

This book is an examination of contemporary gangs in American cities. Gangs have proliferated over the past ten years and pose a new set of challenges to public officials, law enforcement agencies, and urban educators. Most major cities are now confronted with serious problems derived from gang violence, drug traffic, and disruption of the public educational system. In the face of deindustrialization and deepening recession, many minority youngsters view gangs as attractive alternatives to a futile search for employment in a deteriorating urban economy. Perhaps most significant, gangs are now beginning to emerge in small and medium-sized cities. Some of the nation's leading scientists and scholars have been brought together in this book to examine the contemporary contours of America's gang problem, including Daniel J. Monti, Joan Moore, Scott Cummings, Howard Pinderhughes, Diego Vigil, Ray Hutchison, Felix Padilla, Jerome H. Skolnick, Pat Jackson, and Robert A. Destro. New material dealing with wilding gangs, migration and drug trafficking, and public educational disruption appear in this volume. Other topics covered include how gangs are organized, what social function they serve, their relation to conventional society, and the social and psychological factors that contribute to their rise. The relationship of the contemporary gang problem to past research is explored, and a rich variety of case histories and comparative analysis is presented. The book also includes a section on public policy.

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