman of the Civic Improvement Subcommittee expressed some hesitation about the project at a North Side Civic Committee meeting on June 17, 1940 (Chicago Area Project, 1940). He reported that the committee, made up of 300 resident property owners, was working to improve existing housing in the district and that they would enthusiastically support any project that would provide for the welfare of neighbourhood residents. However, the proposed public housing was planned without their input in spite of their having submitted detailed recommendations for the modification of the project to better serve the needs of the local community. Romano concluded that they would oppose any project that would destroy their social life, scatter their people, and drive them out into worse living quarters than they were already occupying. In spite of the protests of local citizens, the City of Chicago went ahead with its plans and began to demolish the area and replace it with public housing.

In the early 1950s, the city of Chicago decided to expand public housing in Little Sicily. The construction was to be in two phases. Phase one, the "Cabrini Extension", consisted of fifteen seven-, ten-, and nineteen-story buildings. Phase two, the William Green Homes, would add an additional eight buildings to the housing complex that came to be known as 'Cabrini Green' (Chicago Daily Tribune, 1992). The people of Little Sicily felt betrayed. Much had been done to rehabilitate the area. Dr. Lendino, as spokesman for the Near North Civic Committee, stated that seventy-five percent of the residents of the community were home-owners who had done much to improve their property (Chicago Daily Tribune, 1940). Although well intended, the new public housing complex would permanently alter the character of the neighbourhood.

The destruction of Little Sicily was viewed as nothing less than a betrayal of the Sicilian community under the guise of progress. Some believe that the area's reputation for lawlessness led to the demise of the community (Zummo, 2001). But as Dr. Lendino stated to federal housing officials: "We did have a reputation for crime and delinquency and at one time had the name of Little Hell, but our North Side Civic Committee has been cleaning things up. We now have seven Boy Scout Troops" (Chicago Daily

Tribune, 1940). Neighbourhood physician Bruce Zummo MD wrote in his book *Little Sicily* (2001) that the area was not a deteriorating slum when the Chicago Housing Authority redeveloped the area arguing that the residents had done all they could to rehabilitate the area and that every property had a responsible owner. Dr. Zummo stated he did not know that he lived in a distressed community until he went to college and read Harvey Zorbaugh's book *The Gold Coast and the Slum* (1925).

The coming of public housing brought an end to Little Sicily as the Sicilian community was dispersed to other parts of Chicago and its surrounding suburbs. With the end of the Little Sicily community came the end of the North Side Civic Committee. Many of its functions were taken over by the North Central Community Committee, which worked for a time among the residents of the Cabrini-Green housing project. The end of Little Sicily also brought an end to one of the most important sociological experiments ever conducted, one that continues to inform our understanding of the social organisation of community life.

## **West Side Community Committee**

The West Side Community Committee was established in 1938 (Chicago Area Project, 1955). It served the area from Congress Street on the north to Roosevelt Road on the south and from Halsted Street on the east to Rockwell Street on the west. In his 1972 book *The Social Order of the Slum*, Gerald Suttles referred to the neighbourhood as the 'Addams Area' in honour of social reformer Jane Addams, but to the residents it was called 'Taylor Street' in reference to the community's main thoroughfare. The 31,000 people who lived in the community were largely Italian with some Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. In spite of the number of residents, a large portion of the district was dedicated to industry. Because much of the area was zoned for manufacturing, it was not uncommon to find residential housing adjacent to small factories and commercial establishments. Most of the houses in the area were comparatively old, two-story frame cottages containing two to four small apartments. Fearing further expansion of the manufacturing area, property owners were often unwilling to expend even a small sum for the repair of a house that might soon be replaced by a factory.

The Near West Side of Chicago was the area of first settlement for almost every immigrant group that came to Chicago. It was a textbook example of social disorganisation. Bad housing, lack of sanitation, low rents, low family income, welfare dependency, high rates of infant mortality, and tuberculosis were among the chief social problems of the community (Annual Report of the West Side Community Committee, 1942).

While such factors were believed to contribute to the juvenile delinquency in the area, they were compounded by what the committee described as "more significant elements." Lacking effectively organised social and recreational facilities, the leisure time of the youth in the area found expression in various delinquent activities. The large number of rundown buildings made junking an inviting form of play activity and provided an opportunity to earn money. A well-known vice district

was also within walking distance of the Near West Side providing young boys with the opportunity to “roll” (rob) drunks and spend their ill-gotten gains in cheap movie houses and saloons. There were taverns, taxi-dance halls, burlesque shows, shooting galleries, greasy spoons, and poolrooms (Sorrentino, 1977). The absence of constructive social programs to satisfy the fundamental wishes of the children allowed delinquency to become normal group behaviour, and the absence of conventional means to achieve status allowed delinquency to become approved behaviour for the children of the Near West Side.

While children in other communities found recognition in socially approved experiences such as the family, play group, church, and school, children living in the Near West Side were exposed to conflicting values and standards of behaviour (Annual Report, 1942). During the “Roaring Twenties,” for example, the “Big Shots” of the neighbourhood were Prohibition era gangsters and the members of the Forty-Two Gang, both providing “approved” means for local youth to achieve success. The Fortytwo Gang was a group of teen-age boys and young men who committed an endless series of crimes in Chicago’s Near West Side during the years between 1925 and 1934 (Lombardo, 2010). While concentrating on auto theft, the Forty-two Gang engaged in nearly every other form of crime from coin-box looting and window smashing to armed robbery and murder. During Prohibition, the gang also furnished cars for their elders in the alcohol and bootleg rackets. Promising members of the Forty-two Gang graduated into various adult bootlegging gangs including those led by Bugs Moran, Red Bolton, and Al Capone.

So extensive was bootlegging in Chicago’s Near West Side that the intersection of Roosevelt and Halsted streets was referred to as “Bootleggers Square” (Pacyga and Skerrett, 1986). Bootlegging in the Taylor Street area was dominated by the Genna brothers—Angelo, Sam, Jim, Pete, Tony, and Mike—who organised large numbers of Italian immigrants in the home production of alcohol (Chicago Daily Tribune, 1925a). The Genna’s bootlegging operations were so extensive that in June 1925, Chicago police conducted fifty raids on Genna stills arresting 320 people and seizing more than 10,000 barrels of illegal alcohol and scores of shotguns and revolvers (Chicago Daily Tribune, 1925b).

Republican Ward Committeeman Giuseppe Esposito, popularly known as “Diamond Joe” dominated political efforts in Chicago’s Taylor Street Italian community during Prohibition (Chicago Daily Tribune, 1926). Although Esposito had become an influential political figure and ward leader, he was also active in bootlegging. Esposito had a license to distribute Cuban sugar; one that he claimed was granted by President Calvin Coolidge in return for his assistance in delivering the Italian vote. Sugar was an ingredient critical to the distillation of alcohol, and Cuba was the major U.S. supplier. Esposito operated a 1,000-gallon still at the Milano Cafe in south suburban Chicago Heights. He was murdered on March 22, 1928 while walking home from a meeting of the Nineteenth Ward Republican Club (Giancana and Giancana, 1992). It is believed that he was killed by members of the Forty-two Gang at the behest of Al Capone, who sought to gain control of bootlegging activities in the Near West Side.

The alliance between politics and crime in this area predated Italian immigration. Irish machine boss John Powers controlled the area, which at the time was part of Chicago's Nineteenth Ward. The Municipal Voters League described Powers as the leader of the "Grey Wolves," a group of aldermen recognized as the worst element in the city council (Davis, 1967). Powers was elected to office in 1888 when the ward was predominately German and Irish. Over the years, the ethnic composition of the area changed. The earlier residents moved away and were replaced by newly arriving Italian immigrants. By 1916, the ward consisted largely of Italians and Eastern European Jews. Because of the change in the ethnic make-up of the area, the Italian community sought to elect one of its own, Anthony De'Andrea, to the office of alderman (Baker, 1898). The effort to unseat Powers resulted in an "Alderman's War" in the Nineteenth Ward. Before it was over, thirty men had died in the war to control the "Bloody Nineteenth."

The integration of deviant and conventional lifestyles in the Near West Side manifested itself in a locally acknowledged alliance between the political leadership and the leadership of the city's gambling and vice rackets (Kobrin, 1951). In describing the community, Solomon Kobrin, of the CAP, wrote that a firmly established integration of legitimate and illegitimate elements had existed in the community for some length of time. Kobrin (1951: 657) found that specific patterns of group delinquency were determined in large part by the "character of the interaction between the conventional and the criminal value systems." This position suggested the existence of a typology of delinquency areas based upon variations in the relationship between the two. He identified the two polar types of this typology as the presence or absence of "systematic and organized adult activity in violation of law" and argued that the stable position of an illicit enterprise within a community is reflected in the nature of delinquent conduct on the part of the children. He wrote:

In a general way, therefore, delinquent activity in these areas constitutes a training ground for the acquisition of skill in the use of violence, concealment of offense, evasion of detection and arrest, and the purchase of immunity from punishment. Those who come to excel in these respects are frequently noted and valued by adult leaders in the rackets who are confronted, as are the leaders of all income-producing enterprises, with the problem of the recruitment of competent personnel (Kobrin, 1951: 658).

Responding to these conditions, a group of approximately 50 young men from the Taylor Street area, working with Clifford Shaw and the Institute for Juvenile Research, set up the West Side Community Committee in an effort to eliminate the social conditions that were conducive to delinquency in their area (Annual Report, 1942). Many of the original committee volunteers were members of the Guiding Brothers Club that had been organised by neighbourhood boys to improve the community (Sorrentino, 1977). An abandoned stable on Vernon Park Place became the committee's first home. The committee later worked from a store-front office at 1035 West Polk Street. Later, a second office was opened at 908 South Western Avenue to serve the Italian community west of the Illinois Medical Centre District along Taylor Street (Chicago Daily Tribune, 1950). The group sought to battle delinquency and improve their community through a program of social, recreational, and educational activities controlled by the members of the community and not

outside social workers.

Working with start-up funds provided by CAP, the West Side Community

Committee organised the same types of services that were provided by the North Side Civic Committee. Groups or subcommittees were formed to deal with community improvement, education, employment, entertainment, family counselling, health, neighbourhood recreation, and scouting (Annual Report, 1942). Committee members also assisted local residents in applying for citizenship, social security, and veteran's benefits (Sorrentino, 1977). Emil Peluso and Nick Taccio of the Illinois Department of Public Welfare were assigned to the committee to work as delinquency prevention coordinators. The group also became involved with the local Parent Teacher Associations in an effort to improve neighbourhood schools.

A summer camp was later established on 44 acres of land in Crete, Illinois, a southern suburb of Chicago (Chicago Area Project, 1955). Community volunteers built benches, tables, and cabins for the camp with second-hand lumber, and a portable school building was purchased from the Chicago Board of Education and used as a dining hall (Annual Report, 1942). A religious grotto dedicated to the Madonna was also constructed from cement blocks and steel and included a thirty-foot cross (Sorrentino, 1977). The money to fund the summer camp was raised in cooperation with Reverend Romingio Pigato, the pastor of the Our Lady of Pompeii Church (Chicago Area Project, 1942). A charity dance was held at the church and approximately \$4,000 was raised from the local community to purchase the camp. Over 3,000 people participated in the effort. The summer camp was named Camp Pompeii in recognition of the parish's efforts. Father Pigato was a member of the Scalabrinian order, an Italian religious group founded in 1887 to maintain the Catholic faith among Italian immigrants in the New World. The Our Lady of Pompeii Parish was established in 1911 to work among Chicago's Near West Side Italians and played a major role in the delinquency prevention and community betterment efforts of the West Side Community Committee.

One of the main focuses of the committee was juvenile delinquency and crime prevention. Parts of the Near West Side had the highest delinquency rates in Chicago. Anthony Sorrentino (1972) of the West Side Community Committee identified seventyfive boy's gangs in the area. For over forty years, the Near West Side had been what Clifford Shaw described as a "delinquency area," an area where large numbers of boys and men were involved in delinquency and crime (Annual Report, 1942). Between 1924 and 1926, one out of every four boys aged between 17 and 21 living in the community had faced felony charges in the juvenile court (Shaw, 1930). Although the neighbourhood was largely Italian, it earlier had produced large numbers of delinquents when the major nationality groups occupying the area were German, Irish, and Jewish. Attitudes underlying delinquent behaviour were imbedded in the community and transmitted successfully from one group to another in what Shaw and McKay (1942) called the "cultural transmission" of delinquent values. Members of the West Side Community Committee argued that if the rates of delinquency were uniformly high despite successive changes in the population, then delinquency must be caused by the social structure of the community itself and not the cultural traits of the community's

inhabitants (Annual Report, 1942). In other words, there was nothing inherent in the culture and ethnic background of the local boys to cause their delinquency.

In an effort to fight crime and delinquency, the West Side Community Committee began a number of programs aimed at reintegrating both juvenile and adult offenders into conventional roles including an Adult Parole Program, a Delinquency Prevention and Treatment Program, and a Boy's Court Supervision Program (Chicago Area Project, 1955). The Adult Parole Program assisted parolees in securing employment.

Finding employment was particularly hard for young men from the area. Sorrentino (1977) found that employers often discriminated against Italians from Taylor Street because of their "hoodlum background."

While they may have been discriminated against in finding employment, parolees were not prevented from participating in the recreational programs of the committee where they worked to rehabilitate delinquent youth (Annual Report, 1942). As former gang members and ex-convicts, the parolees carried some authority with the younger boys and were able to tell them first hand of the failings of a life of crime. The delinquency programs also received referrals from local police juvenile officers and boy's court, and volunteers visited neighbourhood youths sentenced to the Illinois State Training School for Boys in Saint Charles, Illinois. Recognizing that crime and delinquency often resulted from association with other offenders, these programs were aimed at acquainting parolees and court supervised youth with a new circle of friends and involving them in wholesome activities such as those sponsored by the committee.

There existed within the Near West Side a large number of young men's clubs, known as social athletic clubs, that functioned as centres of male social life (Kobrin, 1961). Many of these clubs enjoyed the patronage of local political leaders and became a pool for recruitment of political followers and future leaders. Sorrentino (1977) tied these social athletic clubs to machine politics describing how local precinct captains would provide "help" through their "political contacts" whenever a club member was in trouble. He estimated that 2,000 young men in the Taylor Street area belonged to these clubs in the years following World War II. Because these social athletic clubs played a significant part in the organised social life of the area, the West Side Community Committee devoted a great deal of energy to convince these clubs to help solve community problems (Ferguson, 1950). Their efforts paid off. Sorrentino (1977) reported that many of the clubs gave Christmas parties for neighbourhood children, helped poor families in need, and worked with local delinquents. So successful was their effort that it was a local Social Athletic Club (SAC) that began the West Side Community Committee's branch office at 908 South Western (Chicago Area Project, 1955).

Like the Near North Side, Chicago's Near West Side was also targeted for public housing and urban renewal. One of Chicago's first public housing projects, the Jane Addams Homes, was built along Taylor Street in 1938 displacing large numbers of Italian residents (Hirsch, 1998).

The establishment of the Illinois Medical Centre District in 1941, the construction of the Eisenhower Expressway in 1956, and the construction of the Chicago campus of the University of Illinois in 1965 all continued to disperse the residents of the Near West Side Italian community. While the Near West Side was one of Chicago's oldest neighbourhoods, like the Near North Side much had been done to improve the area. The West Side Community Committee had cleared empty lots to create play space for children, worked with city officials to demolish dilapidated buildings, and worked with local residents to improve the physical condition of their homes (Annual Report, 1942).

Despite the improvements to the area, much of the Taylor Street Italian community, like Little Sicily, was destroyed. Urban renewal and public housing had taken its toll on the Near West Side. Just like the people of the Near North Side, the residents of the Near West Side felt betrayed. Echoing Dr. Lendino's comments, Anthony Sorrentino (1977) wrote that the bootleggers were gone, the Forty-two Gang was gone, and juvenile delinquency had been drastically reduced, yet despite all of their efforts, the community would be destroyed. Even the newly built \$600,000 Holy Guardian Angel Church would be demolished to clear land for the new University of Illinois campus (Sorrentino, 1977). The Near West Side Italian community was much larger than the Near North Side's Little Sicily. While Little Sicily was totally destroyed, only one-half of the Near West Side Italian community was affected by the many urban renewal projects, but enough was destroyed to have a permanent effect on the Italian neighbourhood. People began to move away. No longer able to support Camp Pompeii, the West Side

Community Committee sold the camp in 1955 to the Near Northwest Side Civic Committee (Sorrentino, 1977). The West Side Community Committee changed its name to the Near West Side Community Committee in 1960 and continued to operate for another twenty years. It is no longer in existence today.

## **Near Northwest Civic Committee**

The Near Northwest Civic Committee was organised in 1940 (Chicago Area Project, 1955). The committee served the area between Chicago Avenue on the north to Grand Avenue on the south and from Racine Avenue on the east to Western Avenue on the west. The population served was predominately Italian and Polish. Like the Near West Side, the Near Northwest Side had its share of commercial facilities and small industrial plants. And like the Near West Side, it also suffered from high rates of infant mortality, tuberculosis, and welfare dependency (Chicago Area Project, No date). These conditions only existed in the inner city and were left behind when people moved from the district. It wasn't the culture of the urban poor that caused crime and delinquency, but the disadvantaged conditions that existed in neighbourhoods like the Near Northwest Side. The area also contained some of the same "more significant elements" that had affected crime in the area of the West Side Community Committee. For example, the South end of the district bordered the West Madison Street rialto and its notorious honky-tonk bars and flophouse district.

Unlike Taylor Street, little has been written about the early history of this area. While the area is

commonly referred to as “Grand Avenue,” The neighbourhood is located within the West Town community area of Chicago. West Town was annexed to the City of Chicago in 1869. In his seminal book *The Gang*, Frederic Thrasher (1927) wrote that West Town had been a refuge for criminal gangs. When Chicago’s gangs first began to find life difficult within the central area of the city, they moved to West Town, because of its “ineffective government” (Thrasher, 1927: 5). As a result, West Town had a tradition of wide-open saloons, cabarets, gambling houses, and vice resorts.

The Near Northwest Side Italian settlement began near the corner of Grand, Milwaukee, and Halsted streets adjacent to the Near North Side, which was connected to the area by a bridge over the north branch of the Chicago River (Nelli, 1970). The Grand and Halsted neighbourhood received a large number of new residents as families began moving out of the Near North Side because of the influx of negro migrants. In 1901, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* published a feature story titled the “Most Dangerous Neighbourhood in Chicago,” referring to a small Sicilian colony on Grand Avenue east of Halsted Street near the Chicago River. The neighbourhood was allegedly the headquarters of the Sicilian Mafia. Other Italians settled further west on Grand Avenue as far as Chicago Avenue in order to work in the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad yards and the adjoining factories that dominated the area.

Organised adult criminality was prevalent in the area. It was the same type of adult criminal activity that existed in the Near North and in the Near West Sides of Chicago, and it was the same type of adult criminal activity that influenced the delinquent activity of the young people in these areas. For example, during the 1940s local merchants and gambling house operators were forced to pay protection money to Vincent Benevento (*Chicago Herald American*, 1946). Known as the “Cheese King,” Benevento was the head of the *Unione Siciliano* a powerful fraternal group within the Italian community. He was slain by members of the Capone Syndicate in an effort to replace him with local Grand Avenue mobster Anthony Accardo as head of the *Unione* (*Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1946).

One of the most important early Near Northwest Side gangsters was Anthony “Tough Tony” Capezio. Capezio ran a number of gambling operations in the area. In 1952, the Chicago Police raided Capezio’s Grand Club, a bar at 1958 West Grand Avenue (*Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1952). Although Capezio was not present, twentyseven known burglars, robbers, and hijackers were arrested including future Chicago crime syndicate members James “Cowboy” Mirro, Americo Di Pietto, John Di Fronzo, and James D’Antonio. The raid at the Grand Club was in response to threats made by the bar’s patrons against the Chicago police. The importance of the raid was that it clearly documented the integration of different age levels of offenders. Adult gangsters like Miro and Dipietto were found interacting with young neighbourhood toughs. John Di Fronzo, the future head of the Chicago crime syndicate was twenty-three years old at the time of the raid. James D’Antonio was twenty-four.

Hearing of the success of the North Side Civic Committee, a small group of men in the Near

Northwest Side turned to the CAP for help (Chicago Area Project, No date). Many of the people who lived along Grand Avenue in the Near Northwest Side were related to people who lived in the Near North Side. Being Italian they also attended the same churches and belonged to the same fraternal organisations. Seventy people came to the first meeting of the Near Northwest Civic Committee, which was held in the basement of the Santa Maria Addolorata Church.

The Near Northwest Side Civic Committee opened an office and social centre at 539 North Ogden Avenue in 1943, and a second social centre on Erie Street in 1945 (Chicago Area Project, No date). The Ogden Avenue centre hosted wedding receptions, birthday parties, and dances. The Erie Street centre had table games for young people and sponsored Christmas parties and held Boy Scout meetings and dances for teenagers. Daniel "Moose" Brindisi was assigned to the committee by the Illinois Department of Public Welfare and served as the committee's director until his death in 1993, a period of fifty years. In fact, Mr. Brindisi's home was in the same building that housed the Near Northwest Civic Committee, which had moved to 1329 West Grand Avenue (Crimmins, 1993). Grand Avenue between Halsted Street and Ashland Avenue was renamed Daniel "Moose" Brindisi Avenue in 1992 in honour of the work that he had done in the community.

The committee's programs included a boy's and girl's club, athletic events, weekly movies, and other recreation activities (Chicago Area Project, 1955). The committee also sponsored a summer camp for neighbourhood children using facilities provided by the Salvation Army and the Boy Scouts of America. The Santa Maria Addolorata school gymnasium was also used for recreational programs. Like Our Lady of Pompeii, Santa Maria Addolorata was a Scalabrinian parish established to work among Italian immigrants. The committee also sponsored baseball games at Chicago's Eckhart Park and used the gymnasium and auditorium of the nearby Chicago Commons Settlement House for other activities (Chicago Area Project, No date). While Chicago Commons was one of those "outside" agencies that had been criticized by CAP, the Near Northwest Side Civic Committee worked hand-in-hand with Chicago Commons on a number of worthwhile programs. During World War II, the Near Northwest Civic Committee also sent literally hundreds of pounds of food and clothing to families in war-torn Europe.

Even the social athletic clubs in the area were enlisted in the committee's efforts. The SACs formed a baseball league at Eckhart Park for three age groups of children (Chicago Area Project, No date). When they ran out of baseball diamonds at the park, they cleaned up vacant lots in the area and turned them into baseball parks. One group received permission from the Chicago Board of Education to use the former location of the Moses Montefiore School, where they cleared the land and built bleachers for the league's spectators.

An important part of the Near Northwest Civic Committee's program included work with eight neighbourhood youth clubs or what they called "natural gangs" (Chicago Area Project, 1955). These gangs were groups of teenage boys who engaged in delinquent activity including gang fights, petty larceny, noisy horseplay, truancy, and sex offences. Using local adult and boy leaders, the members of the committee worked with the boys to direct their energy into positive activity in an

effort to prevent delinquency.

Like Little Sicily and Taylor Street, Grand Avenue was also targeted for urban renewal. Strong opposition from the Near Northwest Civic Committee and community residents led the Chicago Land Clearance Commission to announce that it would not go forward with plans to demolish a large segment of the neighbourhood and build 1,500 to 1,900 new housing units (Chicago Daily News, 1954). Michael Lang of the commission concluded that local residents should be given the chance to rehabilitate their own neighbourhoods (Chicago Daily Tribune, 1954). Like the North Side Civic Committee and the West Side Community Committee, the Near Northwest Side Civic Committee is not in existence today. While the John F. Kennedy Expressway did destroy a portion of the neighbourhood, it was not urban renewal, but suburbanization that brought an end to the Near Northwest Side Civic Committee. Italians like other ethnic groups sought a better life and moved to newer areas. Some brought CAP with them. Daniel "Moose" Brindisi's sons, Cesar and Thomas moved to west suburban Du Page County, Illinois and established Du CAP, the Du Page County Area Project, which is still in existence today.

## Conclusion

As early as 1943, the Chicago Plan Commission, a municipal body responsible for reviewing and approving large-scale urban development projects, found that 242,000 substandard housing units existed within a semi-circular zone of "blight" surrounding downtown Chicago (Hirsch, 1998). These conditions, they believed, threatened the downtown business district. As a result, plans were made to replace many of the adjacent neighbourhoods, most of which were Italian. The development of Cabrini Green, the Jane Adams Homes, the construction of the Eisenhower and the Dan Ryan expressways, the building of the Medical Centre District, and the building of the Chicago campus of the University of Illinois all impacted Chicago's Italian community and has led some to conclude that it is doubtful that any Chicago ethnic group, other than African Americans, was damaged as greatly by government policies as was the Italian (Candeloro, 1995). As a result of the dispersion of the Sicilian and Italian populations, there has never been an Italian-American candidate for mayor of Chicago or any other major city office. It appears that all the good work done by the CAP could not save Chicago's Italian communities.

Today there is a public recognition of racial and ethnic discrimination, a recognition that did not exist during the early years of CAP. The existence of organised crime in these areas was attributed to the ethnic heritage of the Italian people and not machine politics and social structural conditions. In fact, it was the work of Clifford Shaw (1929) and his cultural transmission theory that first provided an alternative to the belief that organised crime was a direct descendant of the Sicilian Mafia. In spite of this recognition, media presentations such as the Untouchables (1987) and the Godfather (1972) forever tied organised crime to the Southern Italian immigrant, a stereotype that continues to exist today.

The story of the CAP and its work in Chicago's Italian communities is one that has been

overlooked by scholars and the public alike. No one has ever talked about the heroic efforts of Chicago's Italians to "organise" their communities and prevent young people from being attracted to a life of crime. Prior to going to prison, Grand Avenue mobster Joseph Lombardo told Daniel "Moose" Brindisi of the Near Northwest Civic Committee that he would not be going to prison if he had "listened" to him (Thomas Brindisi, 2013). How many other young people in these neighbourhoods would have followed a life of crime had it not been for CAP?

As a sociologist, conducting this review has caused me to question whether modern reformulations of what came to be known as social disorganisation theory have been properly formulated. Writing for the National (Wickersham) Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, Clifford Shaw (1931: 62) stressed that delinquency areas in Chicago were characterized by "immigrant colonies, rooming houses, gambling resorts, sexual vice, and bootlegging". While Shaw said little else about the nature of the adult criminality occurring in the areas he studied, other members of his staff such as Solomon Kobrin (1961) went to great lengths to explore the effect of organised adult crime on juvenile delinquency in CAP neighbourhoods. Today Shaw's social disorganisation theory has been reformulated (Sampson and Groves, 1989) arguing that low economic status, residential mobility, and family disruption lead to community social disorganisation and eventual increases in crime and delinquency with no mention of the presence of organised adult criminality in the areas studied. Has sociology overlooked "the more significant elements" of machine politics and adult crime that played an important role in the development of social disorganisation theory?

Some (Carey, 1975; Reynolds, 1995) have argued that Chicago School theorists, of whom Clifford Shaw was a member, purposefully ignored the study of organised crime because of its corrupt relationship to municipal government. Criticizing the controlling political structure, and its associated business community, may have jeopardized the very funding that CAP was dependent on. Attacking organised crime may not only have been politically unwise, but also dangerous. Reynolds (1995) cites the example of Joseph Lohman who was asked to leave the Near North Side by Clifford Shaw after Angelino Lendino, the president of the North Side Civic Committee, informed Shaw that it was no longer safe for Lohman to work in the area because of a paper that he had presented to the 'American Sociological Society' describing vice conditions in the area. Do these examples suggest that CAP had to come to some form of ethical accommodation in order to work in Chicago's inner-city communities or are they recognition of the fact that the criminal element was an integral part of the social structure of these areas?

The presence of organised adult criminality in inner-city community areas is well documented in the sociology literature. Studies by Whyte (1943), Spergel (1964), Suttles (1968), and Tricarico (1984) have all found the existence of "racket subcultures" where organised crime is part of the political and social structure of a community. I would argue that Shaw and his colleagues recognized this and organised CAP accordingly. The CAP fought organised crime by providing young people with an alternative to a life in the rackets; an alternative that had a direct impact on the ability of the underworld to find new recruits. Although it is impossible to precisely measure the number of young people who were led away from a life in organised crime, the success of these efforts, as CAP

itself, rests upon what Solomon Kobrin (1959) described as “logical and analytical grounds” such as the anecdotal evidence provided by Thomas Brindisi above.

CAP was able to accomplish its mission by using local people in its programs and not outside reformers; local people who may not have liked the presence of adult criminals in their community, but recognized that they lacked the power to directly confront them. When asked why they didn't act against organised crime, Taylor Street residents told Gerald Suttles that there was no use in organising when you can't get city hall to help. As proof, they recalled the failed efforts of the Italian White Hand Society to fight Black Hand extortion. Suttles was working in the Taylor Street community doing research for his 1972 book *The Social Construction of Communities*. Similar evidence was provided by a local community leader who revealed that people on Taylor Street were afraid to vote against the gangsters for fear of violence (Romano, 2010). Residents believed that there was no police protection and that the police could not be trusted. They also believed that the politicians knew how they voted and that if they voted against the Chicago machine, city property inspectors would show up at their house the next day and find thousands of dollars in code violations. It was okay to be a social reformer as long as it did not go against the interests of the gangsters and the politicians.

While local CAP leaders may not have been able to challenge organised crime directly, there is evidence that they did so indirectly. In fact, the genius of CAP may have been the fact that it relied upon local residents to carry out its delinquency prevention programs. CAP leaders and local gangsters grew up together in the River Wards of Chicago. One former neighbourhood resident reported that local gangsters could be seen playing cards with CAP members in the Near Northwest Civic Committee's office (Paul Rubino, 2013). Additionally, these same gangsters could be counted on to contribute financially to CAP activities (Thomas Brindisi, 2013). There is also evidence that members of the Near Northwest Civic Committee worked with “important people” (neighbourhood gangsters) to close fences (receivers of stolen property) in the neighbourhood in order to deny young delinquents the means to dispose of stolen property (Chicago Area Project, No date).

These efforts at informal social control stood in sharp contrast to the efforts of outside reformers such as Jane Addams. In fact, Anthony Sorrentino (1977: 89) quoted social worker Hasseltine Taylor as saying that CAP was an attempt to “fight the devil with fire” because of its use of community members in its social-welfare programs. Interestingly enough, the acrimony between the ordained history of reform in Chicago and the Near West Side Italian community continues today. Vince Romano (2014), a Near West Side Community activist and founder of the Taylor Street Archives, has led a continuing battle with the Board of Directors of the Hull House Museum over the inclusion of the Archives in the museum's artefacts. The Archives contain the oral histories of former Near West Side Italian residents, the largest ethnic group in the area served by Jane Adams and Hull House.

In the early 1970s, the state of Illinois abolished the Illinois Youth Commission and transferred

institutional and community services to the newly created Department of Corrections (Chicago Area Project, 2013). After extensive lobbying by CAP, Illinois Governor Daniel Walker created the Commission on Delinquency Prevention in 1976 and appointed Anthony Sorrentino as the Executive Director. Sorrentino had succeeded Clifford Shaw as the Director of CAP. This new structure preserved CAP's focus on delinquency prevention. In 1981, the state legislature failed to approve the budget of the Commission on Delinquency Prevention. As a result, CAP sought and received funding from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. In 1997, the Illinois Juvenile Justice Reform Act was modified to allow CAP to work with the Cook County Juvenile Court and the Cook County State's Attorneys' Office to establish a new Juvenile Justice Diversion program. There are forty-four CAP sponsored programs throughout the Chicago metropolitan area today (Chicago Area Project, 2013). While there are a great variety of CAP programs, the central mission of reducing juvenile delinquency by improving community life remains the same.

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