“Crime that is organized”:
A Case Study on Gangs in Chicago’s Impoverished Ghetto

David Michael Moore

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Edward Weisband
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Timothy Luke

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I argue for a paradigm shift against general social groupings of organized criminal groups operating throughout the United States. Using Social Constructionism to drive a literature review conducted by way of Discourse Analysis, I spotlight ways in which broad characterizations of “organized crime” led to a mis-handling of gang issues today. Through relying on federally-originating definitions and characterizations, law enforcement and welfare agencies are unequipped for understanding the origins of and motives behind modern gangs and their agendas. The second half of this paper is a case study highlighting the different ways in which gangs may develop and operate despite, in the case of Chicago’s Black Gangster Disciples Nation and its splinters, a shared history. If we are to reduce the hold these groups have over urban societies, we must first seek to understand each group individually, pulling out the root issues that drive their actions and how they identify as a form of modern organized crime, that is, “crime that is organized.”

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

In this paper, I argue for a reduced reliance on broad, all-encompassing definitions and groupings of organized crime /gangs. By creating these broad categories, government and law enforcement entities lack detailed understanding of the specific groups they deal with on a daily basis. Instead, I argue that all such criminal groups from mafia-style organizations to common street gangs be defined as organized crime, being “crime that is organized.” From this point, each group should be studied in depth as an individual group, with individual motives and roots, such that entities may determine specific causes and/or motivations driving how the group operations and what agenda they work to carry out. The second half of this work provides a case study of a Chicago-based gang and splinter groups that resulted from the gang’s demise. Had generalizations been drawn when studying the Black Gangster Disciples Nation and its splinters, the incredible differences in each splinter would have been missed and entities would further lack that which is necessary to isolate and combat the groups for what they are: unique organizations that pursue their own agendas as three very different groups despite identical histories.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Stories of organized crime and gangs are prevalent throughout American history. Social norms shape what constitutes an organized criminal group or a gang within our own minds due to our education, socialization, and the media. Yet, these terms receive their delimited definitions throughout the course of time as groups and individuals attempt to make sense of real-world situations that citizens and law enforcement agencies daily. While we have our societal standards for what constitutes each of these taxonomies, it is important to determine whether our working definitions of organized crime match the present day situation.

According to the National Gang Intelligence Center, organized crime membership and activity in the United States is on the rise.[1] These gangs operate in different facets from coast to coast, north to south, in cities and rural areas, are stationary and mobile, open and secretive. [2] There is no limit to their reach. These organizations are present in every ethnic group across the country, every political ideology, and across many different walks of life from the homeless to business owners. Due to this diversity, seldom can we generalize when discussing or dealing with these groups. Dr. Tim Hall from the University of Gloucestershire studies this dilemma, concluding that vast cultural diversity around the world (and even across the country) prevents mass categorization of organized crime. Should we generalize these studies, failing to address local and regional exceptionality, we "risk the danger of failing to capture globalization in all its

[1] National Gang Intelligence Center, "2013 National Gang Report," accessed electronically through the Federal Bureau of Investigations website, http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/national-gang-report-2013, 9.
[2] National Gang Intelligence Center, "2013 National Gang Report," 7.

complexities," rendering conclusions inefficient for practical application.[3] As such, we take for granted the existence of vast cultural and structural differences between these organizations, and therefore, work without the ability to properly contain and combat these groups, as we do not fully understand the lives of these criminals and the organizations to which they swear allegiance. For most of us this will likely remain inconsequential, however for those working to contain and solve the organized crime dilemma, this unique understanding could be the paramount difference between winning and losing a war fought in the shadows.

We know little else about society and communal values outside the narrow scope from which we were socialized, yet if you live amongst those taking part in organized crime at any level, you are surrounded by individuals whose very lives revolve around completely different social doctrines the community from which they identify with has programmed into them. These groups are far from a mere side note in our daily lives; their impact on culture and security throughout the U.S. suggests a great need for personnel and resource devotion to solving the issue of grasping gang societies and systems of organization from the outside.

Many reputable individuals and governing bodies created baseline characteristics that guide modern analysis and identification of organized criminal groups. For example, in 2001 the European Commission and Europol issued a joint report identifying eleven cited characteristics of organized crime. Of those, at least six must be present and four that were set apart had to be among the minimum 6.[4] Similarly, Howard Abadinsky, a

[3] Tim Hall, "Geographies of the illicit: Globalization and organized crime," *Progress in Human Geography* 37(3) 2013, 367.
[4] M. Elvins, "Europe's Response to Transnational Organised Crime," in Transnational Organised Crime: Perspectives on Global Security edited by Edwards and Gill (London: Routledge, 2003), 34.

premiere scholar of organized crime, was only able to narrow his list of key features of organized criminality to eight broad sections that are quite unspecific such as nonideological operations or the presence of a hierarchical structure.[5]

The story of the organized criminal is almost always filled with some form of external hardship. I argue that, more often than not, individuals turn to membership in criminal organizations due to a need they have in their lives. Whether they suffer from a lack of protection, basic provisions such as food and shelter, or a need for identity in a time of crisis, they find what they desire or require in the collectiveness of the organization. This phenomenon is not unique to members of organized crime. Frequently young people seek membership in the armed forces for these same reasons. In both cases, individuals are searching for a new or specific way of life. They search for what "society" as we know it does not provide for them. As a result, they find solace and acceptance in a new social order their former community does not understand. From here the root of our problem evolves from the individual level to a crisis of conflicting social orders and collective identities.

The first chapter is a literature review of organized criminal descriptors and definitions of a group category ranging from mafia-style groups to common street gangs in the United States. I summarize the history of organized crime as a definition, then conduct a similar investigation into the history of gangs and their description as a discourse throughout history. Following this, I outline similar characteristics and descriptors that suggest gangs and organized crime may fall in the same category of groups, despite varying levels of complexity. The second chapter narrows this comprehensive presentation of gang research and definitions from the national level to

[5] Howard Abadinsky, Organized Crime (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1994), 6.

the city of Chicago while addressing the problem of social segregation and isolation that caused the rise of modern gangs in Chicago. We will come into focus with a case study of a specific group, the Black Gangster Disciples Nation and its three splinters: the Black Gangsters, Black Disciples, and Gangster Disciples.

At first glance, the streets of all major U.S. cities may appear the same. As you traverse them, you see the same individuals, wearing the same style clothing, presenting the same kind of hand signs, committing the same crimes. While the breadth of gang studies provides a large base of research, in part due to a breadth of definitions applied to terms authorities use to identify potential gang members, the study as a whole is overgeneralized resulting in a failure to identify root problems that cause gangs to rise up and maintain power.[6]

In chapter two, I highlight literature and case studies related to the rise of gangs in Chicago. The history of criminal organizations in Chicago dates far beyond the days of Al Capone, and such legacies resonate in contemporary gangs far beyond the fall of mafia-style organizations. Chicago's population experienced a significant spike in the 1940s leading to the first introduction of contemporary gangs. During this time of segregation, African-American residents were forced into what became known as the "Black Belt." The African-American population continued to grow, leading to an increased demand for affordable housing. The Chicago Housing Authority answered this

[6] Malcolm W. Klein and Cheryl L. Maxson, *Street Gang Patterns and Policies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 12.

call, constructing high-rise public housing from 1955 to 1968. Chicago experienced an explosion of African-American gangs during the 1960s.[7]

After overviewing of Chicago gangs, I will describe the rise of Chicago's Black Gangster Disciples Nation in the late 1970s and their split over the death of their leader, "King David." This split lead to the rise of three individual gangs, each likely seeking to capture the reputation of their parent gang by choice of name, continued use of symbols, and similar hand signs: the Black Gangsters, the Black Disciples, and the Gangster Disciples. Each is unique in its own right, operating under distinct, differing systems of organization. This specific case study illustrates not only the breadth of gang structure, organization, activity, and public reputation but also shows contrasting internal workings that make drawing similarities difficult. Yet from the outside, their shared past and common name lead to confusion and crossed information which adds to the complexity of gang studies governing bodies/law enforcement agencies apply on the job every day.

What follows are several gang-related myths often created or highlighted by written or broadcast media and prevalent throughout gang research. Scholars James C. Howell and Elizabeth Griffiths, who took the time to compile and analyze 18 common misconceptions surrounding gang studies provide the myth titles and numerical order below. The myths chosen outline the discussion of Chicago's Black Gangster Disciples Nation that follows. While this discussion challenges some myths, others maintain their credibility against this sophisticated case study.

[7] James C. Howell and Elizabeth Griffiths, *Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2016), 6.

1) Gangs are highly organized: This myth proves accurate in this study. The Black Gangster Disciples Nation was known as Chicago's most organized and one of its most powerful gangs during their time. Multiple scholars and law enforcement agencies more recently described the Gangster Disciples as one of the most organized gangs in Chicago if not the entire United States.[89]

2) Gangs of the same or similar name are connected: The Black Gangster Disciples Nation case study argues against this particular myth. The fall of Chicago's Black Gangster Disciples Nation lead to the rise of three gangs: the Black Gangsters, the Black Disciples, and the Gangster Disciples. None of these three are synonymous with each other, and are in fact very different in structure and regular group activity.[10] However, as we will see, the Black Disciples and Gangster Disciples trace their roots to the Black Gangster Disciples Nation in organization literature.

5) Drugs and violence are inherently linked: The Black Gangster Disciples Nation and each of its splinters operate parts of Chicago's illicit drug market and have been violent throughout their history. However as we will discuss, there is very little correlation between their drug operations and outward violence within the community.[11] In fact, neighborhoods controlled by larger and more stable organizations such as the Gangster Disciples and Black Disciples are reportedly less violent than those plagued by weaker gangs lacking social legitimacy.

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[8] Scott H. Decker, Tim Bynum, and Deborah Weisel, "A Tale of Two Cities: Gangs as Organized Crime Groups," in *The Modern Gang Reader (2nd ed)* by Miller, Maxson, and Klein (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Co., 2001), 75.
[9] Howell and Griffiths, *Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 24.
[10] Howell and Griffiths, *Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 26.
[11] Howell and Griffiths, *Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 28.

8) All time is used by gangs to plan or commit crimes: While the studied splinter groups violate the law, the Black Gangsters and Gangster Disciples take part in social and welfare work. For example, political activity as well as neighborhood action/protection are among four most common activities conducted by the Gangster Disciples as an organization.[12]

14) Gangs equal "super predators": Research and accounts of first-hand interviews within this work will demonstrate the Gangster Disciples seek to avoid the "super predators" label. Their actions and determination as "brothers of the struggle" go far beyond the stigma of local neighborhood terror and control. Like many civil rights groups of the past, their agenda is to protect those around them, provide for their own, and seek solutions to problems afflicting African-Americans living in the Chicago area.[13]

17) Police will eliminate gangs on their own: Gangs rely on the support of their community to prosper. The Chicago Police and other legitimate authorities need community and federal support if they are to stop the spread of gang violence and control throughout the city as well. However, such a stance seeks to attack the surface issue without going after what many perceive as the root cause of this gang epidemic: historical socio-economic segregation within public housing that led to the rise and maintained illegitimate civil authority of gangs in Chicago's urban slums.[14]

[12] Howell and Griffiths, *Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 31.
[13] Howell and Griffiths, *Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 34.
[14] Howell and Griffiths, Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed., 38.

1.1 Methods and Approach

Society itself has created definitions of organized crime due to its views of members and the organizations of which they associate. This concept, known as Social Constructionism, proposes that all views of society and the way social structure is organized are merely a result of the history of the society and the present position of society relative to itself.[15] It is not, however, every member of society that has the ability to shape social views as a whole, despite active participation in it. Only those with influential authority, whether influential individuals or institutions may shape these social views. As Foucault says, no one will listen to the old man on the street, but will wholeheartedly listen to the scholar or ruler who hold the positional authority to receive respect and attention while having their words heeded.[16] These ideas, as Geertz states, are "carried by powerful social groups to have powerful social effects…they have to be institutionalized in order to find not just an intellectual existence in society, but so to speak, a material one as well," meaning a certain amount of authority must back the use of words or implementation of knowledge into society to give them their own weight and authority.[17] This concept originated with Foucault who "has done more than anyone to stress the significance of the production of professional discourses."[18] He believed society itself establishes its internal rules for discourse, or rather, those who command the society establish beliefs held.[19] Specifically, Foucault believed that outside the rules of discourse, it was impossible to identify truth: what is really a truth and what is a

[15] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interview & Other Writings 1972-1977* (NY: Vintage, 1980), 131.
[16] Michel Foucault, "Text, Discourse, Ideology," in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader* edited by Robert Young (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), 53.
[17] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation Of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 314.
[18] Travis Purvis and Alan Hunt, "Discourse, ideology, discourse, ideology, discourse, ideology…," in *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Sep., 1993), 488.
[19] Foucault, "Text, Discourse, Ideology," 52.

perceived truth.[20] Thus, I base my research on the Social Constructionist approach, believing that those with influence over the masses create all social norms, and that norms may only be changed, should the masses find influence elsewhere or authority wish it. With this approach, I will utilize the basic tenants of Foucauldian discourse analysis.

As Ruth Palmquist believes, discourse analysis is difficult to define. While it does not provide the same "tangible answers" as scientific research, it seeks to do open a greater sense of perception. It allows us "to reveal the hidden motivations behind a text or behind the choice of a particular method of research to interpret that text."[21] In short, discourse analysis gives us the tools necessary to objectively decipher the discourses of society in to discern which information puts researchers as close to truth as we can come. Though Social Constructionists believe it is impossible for outsiders to understand social truths, through research we draw as close as we can to understanding the truth of social structures we are not members of ourselves.

Discourse is equally as complex and difficult to define as discourse analysis. While Fairclough defines discourse as "the use of language seen as a form of social practice,"[22] Foucault more abstractly described it as the very notion "for which and by which there is struggle," in an attempt to seize power within the society.[23] Through these two descriptions we see that discourse represents communication of some form and may also be seen as the active control of ruling members and ideals of society seeking further

[20] Foucault, "Text, Discourse, Ideology," 61.
[21] Ruth Palmquist on discourse in "Media Research Methods," by Shannon Christine Mattern, http://www.wordsinspace.net/course_material/mrm/mrmdiscourseanalysis.html, accessed April 27, 2015.
[22] Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (London: Routledge, 2010), 6.
[23] Purvis and Hunt, "Discourse, ideology, discourse, ideology, discourse, ideology…," 488.

influence and institutionalization of thought. As such, Foucault believed that every way in which an individual, group, agency, etc. could influence others through communication is a form of discourse. Purvis and Hunt contend with this blanket statement by insisting that "[Foucauldian] discourses are characteristically 'professional' which emanate from institutionalized site of production" such as systems of government and/or education", insisting that popular discourses arise from the values and issues within society that lead to class structures and other divisions. With these divisions come resistance to power and the formation of alternative discourses attempting to gain headway throughout society.[24] While I understand the points behind Purvis and Hunt's argument, I believe, as Foucault alludes, that regardless of societal divisions, there are beliefs, behaviors, ways of learning, and understanding that are present within every discourse of a single society, regardless of the source of authority responsible for its dissemination. I also agree with Purvis and Hunt, however, that popular discourse does influence the flow of professional discourse throughout society. Foucault does not deny the existence of social division, in fact he points them out as a main theme in his work,[25] but he would be quick to argue that the power of society's primary discourse is strong enough to guide the social rules and values of even those who resist it. However, it is also worth recognizing that choices made in terms of institutionalized discourse might not always flow from the government into the population, in fact the opposite may happen. A previous governing body once created discourse that socialized those now in authority over society.

[24] Purvis and Hunt, "Discourse, ideology, discourse, ideology, discourse, ideology…," 489.
[25] Foucault asserts that "where there is power, there is resistance" (Purvis and Hunt 489). Since he believes discourse and power are closely related, he recognizes that where a discourse is present, so will there also be those who oppose it.

While I am not attempting to argue about the political nature of these definitions' origins, understanding the process of discourse creation is still important for the historic positioning of definitions used. Additionally, noting the flow of knowledge from one generation into another should prove useful moving forward as it may account for like characteristics in definitions, should we not be able to draw parallels between the aforementioned and the groups they wish to describe. Foucault's description of discourse appears broad and abstract. However, since my research concerns itself with forms of communication that directly result in shifting social perception, his less than concise definition serves its purpose well. To answer the question "what is discourse?" within my work, I follow Foucault's guidance that discourse is any communication (although I focus on formal communication) from an actor that holds the power to influence the ideals of a population toward a specific common belief. In this case, the discourse I will analyze are definitions of organized crime and gangs throughout American history. I will take this chosen discourse and analyze it in such a way as to determine if parallels and contrasts exist between authoritative definitions and societal depictions throughout history.

The approach Rose describes as [Foucauldian] Discourse Analysis II, usually leaves its methodology implicit, tending to be more "explicitly concerned with issues of power, regimes of truth (particularly grounds on which truth is claimed), institutions and technologies."[26] It holds the basic tenants of discourse analysis by allowing the user to analyze thoughts and ideas as they flow through society. Rose's Discourse Analysis II specifies my focus on the institutionalization and production of thought and the

[26] Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2013), 140.

authorized power transmitted from the creator to the receiver through the socializing process, while communicating my intention to utilize the full range of discourse provided through such a method by Rose and ultimately Foucault. Through this method I will address the complex nature of defining organized crime for contemporary purposes, hoping to reveal the underlying text of these definitions, hoping to determine if such definitions arose through critical analysis of the problem at hand (as one would expect from governing institutions), or if the role of socialization in society pushed forward lasting ideas that accurately applied for the power of past institutions.

Basing an understanding or definition of organized crime on formerly institutionalized frameworks risks losing the very nature of the term itself. As Cunliffe and Jun infer from their interpretation of Derrida's, words so often take on meanings for reasons apart from the linguistic annotation of the word itself.[27] Using "organized crime" as an example, the commonly connoted meaning behind the term may stem from more than the original annotation of the words "organized" and "crime," taking on such institutionalized connotations previously described authoritative actors created. As such, we lose the original value of the term for a socially accepted image of what it means to engage in organized criminality.

With this separation of meanings in mind, my research will investigate this split from organized crime as annotatively described to a social discourse of organized crime as an image or idea. I will delve into the history of organized criminality in the United States, reviewing not only governing bodies' of organized crime, but also descriptions of other "organized" criminal groups often referred to as gangs. The basic tenants of these

[27] Ann Cunliffe and Jong Jun, "The Need for Reflexivity in Public Administration," *Administration & Society*, May 2005; 37, 2; ABI/INFORM Global, 230.

definitions are described below and will be further elaborated in my subsequent chapter. The case study that follows utilizes a broad range of political geology and ethnographic research completed on the topic of gangs, organized crime, and urban life in Chicago. The purpose of combining discourse analysis with ethnographic research is to highlight not simply how society portrays these groups, but also how they choose to represent themselves to Chicago's urban and mainstream communities. Rather than considering only formal government bodies and legal authorities as organizations of power, as discussed above, the second chapter focuses on organized criminal groups who, due to the position they hold within their localized society, receive a sense of legitimate authority from local residents.

Chapter 2: National Context and Literature Review

2.1 Defining Organized Crime

As political economist Thomas Schelling states, defining organized crime has been far more complex than "crime that is organized." [28] Some attempted to define the concept as early as the 1950s. [29,30] While these reports provided first steps, they were unable to grasp the notion of organized criminality farther beyond the idea of professionally organized criminals working with no regard for laws or borders. However, this was the start of a larger conversation that took the spotlight during the 1960s and 1970s throughout the United States.

Government-consensual definitions of organized crime were not produced until the early 1960s, such as the 1965 Oyster Bay Conference of American Law Enforcement Agents, which saw the beginning of "extensive debates about [organized crime's] meanings and effects." [31] The first substantial contribution came thanks to the work of Donald Cressey, a criminologist who advised the U.S. President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice (1967). He spearheaded the search for formalized structures and patterns within organized crime. His premiere definition of the organized criminal is one who "occupies a position in a social system, an 'organization' which has been rationally designed to maximize profits by performing illegal services and providing legally forbidden products demanded by the broader society within which

[28] Thomas Schelling, *Choice and Consequence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Pr., 1984) 180.
[29] Mabel A. Elliott, *Crime in Modern Society* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952) 136.
[30] Report to the Attorney General, Feb. 10, 1959, Hearings Before Subcommittee No. 5 of the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, ser. no. 16, 87th Cong. 1st Sess, 103 (1961).
[31] Alan Wright, *Organised Crime* (Portland: Willan Publishing, 2006), 2.

he lives." [32] Cressey's definition alludes to a rudimentary business model in which a 'worker' performs duties in order to receive profits from those for whom he/she works. While it is important for modern understandings to distinguish between formal and informal organizations that may be at work, such basic definitions remain helpful for building a foundation of complexity. However, one must refrain from getting stuck on giving measure to the word 'organization,' as such categorizations have different meanings to different scholars. Since Cressey treated organized crime specifically as upscale syndicated crime (such as La Cosa Nostra, The Mafia, etc.), the definitions in his reports later became known to criminologists as The Cosa Nostra Theory (or The Cressey Model). [33] According to Cressey, these organizations maintained a well-defined hierarchy of positions split between leaders and members, with "underlying rules and specific goals that determined their behavior", very similar in their modelled structures to bureaucracies.[34] These groups seek to maximize profits taken from the provision of forbidden goods and services, working in organized modes, maintaining more of a 'white collar' status than most contemporary criminal groups in contrast.

The Ianni brothers, whose book lay the groundwork for kinship studies of organized crime, sought behavioral explanations for the actions of these groups. They determined that the crime syndicates of their day were not, in fact, hierarchies at all, but rather, operated off patterns of relationships between individuals and kinship bonds within the group. [35] Furthermore, the Iannis suggest that, more often than not, these

[32] D.R. Cressey, *Theft of the Nation: the Structure and Operations of Organized Crime in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 72.
[33] Frank E. Hagan, *Introduction to Criminology* (New York: SAGE Publications, 2013), 376.
[34] Wright, *Organised Crime*, 5.
[35] E. Ianni and F. Ianni, *A Family Business: Kinship and Social Control in Organized Crime* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1972): 11.

allegiances to the group were due to blood connections rather than business opportunities. As such, they found it most fitting to study the activities of Italian-American syndicates who often rely on "fictive godparental relationships" to reinforce loyalty ties to the group when blood relations were not present. [36]

Cressey, Albini, and the Iannis are recognized as pioneers in the study of organized crime. Up to this point in time (the early 1970s) the issue of organized crime was primarily handled at the state-level. However, in 1975 the United Nations worked to create a universal definition for organized crime in order to lay a common ground for the production of laws and policy for the international community. They reached a consensus in 1976, determining that organized crime:

> Is understood to be the large scale and complex criminal activity carried on by groups of persons, however loosely or tightly organized, for the enrichment of those participating and at the expense of the community and its members. It is frequently accomplished through ruthless disregard of any law, including offences against the person, and frequently in connection with political corruption. [37]

To this point, the definitions of organized crime used fit both the present situation law enforcement faces, and the annotation of the term: not only were these groups criminal, but it was obvious they were organized in some fashion.

Shortly after this rise of research on mafia-style crime came the fall of mafia crime in the U.S. due to the success of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act, which allowed law enforcement and federal agencies, namely the Federal Bureau of Investigations, to tap into the homes and cars of suspected

[36] Ianni and Ianni, *A Family Business: Kinship and Social Control in Organized Crime*, 154.
[37] Wright, *Organised Crime*, 8.

mobsters on grounds of suspected criminality alone. This act served as a powerful weapon, leading to the decline of powerful organizations such as the Sicilian Mafia, the Camorra (Neapolitan Mafia), the American Mafia, La Cosa Nostra, and others. [38] With this success came government recognition of a certain complexity to organized crime stretching beyond the realm of mafia. Specifically, the National Advisory Committee noted in 1976 that "organized crime is not synonymous with the Mafia or la Cosa Nostra," despite their being the "most experienced, diversified, and possibly best disciplined of the conspiratorial groups…today, a variety of groups is engaged in organized criminal activity." [39] With this realization, scholars and organizations began working to define organized crime broadly in order to reach past the style once exclusively associated with the term.

While intricate definitions of organized crime have surfaced from reputable sources such as the FBI, UN, and a multitude of scholars, certain negative trends in their work remain. These authors made the point that organized crime can take seemingly countless forms and must often be studied uniquely, yet each of these list definitions (whether created within or outside of the U.S.) place emphasis on market ties as crucial features to all forms of organized crime. This shortcoming is hardly limited to these lists, however. While many forms organized crime do exist, there seems to be a consensus that all organized criminal groups work solely for profit. Jay Albanese captured this belief as he tried to summarize the consensus among writers from the 1970s and 1980s, stating that "organized crime is a continuing criminal enterprise that rationally works to profit

[38] Nathan Koppel, "They Call It RICO, and It Is Sweeping," *The Wall Street Journal*, Jan. 20, 2011, http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704881304576094110829882704.
[39] National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, "Private Security – Report of the Task Force on Private Security," U.S. Department of Justice, 1976, 8.

from illicit activities that are in great public demand." [40] This belief is shared with scholars and organizations beyond the 1980s as well. Potter[41], Liddick[42], Kenney and Finckenauer[43] published similar statements in the 90s, as did the Internal Revenue Service.[44] This notion pushed into the 21st century with like publications from countless more.

We cannot make broad, definite conclusions for all criminal groups throughout the country, thus there is no way to definitively prove the broad conclusion that every group operates exclusively for profit, rather than utilizing profit as a means to accomplish its given agenda. Some organizations may exist solely for maintaining the heritage of an ethnic group or providing protection to a persecuted minority. Another issue is prevalent throughout contemporary definitions of organized crime. Similar to the belief that all organized criminal groups work solely for profit is the notion that organized criminal groups are categorized as such by their actions alone, primarily connecting the notion of organized criminality with illicit market control, drugs, gambling, etc. This requirement seems to indicate that definitions exclude thoughts or ideas governing authorities neither publicly recognize nor instill in society. Due to this and possibly other factors, distinctions are made between organized crime and gangs among those defining the field. Yet it seems these scholars so often overlook organizational types when categorizing criminal groups.

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[40] Jay Albanese, *Organized Crime in America*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Anderson Publishing Co: 1989), 4-5.
[41] Gary W. Potter, *Criminal Organizations: Vice, Racketeering, and Politics in an American City* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland), 116.
[42] Don Liddick, *An Empirical, Theoretical, and Historical Overview of Organized Crime* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Pr.: 1999), 50.
[43] Dennis Jay Kenney and James O. Finckenauer, *Organized Crime in America* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 1995), 285.
[44] Internal Revenue Service Manual 9.5.6.1.1: Definition of Organized Crime (07-29-1998).

The history of organized crime in the United States began with mafia rule in the mid-20th Century, however it did not end there. With the passing of the RICO Act, law enforcement agencies were able to take down the formerly elusive crime syndicates plaguing the country. While their reign ended, working definitions of organized crime still focused on past ideals of these near-extinct organizations. Despite recognition that organized crime now reached far beyond the grip of mafia-style groups, keys to identifying organized crime remained within the confines of profit and market-centric organizations that operated in hierarchies (much like the mafias of the past). No consensus exists on exactly what defined organized crime, perhaps because scholars and agencies remained unnecessarily focused on the actions of the group rather than the simple fact that these were criminal groups who were organized. Or perhaps due to previous dispositions about the very nature of organized crime due to past experience with professional criminal groups such as the mafia who specialize in what most would consider to be white collar crime by today's standards. The connotation of "organized crime" to this day paints a picture not of criminals banding together in a structured group, but of professionals in suits who carry out criminal acts. Such thoughts ignore the fact, as stated above, that gangs and organized crime can become synonymous to a certain extent, yet creators of discourse in American society seldom recognize them as such. As Schelling states, defining organized crime has been far more complex than stating "crime that is organized,"[45] but perhaps it does not have to be. Should we re-establish our footing from the most basic of levels, it is possible we will find definitions that may be less grandiose than desired, but more adequate for the world we live in today.

[45] Schelling, *Choice and Consequence*, 180.

2.2 The Modern Gang

Whether intentional or not, scholars and holders of authority (in the Foucauldian sense) fielded discussions of gangs using vocabulary very similar to that of the previously defined organized crime. While this makes perfect sense if the two were synonymous, there lies a distinct period of time where discussion of one ceased and the other began. This time is post-RICO act and after the fall of conceptual mafia-like organizations in the United States. I argue this fall allowed gangs to rise to the forefront of the American criminal scene. They maintained this position in a very different way than their predecessors and received different treatment from law enforcement. However, I argue their very existence in the public eye was a mere continuation of organized crime's discourse manifesting itself in what may be seen as very different entities. This section will break down common definitions and discussions of gangs and gang-type organizations from sources of the law as well as academia to highlight such similarities. The United States Department of Justice, within the FBI's 2013 National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC) Report, defines a gang as:

"(1) an association of three or more individuals;
(2) whose members collectively identify themselves by adopting a group identity which they use to create an atmosphere of fear or intimidation frequently by employing one or more of the following: a common name, slogan, identifying sign, symbol, tattoo or other physical marking, style or color of clothing, hairstyle, hand sign or graffiti;
(3) the association's purpose, in part, is to engage in criminal activity and the association uses violence or intimidation to further its criminal objectives;
(4) its members engage in criminal activity, or acts of juvenile delinquency that if committed by an adult would be crimes;
(5) with the intent to enhance or preserve the association's power, reputation, or economic resources; (6) the association may also possess some of the following characteristics:

(a) the members employ rules for joining and operating within the association;
(b) the members meet on a recurring basis;

(c) the association provides physical protection of its members from other criminals and gangs;
(d) the association seeks to exercise control over a particular location or region, or it may simply defend its perceived interests against rivals; or
(e) the association has an identifiable structure.

(7) This definition is not intended to include traditional organized crime groups such as La Cosa Nostra, groups that fall within the Department's definition of "international organized crime," drug trafficking organizations or terrorist organizations." [46]

Several of these points seem to mirror government sourced definitions of organized crime previously provided. Despite these similarities, the Department of Justice insists of caveating their definition with section 7: "This definition is not intended to include traditional organized crime groups such as La Cosa Nostra, groups that fall within the Department's definition of "international organized crime," drug trafficking organizations or terrorist organizations." This is likely an effort to distinguish between organizations with definitive international reach and those with motives focused solely within the United States. Doing so allows U.S. domestic-focused entities, such as the FBI and state/local law enforcement to take the reins against gang activity. As such, national definitions are few and far between, none being as substantial as that of the Department of Justice. Despite the decline of "conventional organized crime" post-RICO Acts, federal investigation continued on matters regarding overall criminality. In 1987, a second President's Commission concluded research similar to the 1967 Presidential Task Force Report discussed earlier. Their findings were more comprehensive than the previous investigation and are summarized below:

[46] National Gang Intelligence Center, "2013 National Gang Report," Federal Bureau of Investigations, accessed March 30, 2016. http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/national-gang-report-2013/view.

Table 7.1 Comparison of Findings and Recommendations of the Two Presidential Investigations of Organized Crime

Subject	Task Force Report, 1967	President's Commission, 1987
Crime groups	Nearly exclusive focus on Italian-Sicilian groups	Specific recognition of organized crime among at least 10 other ethnic, national, and geographic groups
Narcotics	Only two paragraphs on narcotics in the report; heroin the only drug mentioned by name	Five days of hearings on cocaine and heroin, and a 500-page interim report on the drug-organized crime link, recognizing the problems of interdiction and source country eradication, and the need to reduce demand
Labor racketeering	Only three paragraphs devoted to labor racketeering in report	Two days of hearings and a 400-page interim report and appendix on labor racketeering, encouraging civil remedies and a less fragmented prosecution approach
Money laundering	No specific mention of money laundering in the report	One day of hearings and a 90-page report on money laundering, focusing on the collusion of some banks with organized crime
Gambling	Gambling seen as largest source of organized crime revenue	Uncertain of the attention that should be devoted to gambling; narcotics found to be largest source of revenue
Penalties	Emphasis on criminal penalties to reduce organized crime involvement in drugs and other crimes	Recognized that civil remedies and reduced demand may be more effective in reducing organized crime activities
New laws	Many proposals for new laws, including wiretapping, witness immunity and protection, and RICO, which have since become law	Recognized that existing laws have been underutilized; fewer proposals for new laws, except for state versions of federal laws and better interagency law enforcement cooperation

Jay Albanese, Organized Crime in America, 7th ed. (London: Routledge: 2014), 190.

The Commission found organized crime spread throughout multiple ethnic groups, taking part in various forms of criminal activity. Of note, the Commission concluded that future progress against this threat would require "state versions of federal laws and better interagency…cooperation." Since this time, the federal government kept its focus on combating Transnational Organized Crime as a major threat to national security, which ultimately resulted in the Strategy To Combat Transnational Organized Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security, issued by President Obama in 2011.[47] This shifted discourse took focus from U.S.-based organized gangs. Although, as the 1987 Commission suggests, gangs are perhaps better dealt with at the

[47] Albanese, Organized Crime in America, 7th ed., 192.

local/state level. With this shifted focus, ultimately the question becomes whether our Foucauldian sense of discourse ends with the federal government's shifted focus, or if it continues well past the "national authority" to reside with state and local entities.

State and local authorities have more hands-on experience with gang related issues than the federal government, the gangs states are tasked to deal with may exist or operate unique to their governed locality as well. However, since state and local authorities handle much more than gang-related issues on a regular basis, likely they have fewer resources to devote to the discussion of these gang's origins and their likenesses to criminal groups of the past. Additionally, their broad focus and likely limited exposure to a broad variety of gangs created challenges in developing local operational definitions of "gang." [48] Due to this, several states utilize the California legislature's definition of "gang" with modifications made to fit local challenges:

> "criminal street gang' means any ongoing organization, association or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having as one of its primary activities the commission of one or more of the criminal acts [...], having a common name or common identifying sign or symbol, and whose members individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal gang activity."[49]

With this "joint definition," states have the ability to act as a consortium of independent actors toward a united goal much like military forces from multiple nations may operate together within a coalition against a violent non-state actor, for instance. Unfortunately, this definition used is broad enough to be as encompassing as the states need without providing the sort of specificity common in federal discourses. At these

[48] "What Is a Gang?" National Institute of Justice, October 28, 2011, http://www.nij.gov/topics/crime/gangs/pages/definitions.aspx.
[49] National Gang Intelligence Center, "2013 National Gang Report," Federal Bureau of Investigations, accessed March 14, 2015, http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/national-gang-report-2013/view.

levels of government, it is likely individuals know a gang member when they see one and do not require definitions for varying types of organization within the gang architype. As such, individuals are not given a definitive framework from their discursive authority, resulting in, perhaps, skewed views from the media and entertainment regarding the complex nature of this adversary. We must return to a federally-based discourse for this breakdown.

While the FBI's NGIC excludes "traditional organized crime groups such as [mafia group]" from its gang groupings, the NGIC does divide gangs into three distinct sub-groups. This is likely done to bridge the collaborative gap between federal agencies and state entities left to deal with gangs despite their lack of efficient resources. By providing this breakdown, the FBI is ensuring states and local authorities understand how one organization may think or act differently than another, providing common ground for state collaboration (a necessary step given the shift in federal focus previously mentioned). The NGIC's sub-categories are:

1. Street gangs, defined as: "(neighborhood-based and national street gangs) gangs located throughout the United States, and their memberships vary in number, racial and ethnic composition, and structure. Large national street gangs pose the greatest threat because they smuggle, produce, transport, and distribute large quantities of illicit drugs throughout the country and are extremely violent. Local street gangs in rural, suburban, and urban areas pose a steadily increasing threat transporting and distributing drugs within specific areas. The local street gangs

often imitate the larger, more powerful national gangs in order to gain respect from their rivals."[50]

2. Prison gangs, defined as: "criminal organizations that originated within the penal system that have continued to operate within correctional facilities throughout the United States. Prison gangs are also self-perpetuating criminal entities that can continue their operations outside the confines of the penal system. Typically, a prison gang consists of a select group of inmates who have an organized hierarchy and who are governed by an established code of conduct. Prison gangs vary in both organization and composition, from highly structured gangs such as the Aryan Brotherhood (AB) and Nuestra Familia (NF) to gangs with a less formalized structure such as the Mexican Mafia (Eme). Prison gangs generally have fewer members than street gangs and OMGs and are structured along racial or ethnic lines. Nationally, prison gangs pose a threat because of their role in the transportation and distribution of drugs. Prison gangs are also an important link between DTOs, street gangs and OMGs, often brokering the transfer of drugs from DTOs to gangs in many regions. Prison gangs typically are more powerful within state correctional facilities rather than within the federal penal system."[51]

3. Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMGs), defined as: "Organizations whose members use their motorcycle clubs as conduits for criminal enterprises. OMGs are highly structured criminal organizations whose members engage in criminal activities such as violent crime, weapons trafficking, and drug trafficking. There are more

[50] National Gang Intelligence Center, "2013 National Gang Report," Federal Bureau of Investigations, accessed March 14, 2015, http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/national-gang-report-2013/view.
[51] National Gang Intelligence Center, "2013 National Gang Report,"

than 300 active OMGs within the United States, ranging in size from single chapters with five or six members to hundreds of chapters with thousands of members worldwide."[52]

2.3 Organizing Crime

The President's Commission on Organized Crime mentioned earlier published guidelines for recognizing organized crime while going so far as to directly connect the term to manifestations of the "cartel," "corporation," "family" etc. operating solely to gain and maintain profit and power.[53] Yet, organization supersedes the mafia groups' family-style structure. Lippens, whose work emphasized a period of transition away from the bureaucratic age of organized crime toward labyrinthine networks of organization that is most common today, upholds this stance.[54] These networks often succeed in remaining unassociated with organized crime due to their lack of public organization and governing rules, as were associated with the mafia and the public perception of organized crime. These criminal networks, often tagged as gangs, show signs of organization without receiving the title of organized crime.

Just as there is no commonly accepted definition of organized crime, no such taxonomy exists for the term "gang," mainly due to the broad spectrum of gangs that exist throughout the United States. The FBI's NGIC divides gang activity into three smaller gang types: street gangs, prison gangs, and outlaw motorcycle gangs, recognizing that motives and structures of gangs may vary. All three of these sub-groups, despite

[52] National Gang Intelligence Center, "2013 National Gang Report,"
[53] President's Commission on Organized Crime, "America's habit: drug abuse, drug trafficking, and organized crime," (a report to the President and the Attorney General of the United States, 1986), Appendix A.
[54] Ronnie Lippens, "Rethinking Organizational Crime and Organizational Criminology," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 35, 319-331.

NGIC's effort to separate them completely, maintain similar goals. Each seeks wealth, most seek territory, and all are willing to use force or manipulation of the black market to get it. Street and prison gangs are usually ethnically divided and often rely on the drugs or intimidation to seize territory or make money. OMGs, on the other hand, mask their enterprises under licit groups (their motorcycle clubs) and usually resort to violence or the threat thereof to protect what they believe is theirs.

Each sub-group is also distinct in its own way. For instance, the history of prison and outlaw motorcycle gangs are quite different. Prison gangs (as is evident by the title) began within prisons across the country and continue to operate in a similar fashion, whereas outlaw motorcycle gangs were founded for various reasons based on the area of operation and current events at the time, however today most claim to be non-violent in nature (some even humanitarian).[55] Yet most still insist that, while gangs are often organized, they do not equate to organized criminal groups (despite no adequate definition for organized criminality on which to base these claims). The frequent distinction between gangs and organized crime in work reviewed thus far accomplishes this. It is noted that the line between organized crime and gangs are often blurred and ill-defined. [56]

First, gangs and organized crime each were labelled as organizations operating within illicit markets for profit. Additionally, Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (a defined subset of gang) often operates forms of licit enterprise as did many mafia families of the

[55] National Gang Intelligence Center, "2013 National Gang Report," Federal Bureau of Investigations, accessed March 14, 2015, http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/national-gang-report-2013/view.
[56] Carter F. Smith, Jeff Rush, and Catherine E. Burton, "Street Gangs, Organized Crime Groups, and Terrorists: Differentiating Criminal Organizations," *Investigative Sciences Journal*, Volume 5, Number 1: January 2013, 1.

mid-20th century. A second similarity is the emphasis on internal structure given to both types of criminal group. Traditionally defined organized crime groups often maintained more public structures than their gang counterparts, however several definitions above point out the need for distinct organization in order to identify a group as a gang (such as having at least three members and wearing identifying marks/tattoos). Both types are known to have membership, hierarchical structures, outward expressions of loyalty (tattoos, clothing, etc), and secret languages.[57] Gangs also show signs of operating in a hierarchical system when needed, as described in the relationship between prison and street gangs.

Both group-types also, according to our defining sources, utilize violence or the threat of violence to influence behavior or gain and keep territory. While the violence carried out may vary from group to group, the willingness to harm another human being for organizational gain displays thuggish characteristics in even the classiest of mafia mobsters, yet many insist "essential criteria for classification as 'organized crime' exists, and that gangs do not meet the standard.[58] Such statements seem to overlook the unprovable notion that gangs remain secretive about their inner workings in order to remain below the radar. Simply because these organizations are not formal and public like the mafias once were does not mean that they do not maintain the same level of organization. On the contrary, the fact that these groups are able to thrive in our modern age even suggests the presence of a more intricate structure and complexity to their mafia predecessors. Thus, the distinction may have been made between organized crime and

[57] Smith, Rush, and Burton, "Street Gangs, Organized Crime Groups, and Terrorists: Differentiating Criminal Organizations," 5-6.
[58] National Gang Center, "Frequently Asked Questions About Gangs," accessed March 15th, 2015, http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/about/FAQ#q2.

gangs when developing these definitions due to less transparent internal organization and structures within the gangs.

Regardless of how or why a distinction was made between gangs and organized crime, through this research I suggest the fault does not lie in those forming the definitions. It is clear such processes did not follow traditional routes of discourse, or the very nature of the subject would have been evaluated during the process. Rather, I argue these different types of groups, all falling under the umbrella of organized crime, that being "crime that is organized," were originally established within creation of discourse in order to deal with issues of the present without necessarily looking back upon the past. Once this discourse was set into motion, the authorities shifted their gaze to transnational matters rather than develop threats that were born within their own borders. As a result, the public had only a baseline on which to act. From this point the media and entertainment may have played a role in further developing this base discourse, however without direct action by the discourse-shaping authority, guidance for future development from within the public sphere was virtually non-existent. As such, we are left with an contentious distinction between two types of organizations who look different and act differently, maybe even operate differently, but are virtually two sides of the same coin; both are organized crime.

2.4 Research Limitations

First, this research is limited in its applicability to the study of organized crime as a whole. As previously discussed, the largest gains in this field are theorized to take place at the local/regional level. In order to stay true to this, no claims were or will be made asserting the applicability of this research to organized crime outside the United States. Future research should seek trends in these regional studies to determine if claims

hold up at the international level, however to reach that point the regional studies must first be conducted.

The modern study of organized crime, according to Hall, prevents generalizing this field of research to a level of global inquiry. Due to the complex nature of organized crime, each group must be evaluated based on local/ regional characteristics. Likewise, defining organized crime should not be so specific that treatment of groups who fail to match certain characteristics (like for-profit doctrines and publically formal structures) do not reach the necessary level to handle the group's true being. Like the Ianni brothers, Hall stresses the importance of kinship bonds between organized criminals stemming from the heritage and traditions of the group at the local level.[59] To accomplish this, researchers should approach their studies not from the bureaucratic perspective of Cressey et al. but by a model that incorporates motives and present situation based on past experiences and the surroundings in which individuals are forced to live. However, simple models of analysis will prove inadequate due to the overwhelming uniqueness found within modern organized criminal groups, as these definitions tend to call for justifying characteristics not always found among groups one could claim as "organized."

The greatest limitation to this area of research are a lack of information available during the research process. The second is finding resources that stay focused on discourse-related texts. This paper may be expanded by a significant amount if it were opened up to scholars as sources of authority, however the length became limited without such an introduction. It became difficult to draw substantive information through federal, state, or local authorities, and the reliability of information on modern organized crime

[59] Tim Hall, "Geographies of the illicit: Globalization and organized crime," in *Progress in Human* Geography 37(3) (2013), 365.

that may be used to guide this study also had to be questioned. This study was also limited to the sources of information available. Due to time and monetary constraints as well as safety concerns, field studies cannot be conducted. Thus, the study must rely on third-party sources who will have to be screened for possible biases and relevance of information to contemporary research. As such, information may not be wholly accurate, the best kept secrets in the field of study may remain in the field due to the risks involved in collecting information. Security concerns from the standpoint of the government must also be taken into account. Sources such as the FBI may not release information that would have been vital to a more extensive study in order to protect those involved in acquiring the information as well as securing the fact that government entities had said information in the first place.

Due to these limitations, the case study in chapter two hones in on a specific group and its splinter organizations in a specific city, approached from a specific theory that some argue is only applicable to urban groups in Chicago. The focus, however, should resonate out of this small realm with applicability in moderation to other non-state actors around the country and internationally. It demonstrates the broad range of groups that may be found in a single place with similar origins, speaking to what many of the above definitions lacked: specifically tailored studies into organizations to avoid the shortfalls of overgeneralization.

Chapter 3: Social Disorganization and the Prevalence of Gangs in Chicago

3.1 Social Disorganization Theory

The Chicago School's theory of social disorganization offers an explanation to the application of social chaos and isolation from the outside world leading communities to not only tolerate but embrace gang presence.[60] A group of scholars at the University of Chicago in the early 20th century first developed this theory, and are recognized as the group who ushered in a new level of urban studies. They completed one of the most comprehensive studies of an urban area to date in the midst of Chicago's economic and cultural revolution. They found urban growth follows a process of "invasion and succession" in which immigrant groups often settle in areas of lower income. Contemporary Chicago School scholars Bursik and Grasmick concur, suggesting these neighborhoods in Chicago were used as transition locations for new immigrants who often contributed to the degraded neighborhood conditions before moving to another area if and/or when they can afford to do so.[61] As a result, businesses close, housing remains empty, and crime increases. Those who cannot afford to live elsewhere remain with no other option, leaving the area "socially disorganized."[62] A number of studies have since illuminated the depth this theory may apply in urban environments.

Two Chicago School scholars, Shaw and McKay, established the baseline for what was at the time contemporary applications of social disorganization theory. Their study systematically mapped more than 10,000 adolescent males incarcerated in Chicago area's Cook County Jail from the year 1900 through 1965. Their findings highlighted a

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[60] Howell and Griffiths, *Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 74.
[61] R. J. Burisk and H. G. Grasmick, *Neighborhoods and Crime: The Dimensions of Effective Community Control,* in *The City* by Park and Burgess (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 33.
[62] Burisk and Grasmick, *Neighborhoods and Crime: The Dimensions of Effective Community Control*, 8.

negative correlation between youth crime and socioeconomic status, but little correlation between race or ethnicity and crime. Over the course of their study, ethnic and racial compositions in neighborhoods shifted from predominantly European immigrants to a majority African-American. However, crime rates stayed consistent across various neighborhoods. Shaw and McKay thus argued that socio-economic status, rather than ethnic and racial heterogeneity, prevents communities from establishing social organization – that is, "a decrease of the influence of existing rules of behavior upon individual members of the group."[63] Their conclusion became the core of basic social disorganization theory, that "ethnic heterogeneity, low socioeconomic status, and residential mobility reduce the capacity of community residents to control crime." They specify three mechanisms that connect social disorganization to gang persistence: neighborhood population mobility, ethnic heterogeneity, and poverty.[64]

Frederic Thrasher then went on to develop the original comprehensive study of gangs in Chicago following the same school of thought as Shaw and McKay. His work, first published in 1927 then revised in 2000, emphasizes socially disorganized "habitats" as breeding grounds for gangs. After gaining a foothold, gangs persist into the folds of society as what Thrasher deems an interstitial element, filling any crack or weakness giving the façade of a complete society while empowering the gang with a sense of social legitimacy at the expense of community unity.[65] Once inside the crevices of an otherwise broken society, more powerful and successful gangs will repair failures such as lack of

[63] W. I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf: 1927), 2.
[64] Howell and Griffiths, *Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 79.
[65] Frederic Thrasher, *The Gang: A Study of 1,313 Gangs In Chicago* (Chicago: New Chicago School Press, 1927/2000), 6.

jobs or welfare, security concerns of residents, and a lack of community identity.[66] Thus, gangs become engrained within a given local society, not just as drug-selling menaces, but also as providers for those less fortunate.

Moving forward, it is important to recognize that all data utilized for the Chicago School's theory was gathered in Chicago itself. Howell points out that while national level findings are usually inapplicable at the local level due to social and demographic variance, the same applies from such a specific study to a broader application.[67] Likewise, if we are to maintain the perspective of each community requiring individualized research and descriptors, we should take care in attempting to apply the Chicago School's theory or conclusions drawn by this work to other communities of similar size or socioeconomic status. Therefore, let us take the following case study for what it is, concluding in simplest terms that gangs are unique and often render services to the community and operate with an agenda that may far surpass committing crime at every opportunity.

3.2 The Rise of Gangs in Chicago

Our story begins as far back as the Great Migration, a time before the Great Depression in which Americans moved westward in order to find work. During this period at the turn of the 20th century, Chicago's African-American population grew from around 15,000 to over 40,000, most of which settled in Chicago's South Side neighborhoods that soon became known as the Black Belt. The population continued to grow. Due to segregation, most African-American residents in Chicago were forced to remain within the confines of specific South Side communities. Covenants formed between residents of surrounding white communities controlled and enforced this stance,

[66] Howell and Griffiths, *Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 78.
[67] Howell and Griffiths, *Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 82.

stating race requirements in order to rent or purchase a house or apartment within their neighborhood. Homeowners associations backed these covenants and state courts gave protection by formally legitimizing their actions. Such arrangements set the stage for reduced communal fluidity in Chicago and restricted upward mobility for African-Americans from this point forward. With this, two societies emerged: the white society and the minority society. As urban Chicago began to flourish with factory growth, white residents relocated to the outer edges of the city and away from South Side. The African-American population had more room to grow, and used it. Soon the area reached its housing capacity and, beginning in the late 1940s, the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) began construction on its first high-rise apartment buildings.[68]

3.2.1 1950s-1960s High Rise Development

Between 1955 and 1968, the CHA constructed more than 20,000 low-income family residences in the form of high-rise apartment buildings. The buildings were constructed as uniform complexes, the largest of which, Robert Taylor Homes (RTH), was divided into 28 sixteen-story buildings in groups of two to three deep in South Side.[69] Residents first anticipated this housing to be an answer to prayers for an end to overcrowding in the 1950s, which soon developed into much worse than anyone anticipated. CHA failed to construct adequate housing for the number of individuals occupying the projects when RTH opened in 1961. As a result, some 27,000 residents were moved into a space designed for no more than 11,000. The local infrastructure could not keep up with this level of occupancy either, leaving the streets littered with trash, a lack of access to basic services like food stamps, and some 95% of residents

[68] "Housing Segregation in 1950's Chicago South Side," accessed September 29, 2016, http://www.bcps.org/offices/lis/models/slamdunks/raisin/Housing_Segregation_1950s_Chicago.pdf, 22.
[69] Howell and Griffiths*, Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 6.

unemployed.[70] As these projects grew weaker, South Side gangs grew stronger. Gang presence, conflict, and drug trafficking "exploded" in the 1960s, with regular drug deals in RTH alone capping a value of $45,000 a day.[71] The "expansion and turbulence" of gangs in Chicago's housing projects lead to a decrease in law enforcement activity within the inner city. For example, by the mid-1960s, Chicago's law enforcement "deemed [RTH] too dangerous to patrol," leaving a power vacuum of which gangs took full advantage, resulting in a complete takeover of several housing projects throughout South Side.[72]

3.2.2 1960s Rise of Gangs/Swibel Era War on Crime

The gang problem, as discussed, is not a new problem set in Chicago. However, law enforcement attempted to conquer this new era of gangs as they had in the past: overrun and arrest as many of them as possible to get members and their drugs off the streets as fast as possible. In 1969, Mayor Richard J. Daley instituted a "war on gangs" to imprison gang leadership, thus cutting the head off the organization hoping the group would dissolve without direction.[73] Authorities did not, however, anticipate the effect of prison society on gang recruitment. Leaders took advantage of their "captive audience," pushing gang membership to prisoners as an avenue for protection, a brotherhood for comradery, and a path to well-being once released. Due to their efforts, gang membership faced a significant increase. "By the mid-1980s," Illinois had the largest number of gangs and gang members in prison of all U.S. states."[74] Chicago became

[70] "The Robert Taylor Homes: Failure of Public Housing," Berkeley Planning Journal, accessed 28 September, 2016, http://ced.berkeley.edu/bpj/2013/06/the-robert-taylor-homes-failure-of-public-housing/.
[71] "The Robert Taylor Homes: Failure of Public Housing"
[72] Howell and Griffiths, *Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 6-7.
[73] Howell and Griffiths, *Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 8.
[74] Howell and Griffiths, *Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 8.

known as the epicenter for gang activity across the Midwest through what became known as "Chicago style" organization.[75]

Thanks in part to Mayor Daley's war on gangs, but also to a rise in minority and impoverished populations, Latino, Black, and Caucasian gangs ran rampant through the streets. Conflict between these groups became so prevalent and destructive that in the mid-1970s, such gangs reached across racial divides to form loose organizations, the largest of two being the People and the Folk alliances.[76] The weight of most gang conflict in other cities such as Los Angeles or New York stems from racial divides, with Blacks and Latinos warring over turf or control of illicit markets. Chicago, however, represents a much different case. While these alliances mean little to this day, their development and continued presence demonstrate a recognized commonality between groups that would otherwise be in constant feud. The spatial division of socio-economic classes of the previous several decades led gangs of all races to recognize their greater role in leading and caring for residents of their neighborhoods. These gangs demonstrated behaviors mirroring street gangs around the country (petty theft, assaults, and an active hand in the drug market), yet Chicago's lasting, and most influential gangs took a page from the book of their old-world mafia predecessors. As they turned high-rises into fortresses for their organizations, they also took an increased interest in the well-being their residents. Chicago's top 4 gangs originally founded, and still run, the People and Folk Alliances. The Latin Kings (the oldest and largest Latino gang in Chicago) and Vice Lords (an exclusively African-American gang from Chicago's West Side) head the People Alliance, while Chicago's Latin Disciples (a majority Latino,

[75] Howell and Griffiths, *Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 7.
[76] Howell and Griffiths, *Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 7.

although racially mixed gang) and Black Gangster Disciples Nation helped form the Folk Alliance.[77] Law enforcement believes these alliances mean very little today.[78] However, reduction in gang conflicts allowed these larger organizations to grow in size and power. Their momentous influence over neighborhood residents created a relationship in which gangs provided local protection to those living in their local area, while community members openly tolerated gang activity. The rise and fall of Chicago's Black Gangster Disciples Nation (BGDN) highlights this struggle, as local residents sought to spotlight the terrible conditions plaguing public housing but worked with voices unheard.

Today, nearly all high-rise public housing has been torn down. During the "Plan for Transformation" to renovate or build 15,000 new family units through the demolition of high-rise buildings, more than 215,000 families applied for new housing. Of those, only 2,100 requests were fulfilled. The rest were forced to move into neighborhoods elsewhere in the city that are no better off or any less segregated.[79] Thus, despite efforts from authorities such as the Chicago Housing Association to make improvements and end this segregated poverty, Chicago seems caught in a cycle of worsening conditions followed by residential displacement in the name of renovation, and so on. As Social Disorganization Theory highlights, this only breeds interstitial gang development and further reliance on gangs for social welfare rather than seeking or accepting help from legitimate agencies.

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[77] Carolyn Rebecca Block and Richard Block, "Street Gang Crime in Chicago," in *The Modern Gang Reader (2nd ed)* by Miller, Maxson, and Klein (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Co., 2001), 188-189.
[78] Howell and Griffiths, *Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 7.
[79] Ben Austin, "The Last Tower: The decline and fall of public housing," in *Harper's Magazine,* May 2012, accessed November 01, 2016, http://harpers.org/archive/2012/05/the-last-tower/.

3.3 Case Study: Origins and Group Splinter

3.3.1 Black Gangster Disciples Nation (BGDN)

Our case study begins in 1960 with a gang then known as the Devil's Disciples. At this time the Devil's Disciples were a large, well organized gang operating in South Side with majority male African-American members between the ages of 15 and 18. They grew large enough for the Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago Youth Services to assign an outreach worker, an action that happens when a gang builds enough outward legitimacy to be recognized as a significant influence in the lives of area youth. The Devil's Disciples became known as the Black Gangster Disciples in 1966 with the rise of member David Barksdale within the Devil's Disciples leadership structure. From that point on, David Barksdale became known as "King David."[80]

The gang's center of influence resonated out of the Englewood Community of South Side. The group first raised money for their activities by staging fundraising parties at a local theater.[81] Most would assume, upon founding, groups such as these seek an immediate foothold within the illicit market, however these parties represent the first of many licit activities we will see throughout our case study. As the city of Chicago viewed these organized and active gangs as a form of non-state actor (enough so to assign an outreach welfare worker to leas with them), so must we during this analysis to understand the roles of these organizations within Chicago's impoverished neighborhoods.

[80] George W. Knox and Leslie L. Fuller, "The GANGSTER DISCIPLES: A Gang Profile," in *Gang Profiles: An Anthology* edited by George W. Knox and Curtis Robinson for the National Gang Crime Research Center (Peotone: New Chicago School Press, 2004), 2.
[81] Knox and Fuller, "The GANGSTER DISCIPLES: A Gang Profile," 3.

King David continued to "rule" over the Black Gangster Disciples until his death in 1974. His death triggered a power vacuum to form and also put gang leadership and once controlled territory within Chicago's drug market up for grabs.[82] The result was complicated as the organization split into three distinct groups with unique characteristics that identify each group and traits that could be considered either homage to their once unified past, or an effort to capitalize on the power vacuum created by the Black Gangster Disciples Nation's demise. The splinters demonstrate one organization forming three groups with identical roots yet varying structures, goals, and ways of life. These groups today are known as the Black Gangsters, the Black Disciples, and the Gangster Disciples.

3.3.2 The Black Gangsters, A.K.A "New Breed"

The Black Gangsters, a.k.a. "New Breed," is the more authoritarian splinter of the former Black Gangster Disciples Nation. While they are the smallest and least influential BGDN splinter, they stand independent of either the People or Folk Alliances. Their name choice was an attempt to capitalize on powerful reputation of BGDN, however in comparison they match up about as well as a failed state. Their preferred method of control over members is through threat of death at the violation of any gang rules.[83] The threat of violence against members, as with other organizations, does not produce the type of loyal following that would come with strong beliefs in a common cause. However, they prefer for potential members to to have an in-depth knowledge of what they are getting themselves into by joining. There is no punishment through beatings, just simple death for those who violate a rule or cross another Black Gangster. As such, the New Breed suffers from regular attempted coups in which leaders "knock off" other

[82] Knox and Fuller, "The GANGSTER DISCIPLES: A Gang Profile," 3.
[83] George W. Knox, "GANG PROFILE: The Black Gangsters, AKA "New Breed"," in *Gang Profiles: An Anthology* edited by George W. Knox and Curtis Robinson for the National Gang Crime Research Center (Peotone: New Chicago School Press, 2004), 120.

leaders for notoriety and respect. Rather than threat of death keeping lower leaders in line, a leader who has problems with another leader or seeks higher position knows all he must do is kill the other member, in accordance with gang rules, before retaliation can be taken.[84] Their reputation is insignificant compared to the remaining two splinters. While they are not a part of either Midwestern alliance, a significant feud exists between them and the Gangster Disciples. The origins of this feud are not known. However, in 1979 a Black Gangster attempted to take the life of Gangster Disciples leader Larry Hoover.[85] Though preferring to stand on their own, while in prison members of the New Breed tend to align with Black Disciples for protection and strength in numbers.[86] Regardless, the Black Gangsters consider themselves an alternative to either the Folk or People Alliance and portray themselves to the potential members and other organizations as such.

The Black Gangsters do not control any large pieces of turf themselves, but rather operate smaller areas within territory controlled by other larger gangs. An example of this is their presence within the Englewood neighborhood of South Side, a known stronghold of the Gangster Disciples.[87] Despite maintaining the name of their predecessor, signs and symbols used are unique not only from other splinters but also from all other gangs in Chicago to include members of the Folk and People. Rather than using a variation of the five or six point stars often seen as signs of power and allegiance to the major alliances, the Black Gangsters designed their own sign: a square with a circle embedded and three "L"s representing the New Breed oath of Love, Life, and Loyalty (Annex 1).

[84] Knox, "GANG PROFILE: The Black Gangsters, AKA "New Breed"," 120.
[85] Knox, "GANG PROFILE: The Black Gangsters, AKA "New Breed"," 118.
[86] Knox, "GANG PROFILE: The Black Gangsters, AKA "New Breed"," 117.
[87] Knox, "GANG PROFILE: The Black Gangsters, AKA "New Breed"," 118.

Members of the New Breed sport black and grey, often sportswear, must live by the three Ls, uphold the By-Laws (Annex 2), and live the BG Prayer (Annex 3). Political activity, though limited to assisting locals in registering to vote, and issuing memos from "the Don" down through the ranks are signs of mimicked activity of the Gangster Disciples.[88] Due to the comparative size of the New Breed, it is likely they incorporate common practices known to increase the credibility and reputation of their group. However, their goal is to be independent, a stand-out organization gaining legitimacy through peer pressure and aggression rather than social action or control of enterprise.

3.3.3 The Black Disciples

Tracing their lineage direct to "King David" Barksdale himself, the Black Disciples are the second of our three BGDN splinters. The gang is organized in a similar fashion as a large religious denomination, with approximately 300 "sets" spread throughout the Chicago area. A senior Black Disciple known as a "Minister" leads each set, identical in leadership structure and operation.[89] With all members recognizing the late King David as their formal leader by way of the Black Disciples Prayer (Annex 4), the gang's radical internal loyalty is enforced by ritualized violence should a member violate the group's 25 rules (Annex 5, 6).[90] In a sense, the Black Disciples represent what some consider an ordinary street gang organized as a criminal network. In contrast to the Black Gangsters who operate a single hierarchy, the Black Disciples chose to empower lower echelon leaders with the authority to run their sets as they see fit, so long as the rules are followed and no actions affect the reputation of the organization as a whole.

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[88] Knox, "GANG PROFILE: The Black Gangsters, AKA "New Breed"," 121.
[89] George W. Knox, "GANG PROFILE: The Black Disciples," in *Gang Profiles: An Anthology* edited by George W. Knox and Curtis Robinson for the National Gang Crime Research Center (Peotone: New Chicago School Press, 2004), 97.
[90] Knox, "GANG PROFILE: The Black Disciples," 98.

Unlike the Gangster Disciples, the Black Disciples organization sponsors members' roles in the illicit drug market. Members work the streets transporting, storing, and selling drugs under protection from the Black Disciples. As payment, a majority of income earned from sales is returned to the organization in the form of taxes and dues. Because of their heavy hand in this enterprise, the group's rules help protect leaders from criminal prosecution by keeping all unlaundered money in lower echelons and by forbidding use of addictive drugs by any member. The rules shroud the gang from outside investigation by preventing members from speaking against any other member, leader, or the organization itself (Annex 6). In addition to drugs, the Black Disciples are known to host elaborate gambling operations out of Chicago area safe houses. One unnamed informant interviewed by National Gang Crime Research Center's George W. Knox indicated that Black Disciples gamble "on everything, the fights, Super Bowl, you name it…dice and large craps games are their specialty."[91]

The gang's third revenue source also serves as a reliable recruiting tool. Non-members are invited to attend house parties organized by the local set. All in attendance, members and non-members alike, pay a small door fee to enter and then are free to socialize with Black Disciples of all ranks. The gang's rules state, however, lower ranking members must be on guard as not ceding privileges at parties to higher ranking members (such as who gets a new drink first) as well as voicing disfavor for any other member would be considered a rule violation, leaving the violating member subject to a violent public beating (Annex 5). As a recruiting tool, the Black Disciples hope non-members enjoy themselves at the parties but also see the respect and discipline instilled in members and the organization. Members will get to know non-members through these

[91] Knox, "GANG PROFILE: The Black Disciples," 98.

public venues, screening them for introduction to the gang and its ways. This process is formalized across the Black Disciples with no room for leeway as outlined in the group's rules (Annex 6).[92] This intense screening process aids to the notion of intentional social separation on part of the Black Disciples, rather than keep an open, inclusive public face like that of the Gangster Disciples.

The Black Disciples display a variation of the Folk's 6-point star, possibly to uphold their heritage as a splinter of the Black Gangster Disciples Nation. As members of the Folk Alliance, Black Disciples are in constant battle with People gangs. Additionally, a feud of unknown origin exists between the Black Disciples and Gangster Disciples similar to the existing feud between the latter and alliance-independent Black Gangsters.[93] As with any classic power vacuum, the feud may be a result of the Black Gangster Disciples Nation split and any resonating negative feelings as each group seeks to control of their parent organization's territory and reputation. The Black Disciples reached national notoriety in 1994 when a set operating in South Side murdered one of their own, an 11 year-old boy.

Robert "Yummy" Sandifer was thought to be an average 11 year-old kid by his mother, a crack addict who was arrested 41 times by age 29, and his nine siblings. Robert was arrested charged with 12 felonies by age ten for crimes such as grand theft auto, extortion, and assault, but could not be sentenced to more than probation due to his age. In 1994, Yummy shot two other youths, members of the Gangster Disciples.[94] While this was considered a "lawful order," the hit on Yummy's rival gang went as well

[92] Knox, "GANG PROFILE: The Black Disciples," 99.
[93] Knox, "GANG PROFILE: The Black Disciples," 101.
[94] Al Valdez, *Gangs: A Guide to Understanding Street Gangs 5th ed.* (San Clemente: Law Tech Publishing, 2009), 336.

as could be expected when orchestrated by an 11 year-old. Yummy opened fire on the Gangster Disciples, injuring one. However, one of his stray bullets struck and killed a 14 year-old innocent bystander girl named Shavon Dean.[95] In accordance with gang rules, the hard blow this killing put on the Black Disciples' reputation warranted retribution. As such, a local set Minister the execution of Yummy for his "crime," a sentence carried out by two brothers only 14 and 16 years of age.[9697] This story, though tragic in the killing of Shavon Dean, illustrates the sad world such young gangbangers of Chicago live in. The Black Disciples gained the reputation of operating what some may consider child soldiers, although this feature is likely not unique to this particular group. The reality of the world these kids live in, as we have discussed, is that gangs are often the only viable way of life they see due to a lack of support, jobs, and opportunity in their communities. Certainly for young Robert Sandifer, the third of ten children to a crack addict, the gang life seemed like a means of survival and well-being. While Robert no longer has the ability to pursue a gang-free life, his convicted killers, Cragg and Derrick Hardaway, vow to never return to their past lives. Derrick (was scheduled for parole in 2016, no new information about his release is available) and his older brother Cragg (set for release in 2024) say they think about Robert's death every day. Prison gave the brothers access to personal and professional development resources as well as education. However, thanks

[95] Knox, "GANG PROFILE: The Black Disciples," 100.
[96] Knox, "GANG PROFILE: The Black Disciples," 100.
[97] Don Terry, "2 Brothers Held in Slaying of a Murder Suspect, 11," *New York Times,* September 3, 1994, accessed October 24, 2016, *http*://www.nytimes.com/1994/09/03/us/2-brothers-held-in-slaying-of-a-murder-suspect-11.html.

to the lives social spatiality forced them to live, neither has known a single day of adulthood outside prison walls.[98]

3.3.4 The Gangster Disciples

Chicago law enforcement considers our third Black Gangster Disciples Nation splinter, the Gangster Disciples, the single most organized criminal group in the city.[99] Started by Larry Hoover, a gangster some consider an original founder of the Black Gangster disciples Nation, the Gangster Disciples maintain a majority of territory and influence once held by their predecessors. Boasting some 30,000 members throughout Chicago and an annual revenue greater than $100 million, the complexity and breadth of activity undertaken by this organization speak to the greater need for social order across South Side. Spatial division across socioeconomic lines gave the Gangster Disciples a foothold through offering welfare and protection to the suffering residents of their community.

Researchers Knox and Fuller believe the Gangster Disciples have "penetrated and exploited authority structures and democratic processes" throughout Chicago, though I argue they instead rose to power as a result of a need for help, support, and protection for the city's spatialized residents.[100] The gang's center of gravity is the Englewood community where they raise money, through licit and illicit means, for the group's enterprises. While the Gangster Disciples are a splinter of the Black Gangster Disciples Nation, in many ways they are also a modern continuance under Hoover's leadership. When King David died in 1974, Hoover positioned himself from prison to manipulate

[98] Tonya Francisco, "Men convicted in '94 murder of 11-year-old speak out for first time," *WGN TV*, December 15, 2014, accessed October 24, 2016, http://wgntv.com/2014/12/15/men-convicted-in-94-murder-of-11-year-old-speak-out-for-first-time/.
[99] Decker, Bynum, and Weisel, "A Tale of Two Cities," 75.
[100] Knox and Fuller, "The GANGSTER DISCIPLES: A Gang Profile," 1.

Barksdale's following under a new name.[101] First, he established clear lines of communication to leaders of lower echelons, who in turn pledged their loyalty. Second, he rallied unaffiliated inmates, swelling his ranks in prison. Third, He continued to offer protection and welfare support to underprivileged residents of stronghold communities such as Englewood, so that they would continue to not only tolerate the existence of but also prefer the gang's aid to that of social services offered by legitimate governments. Finally, he maintained membership in the Folk Alliance and also reached out to the Los Angeles-founded Crips for increased stability and support as the Gangster Disciples stood up.[102] Thus, the gang has been able to gain and maintain strong influence over various sectors of Chicago's licit society.

In setting up his gang, Larry Hoover believed social activism held the key to respect and power, a page right out of Al Capone's playbook. Their community involvement far surpasses the Black Disciples' house parties or the Black Gangsters' simple voter registration drives. Gangster Disciples informants list drugs, politics, and neighborhood protection among the group's top activities.[103] Members are told to meet certain drug sales quotas, returning a majority of the money to the organization. The group then uses the money and invests it in the purchase of legal businesses to provide jobs for gang members and services to the local community as well as launder drug profits. These businesses range from clothing and grocery stores to cleaning companies, car washes, apartment buildings, and even a reputable construction company.[104] The gang also puts money towards community events such as picnics, parties, and

[101] Knox and Fuller, "The GANGSTER DISCIPLES: A Gang Profile," 3.
[102] Knox and Fuller, "The GANGSTER DISCIPLES: A Gang Profile," 4-8.
[103] Decker, Bynum, and Weisel, "A Tale of Two Cities," 83.
[104] Decker, Bynum, and Weisel, "A Tale of Two Cities," 85-87.

neighborhood protection efforts. Often gang efforts to protect and patrol communities are more effective at subduing general crime than police-led efforts. A study conducted by researchers Carolyn and Richard Block for the Department of Justice found areas reporting high levels of street gang activity in turn also reported low levels of non-gang related crimes. Additionally, the report shows that violent crimes in gang controlled areas are most often committed when two gangs are engaged in a turf war, usually instigated by a smaller gang trying to build their street reputation, as is the case of the New Breed and their presence in Englewood.[105] The most lethal areas of Chicago are long-disputed boundaries between smaller gangs.[106] The larger and more complex often see the value in peace and security. While this study does not excuse the crimes of gangs such as the Gangster Disciples, it shows evidence of groups caring about the safety and stability of controlled areas, so include safety of local residents. As such, gang wars, treaties, and policies were found to have a bigger impact on residents' quality of life than what could be done by law enforcement or the Chicago Housing Authority.[107] The Gangster Disciples are also engaged in political activism to help end what they term as "the struggle," or the socio-economic division and injustice plaguing African-Americans across the Chicago area.[108]

Since the Prohibition Era and mafia gangsters, Chicago gangs have been as involved in local politics and civil institutions as possible. Their organized action shows that Chicago's Gangster Disciples "have moved to the point where political awareness

[105] Block and Block, "Street Gang Crime in Chicago," 195-196.
[106] Rebecca D. Petersen, *Understanding Contemporary Gangs in America* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2004), 217.
[107] Susan J. Popkin *et al*., *The Hidden War: Crime and the Tragedy of Public Housing in Chicago* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 2000), 7.
[108] Knox and Fuller, "The GANGSTER DISCIPLES: A Gang Profile," 14.

motivates action." Referring to fellow members as "Brothers [and Sisters] of the Struggle," the group works with fervor to help spatially divided and disenfranchised African-Americans. Their goal is to shape African-American communities by terms decided from the inside out. They often cite a power struggle between African-American citizens and "mainstream" leaders of any race, believing these leaders know little about how the isolated society of the street works. Thus, they seek to create a paradigm shift across the nation regarding this often shrouded and misunderstood level of society. A level, previously discussed, created in the first place due to social separation and racial/socio-economic segregation led by such political leaders.[109] Their activity includes but is not limited to voter registration drives, urging residents to take part in the political process, political protests such as the planned protest at the Democratic National Convention of 1996, running community "awareness sessions" to educate residents about the truth of their present situation, building relationships with and lobbying for members of the local and state governments, and applying for grants to help residents get off welfare and enter "mainstream employment."[110] In one particular instance, the group was awarded three separate contracts in excess of $500,000 from the Illinois Department of Public Aid for the gang's anti-poverty initiatives.[111] Such efforts would not be possible if it weren't for the Gangster Disciples' complex organization, day to day management, and leadership structure.

[109] Albert Dichiara and Russell Chabot, "Gangs and the Contemporary Urban Struggle: An Unappreciated Aspect of Gangs," 79-80.
[110] George W. Knox, "The Impact of the Federal Prosecution of the Gangster Disciples," in *Gang Profiles: An Anthology* edited by George W. Knox and Curtis Robinson for the National Gang Crime Research Center (Peotone: New Chicago School Press, 2004), 33, 36, 38.
[111] Knox and Fuller, "The GANGSTER DISCIPLES: A Gang Profile," 8.

With a vertical leadership structure, the Gangster Disciples are said to resemble a corporate giant.[112] Protection and services flow down as profits and loyalty flow up the chain of command. They are the only gang in Chicago to resemble an organized criminal group reflecting the complexity and street prestige of old-style mafias. The group's basic organization has several different tiers. A Board of Directors runs the gang with Larry Hoover as their "king." Generals and First Captains finish the top tier, the rest are handled locally with names for each position varying. At the bottom come the foot soldiers, none of which seem to have specialized roles but contribute however they can to group enterprises.[113] Information flows up the chain and orders flow down. Hoover and other members of the Board regularly distribute memos from prison, often with words of encouragement as "brothers of the struggle." Hoover frequently encourages his members to pursue academics with topics such as business, law, politics, and economics as the primary focus. These memos were also used to organize the aforementioned voter registration drives and "awareness sessions." Additionally, Hoover implemented gang suggestion boxes via memo in order to better understand the deeper folds of "the struggle" that he himself may not understand from his higher position. His memos often emphasize the group's political position, arguing that the organization is not a gang, but rather a political entity how knows what is best for the spatially isolated.[114] Lastly, his memos are used to give feedback to the gang, letting them know what shortfalls leadership observes such as laziness, self-hatred, disrespect, and dishonesty.[115] He shows a passion for his people, a trait seldom considered as part of a gang leader's repertoire.

[112] Decker, Bynum, and Weisel, "A Tale of Two Cities," 83.
[113] Decker, Bynum, and Weisel, "A Tale of Two Cities," 78-79.
[114] Knox, "The Impact of the Federal Prosecution of the Gangster Disciples," 30-39.
[115] Knox, "The Impact of the Federal Prosecution of the Gangster Disciples," 42-43.

As long as the gang's rules are followed and the organization is not misrepresented, at least from the outside, it appears the welfare of Gangster Disciples hold top priority alongside fighting "the struggle.

Like the other gangs studied in this work, the Gangster Disciples live by a series of rules and multiple "prayers." Unlike the Black Disciples, however, the Gangster Disciples recognize their shared bond with the Black Disciples to King David and BGDN (Annex 7). The group seems to include the Black Disciples as "Brothers of the Struggle," however the Black Disciples and Gangster Disciples are in an open feud with one another. This shared connection the Gangster Disciples Board is attempting to make may fall on closed ears, however it exhibits a sign of elitism within the gang as they attempt to reach common ground with what most consider a mortal enemy. The Gangster Disciples maintain BGDN's six point star, colors, and hand signs.[116] The gang also lives by 16 rules for "brothers of the struggle" (Annex 8). Unlike rules governing the Black Disciples which focus on membership and conduct as it relates to the gang, the Gangster Disciples' represent individual conduct outlawing members from committing various crimes, doing drugs, and ensuring they keep personal hygiene and exercise often, at least when incarcerated.[117] While the rules specify "for [members] in correctional settings," gang members interviewed report these 16 rules stand true during all times of life, whether in or out of prison.[118] These rules demonstrate the idea of corporatism within the organization, what is more impressive is that Larry Hoover orchestrated and continues to run his entire operation from the confines of prison. Due to the Illinois Department of

[116] George W. Knox, "A Comparison of Two Gangs: The Gangster Disciples and the Vice Lords," in *Gang Profiles: An Anthology* edited by George W. Knox and Curtis Robinson for the National Gang Crime Research Center (Peotone: New Chicago School Press, 2004), 89.
[117] Knox, "The Impact of the Federal Prosecution of the Gangster Disciples," 82-83.
[118] Decker, Bynum, and Weisel, "A Tale of Two Cities," 81.

Corrections' weak policies on gang issues, groups are able to organize, operate, and recruit within prison. Prison administrators are thus unable to crack down on gang activity, but often rather choose to negotiate with leaders for a common peace.[119] Just as law enforcement refuses to patrol certain areas of South Side, so it appears these powerful gangs control other facets of a system meant to hold them at bay.

3.4 Community Response

As we discussed, community members often tolerate the presence and actions of gangs due to what the groups provide for residents. We also discussed the gangs' need for community respect and support in order to legitimize their interstitial position in urban sub-society. Harvard's Laurence Ralph conducted an ethnographic study which identified two versions of this community support. First is true toleration in which members resent gangs but allow their actions in order to curb violence. The second account shows community members taking interest in gang activities and the lives of individual gang members in order to influence gang actions and member lifestyles.[120] Additionally, active bonds exist between legitimized gangs and community members as the two work together to maintain peace between the illegitimate authority and local society. While this peace is maintained, non-profits like churches and a group known as the Neighborhood Coalition actively offer alternative paths to work and welfare than life in or around the gang. Some members simply let gang action continue, either for fear of worsening conditions or because they are comfortable with their current living. Still others seek to change their situation as peacefully as possible.[121] These members want at the very least to change the reputation of their communities to the outside world. They

[119] Knox and Fuller, "The GANGSTER DISCIPLES: A Gang Profile," 4.
[120] Laurence Ralph, *Renegade Dreams* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 27.
[121] Ralph, *Renegade Dreams*, 49.

can only make so much progress from the inside, but true success will only come when others view urban Chicago as a community that stands for far more than a gang-ridden warzone of drugs and crime. Ralph points out that the extent to which people are influenced by culture is unmatchable, whether that comes from popular culture or common media, urging us to "not allow the specter of urban violence…to reify the notion of the isolated ghetto."[122] There is so much mainstream society can do to help break this mindset, and it all begins with an understanding that these groups and the communities affected by them are made of real people, surrounded by unique situations that deserve our understanding.

3.5 Cross-Reporting and Conflicting Information

Several accounts of the gangs studied above contain cross-reported information, likely due to their shared history and common names. For example, another study by Block et al. published in 1996 reports an ongoing drug war between the Black Gangster Disciples and the Black Disciples.[123] At present, no gangs in Chicago are using the name "Black Gangster Disciples" as their primary identifier. However, this likely refers to the Gangster Disciples because of similarities in reputation and signs between the Gangster Disciples and their predecessor, although this assumption draws speculation as well. In another example, Dr. Al Valdez, a renowned criminology and psychology professor, claims the Black Gangster Disciples Nation was co-founded by David Barksdale and Larry Hoover, and is also the gang responsible for executing Robert "Yummy" Sandifer.[124] This account mixes stories of the Black Disciples and Gangster Disciples, a

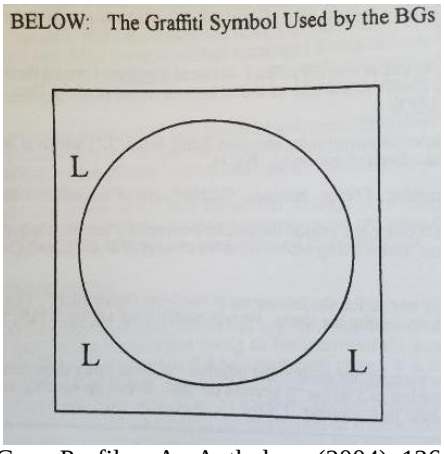
[122] Ralph, *Renegade Dreams,* 169.
[123] Howell and Griffiths*, Gangs in America's Communities 2d ed.*, 30.
[124] Valdez, *Gangs: A Guide to Understanding Street Gangs 5th ed*., 336.

distinction in Yummy's story verified by other studies and news reports about Yummy and his killers.

By using the Knox and Robinson's anthology as well as the work of Howell and Griffiths as a baseline, it became much easier to identify what appeared to be the truth about these gangs. Conclusions drawn in the research above are further backed by cited interviews and studies. As with any attempt to describe pieces of social organization, the truth is impossible to truly know by those not directly a part of the group. As such, we are left with what we can consider as close to truth as possible, this is that account.

Annexes

Annex 1



Gang Profiles: An Anthology (2004), 126.

Annex 2

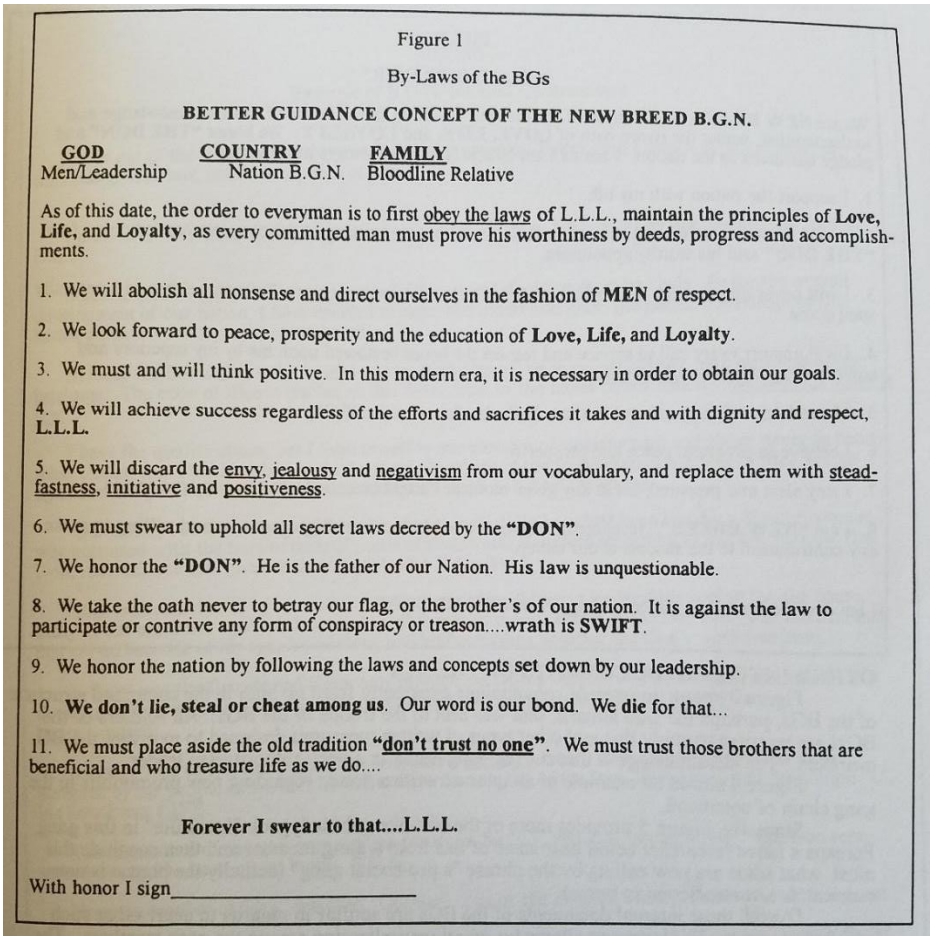


Figure 1

By-Laws of the BGs

BETTER GUIDANCE CONCEPT OF THE NEW BREED B.G.N.

GOD	**COUNTRY**	**FAMILY**
Men/Leadership	Nation B.G.N.	Bloodline Relative

As of this date, the order to everyman is to first obey the laws of L.L.L., maintain the principles of **Love, Life,** and **Loyalty**, as every committed man must prove his worthiness by deeds, progress and accomplishments.

1. We will abolish all nonsense and direct ourselves in the fashion of **MEN** of respect.
2. We look forward to peace, prosperity and the education of **Love, Life,** and **Loyalty**.
3. We must and will think positive. In this modern era, it is necessary in order to obtain our goals.
4. We will achieve success regardless of the efforts and sacrifices it takes and with dignity and respect, **L.L.L.**
5. We will discard the envy, jealousy and negativism from our vocabulary, and replace them with steadfastness, initiative and positiveness.
6. We must swear to uphold all secret laws decreed by the **"DON"**.
7. We honor the **"DON"**. He is the father of our Nation. His law is unquestionable.
8. We take the oath never to betray our flag, or the brother's of our nation. It is against the law to participate or contrive any form of conspiracy or treason....wrath is **SWIFT**.
9. We honor the nation by following the laws and concepts set down by our leadership.
10. **We don't lie, steal or cheat among us**. Our word is our bond. We **die** for that...
11. We must place aside the old tradition **"don't trust no one"**. We must trust those brothers that are beneficial and who treasure life as we do....

Forever I swear to that....L.L.L.

With honor I sign_____

Gang Profiles: An Anthology (2004), 123.

Annex 3

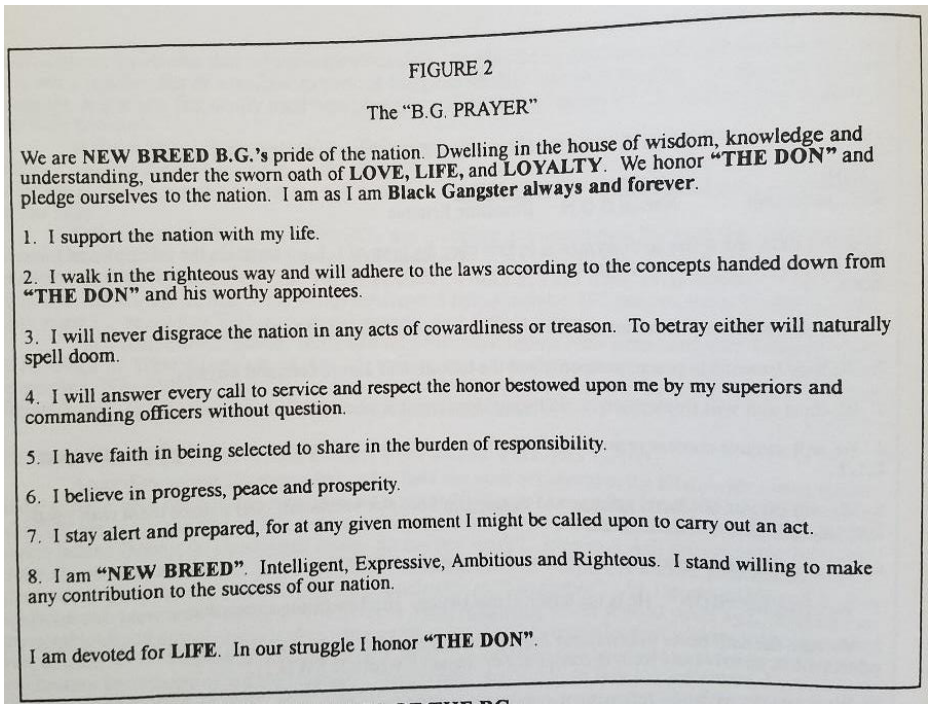


FIGURE 2

The "B.G. PRAYER"

We are **NEW BREED B.G.'s** pride of the nation. Dwelling in the house of wisdom, knowledge and understanding, under the sworn oath of **LOVE, LIFE,** and **LOYALTY**. We honor **"THE DON"** and pledge ourselves to the nation. I am as I am **Black Gangster always and forever**.

1. I support the nation with my life.

2. I walk in the righteous way and will adhere to the laws according to the concepts handed down from **"THE DON"** and his worthy appointees.

3. I will never disgrace the nation in any acts of cowardliness or treason. To betray either will naturally spell doom.

4. I will answer every call to service and respect the honor bestowed upon me by my superiors and commanding officers without question.

5. I have faith in being selected to share in the burden of responsibility.

6. I believe in progress, peace and prosperity.

7. I stay alert and prepared, for at any given moment I might be called upon to carry out an act.

8. I am **"NEW BREED"**. Intelligent, Expressive, Ambitious and Righteous. I stand willing to make any contribution to the success of our nation.

I am devoted for **LIFE**. In our struggle I honor **"THE DON"**.

Gang Profiles: An Anthology (2004), 124.

Annex 4

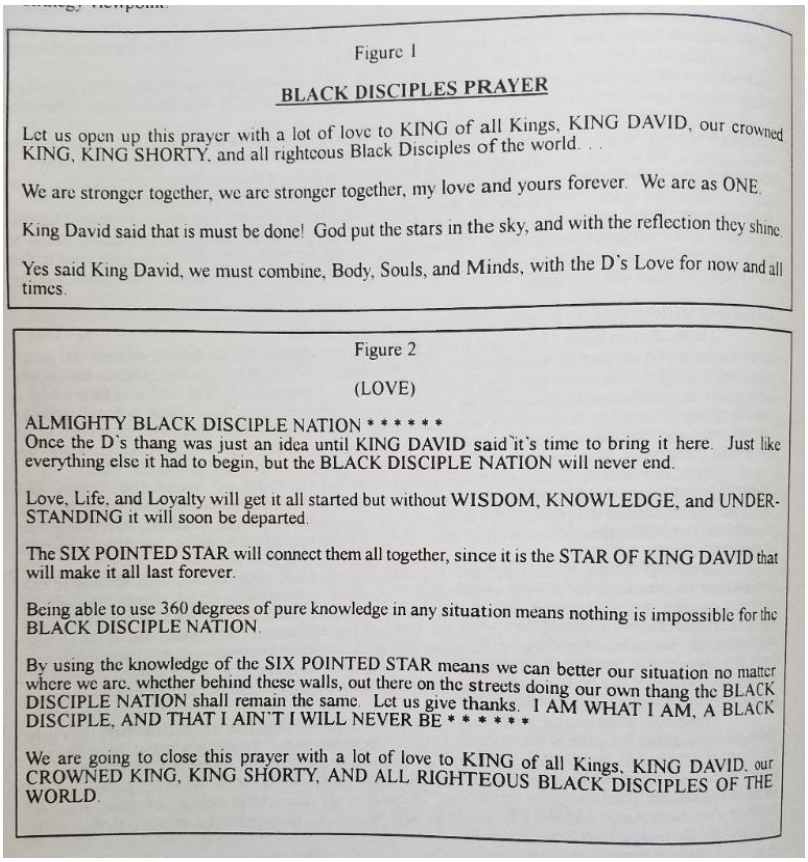


Figure 1

BLACK DISCIPLES PRAYER

Let us open up this prayer with a lot of love to KING of all Kings, KING DAVID, our crowned KING, KING SHORTY, and all righteous Black Disciples of the world. . .

We are stronger together, we are stronger together, my love and yours forever. We are as ONE.

King David said that is must be done! God put the stars in the sky, and with the reflection they shine.

Yes said King David, we must combine, Body, Souls, and Minds, with the D's Love for now and all times.

Figure 2

(LOVE)

ALMIGHTY BLACK DISCIPLE NATION * * * * * *
Once the D's thang was just an idea until KING DAVID said it's time to bring it here. Just like everything else it had to begin, but the BLACK DISCIPLE NATION will never end.

Love, Life, and Loyalty will get it all started but without WISDOM, KNOWLEDGE, and UNDERSTANDING it will soon be departed.

The SIX POINTED STAR will connect them all together, since it is the STAR OF KING DAVID that will make it all last forever.

Being able to use 360 degrees of pure knowledge in any situation means nothing is impossible for the BLACK DISCIPLE NATION.

By using the knowledge of the SIX POINTED STAR means we can better our situation no matter where we are, whether behind these walls, out there on the streets doing our own thang the BLACK DISCIPLE NATION shall remain the same. Let us give thanks. I AM WHAT I AM, A BLACK DISCIPLE, AND THAT I AIN'T I WILL NEVER BE * * * * * *

We are going to close this prayer with a lot of love to KING of all Kings, KING DAVID, our CROWNED KING, KING SHORTY, AND ALL RIGHTEOUS BLACK DISCIPLES OF THE WORLD.

Gang Profiles: An Anthology (2004), 110.

Annex 5

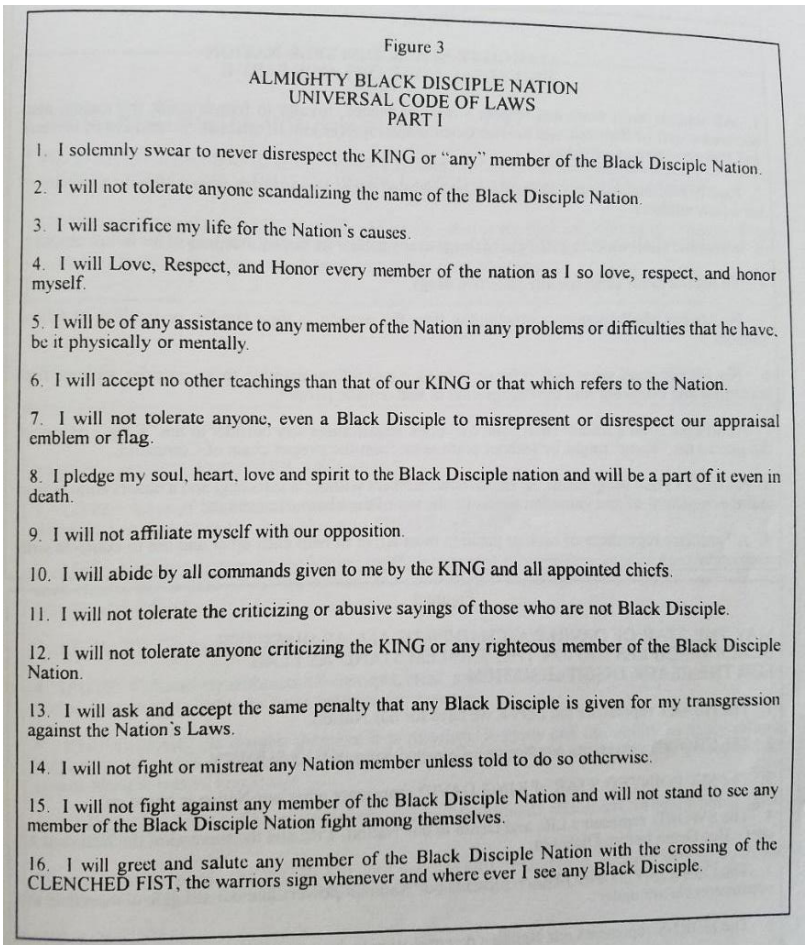


Figure 3

ALMIGHTY BLACK DISCIPLE NATION
UNIVERSAL CODE OF LAWS
PART I

1. I solemnly swear to never disrespect the KING or "any" member of the Black Disciple Nation.

2. I will not tolerate anyone scandalizing the name of the Black Disciple Nation.

3. I will sacrifice my life for the Nation's causes.

4. I will Love, Respect, and Honor every member of the nation as I so love, respect, and honor myself.

5. I will be of any assistance to any member of the Nation in any problems or difficulties that he have, be it physically or mentally.

6. I will accept no other teachings than that of our KING or that which refers to the Nation.

7. I will not tolerate anyone, even a Black Disciple to misrepresent or disrespect our appraisal emblem or flag.

8. I pledge my soul, heart, love and spirit to the Black Disciple nation and will be a part of it even in death.

9. I will not affiliate myself with our opposition.

10. I will abide by all commands given to me by the KING and all appointed chiefs.

11. I will not tolerate the criticizing or abusive sayings of those who are not Black Disciple.

12. I will not tolerate anyone criticizing the KING or any righteous member of the Black Disciple Nation.

13. I will ask and accept the same penalty that any Black Disciple is given for my transgression against the Nation's Laws.

14. I will not fight or mistreat any Nation member unless told to do so otherwise.

15. I will not fight against any member of the Black Disciple Nation and will not stand to see any member of the Black Disciple Nation fight among themselves.

16. I will greet and salute any member of the Black Disciple Nation with the crossing of the CLENCHED FIST, the warriors sign whenever and where ever I see any Black Disciple.

Gang Profiles: An Anthology (2004), page 111.

Annex 6

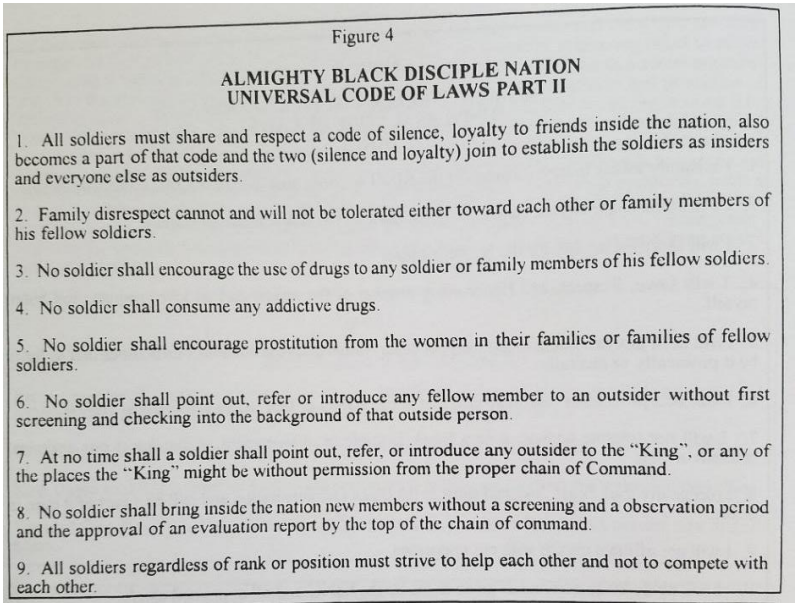


Figure 4

ALMIGHTY BLACK DISCIPLE NATION
UNIVERSAL CODE OF LAWS PART II

1. All soldiers must share and respect a code of silence, loyalty to friends inside the nation, also becomes a part of that code and the two (silence and loyalty) join to establish the soldiers as insiders and everyone else as outsiders.

2. Family disrespect cannot and will not be tolerated either toward each other or family members of his fellow soldiers.

3. No soldier shall encourage the use of drugs to any soldier or family members of his fellow soldiers.

4. No soldier shall consume any addictive drugs.

5. No soldier shall encourage prostitution from the women in their families or families of fellow soldiers.

6. No soldier shall point out, refer or introduce any fellow member to an outsider without first screening and checking into the background of that outside person.

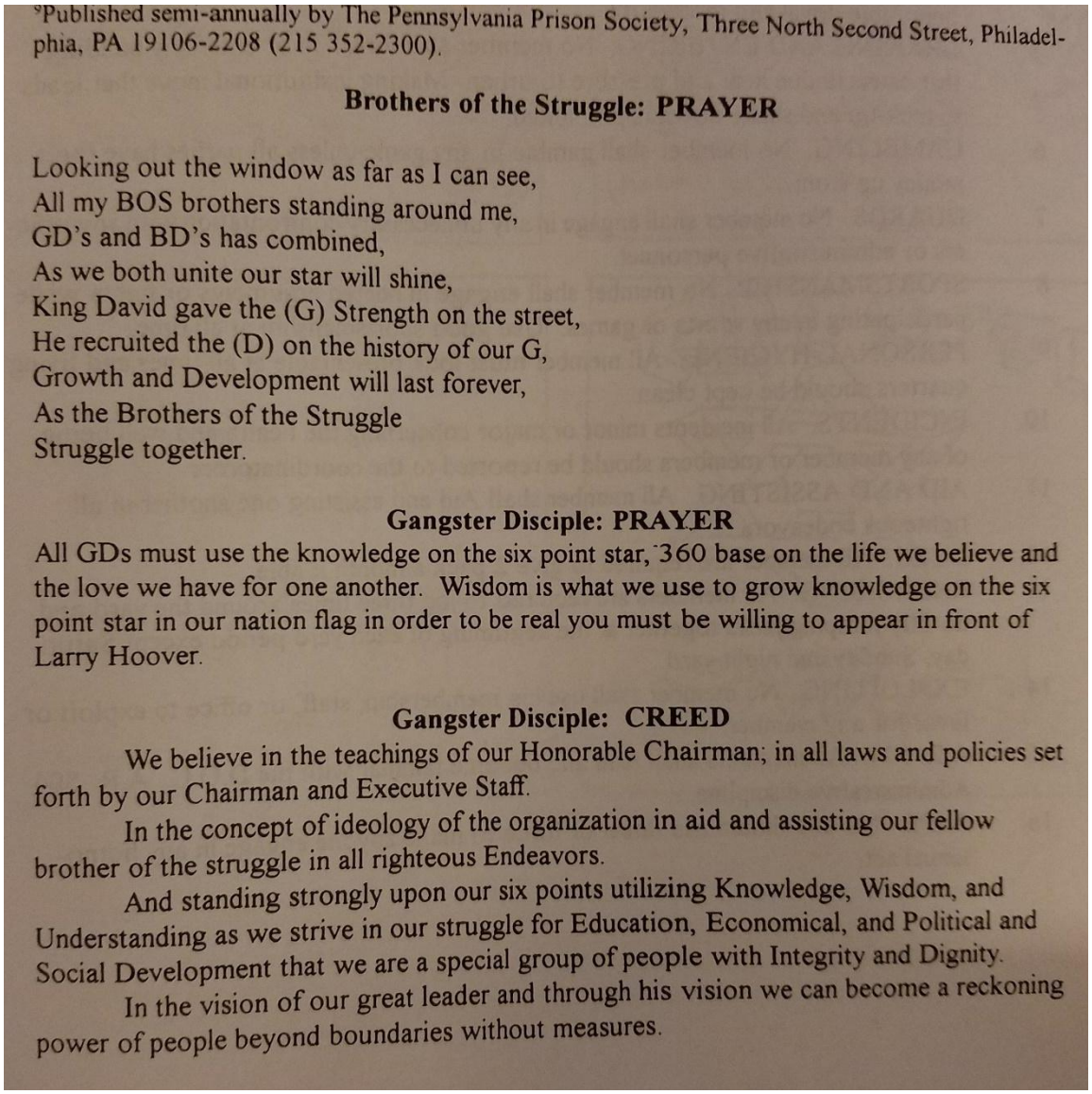
7. At no time shall a soldier shall point out, refer, or introduce any outsider to the "King", or any of the places the "King" might be without permission from the proper chain of Command.

8. No soldier shall bring inside the nation new members without a screening and a observation period and the approval of an evaluation report by the top of the chain of command.

9. All soldiers regardless of rank or position must strive to help each other and not to compete with each other.

Gang Profiles: An Anthology (2004), 112.

Annex 7



[9]Published semi-annually by The Pennsylvania Prison Society, Three North Second Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106-2208 (215 352-2300).

Brothers of the Struggle: PRAYER

Looking out the window as far as I can see,
All my BOS brothers standing around me,
GD's and BD's has combined,
As we both unite our star will shine,
King David gave the (G) Strength on the street,
He recruited the (D) on the history of our G,
Growth and Development will last forever,
As the Brothers of the Struggle
Struggle together.

Gangster Disciple: PRAYER

All GDs must use the knowledge on the six point star, 360 base on the life we believe and the love we have for one another. Wisdom is what we use to grow knowledge on the six point star in our nation flag in order to be real you must be willing to appear in front of Larry Hoover.

Gangster Disciple: CREED

We believe in the teachings of our Honorable Chairman; in all laws and policies set forth by our Chairman and Executive Staff.

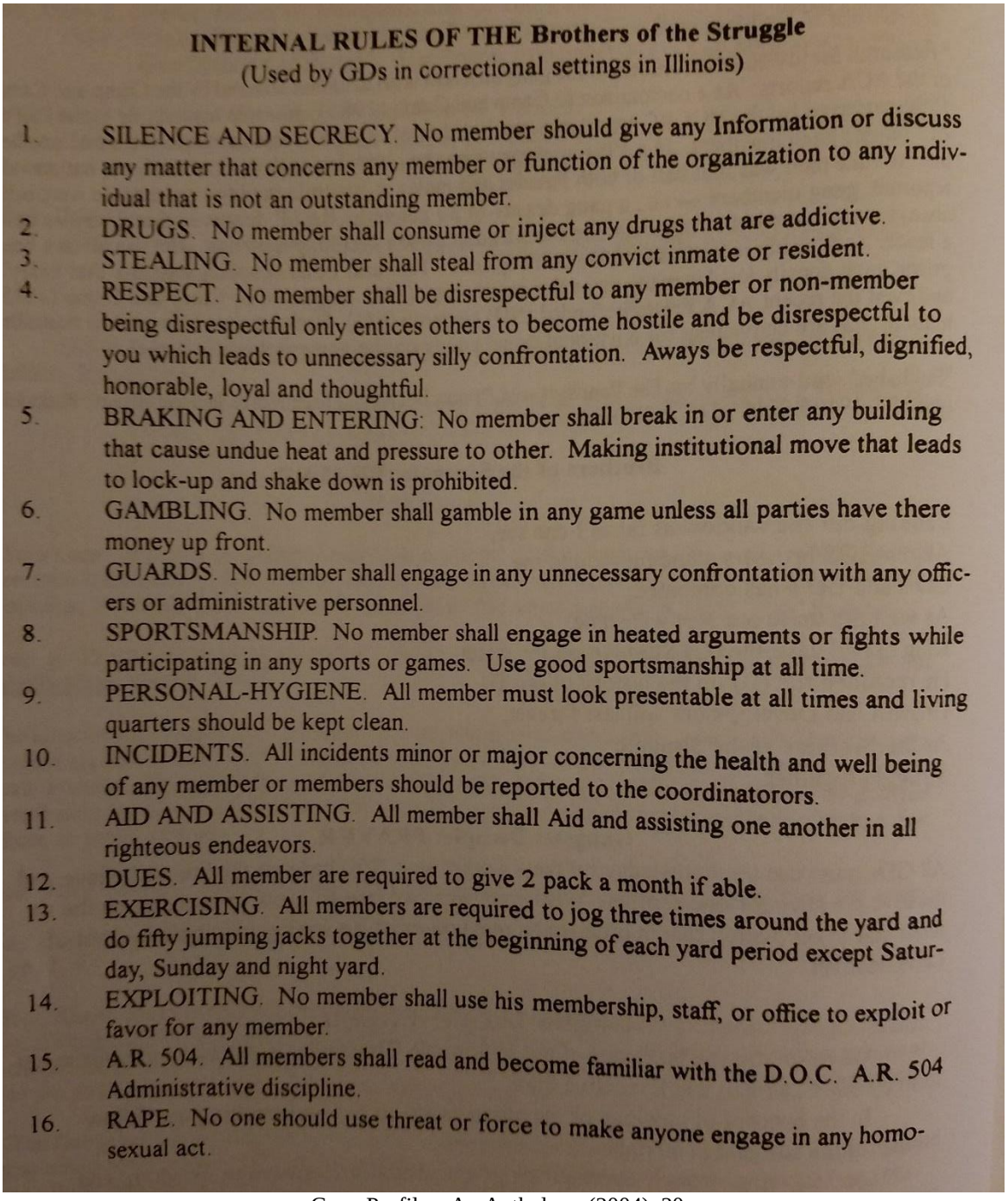
In the concept of ideology of the organization in aid and assisting our fellow brother of the struggle in all righteous Endeavors.

And standing strongly upon our six points utilizing Knowledge, Wisdom, and Understanding as we strive in our struggle for Education, Economical, and Political and Social Development that we are a special group of people with Integrity and Dignity.

In the vision of our great leader and through his vision we can become a reckoning power of people beyond boundaries without measures.

Gang Profiles: An Anthology (2004), 19.

Annex 8



INTERNAL RULES OF THE Brothers of the Struggle

(Used by GDs in correctional settings in Illinois)

1. SILENCE AND SECRECY. No member should give any Information or discuss any matter that concerns any member or function of the organization to any individual that is not an outstanding member.
2. DRUGS. No member shall consume or inject any drugs that are addictive.
3. STEALING. No member shall steal from any convict inmate or resident.
4. RESPECT. No member shall be disrespectful to any member or non-member being disrespectful only entices others to become hostile and be disrespectful to you which leads to unnecessary silly confrontation. Aways be respectful, dignified, honorable, loyal and thoughtful.
5. BRAKING AND ENTERING: No member shall break in or enter any building that cause undue heat and pressure to other. Making institutional move that leads to lock-up and shake down is prohibited.
6. GAMBLING. No member shall gamble in any game unless all parties have there money up front.
7. GUARDS. No member shall engage in any unnecessary confrontation with any officers or administrative personnel.
8. SPORTSMANSHIP. No member shall engage in heated arguments or fights while participating in any sports or games. Use good sportsmanship at all time.
9. PERSONAL-HYGIENE. All member must look presentable at all times and living quarters should be kept clean.
10. INCIDENTS. All incidents minor or major concerning the health and well being of any member or members should be reported to the coordinatorors.
11. AID AND ASSISTING. All member shall Aid and assisting one another in all righteous endeavors.
12. DUES. All member are required to give 2 pack a month if able.
13. EXERCISING. All members are required to jog three times around the yard and do fifty jumping jacks together at the beginning of each yard period except Saturday, Sunday and night yard.
14. EXPLOITING. No member shall use his membership, staff, or office to exploit or favor for any member.
15. A.R. 504. All members shall read and become familiar with the D.O.C. A.R. 504 Administrative discipline.
16. RAPE. No one should use threat or force to make anyone engage in any homosexual act.

Gang Profiles: An Anthology (2004), 20.

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