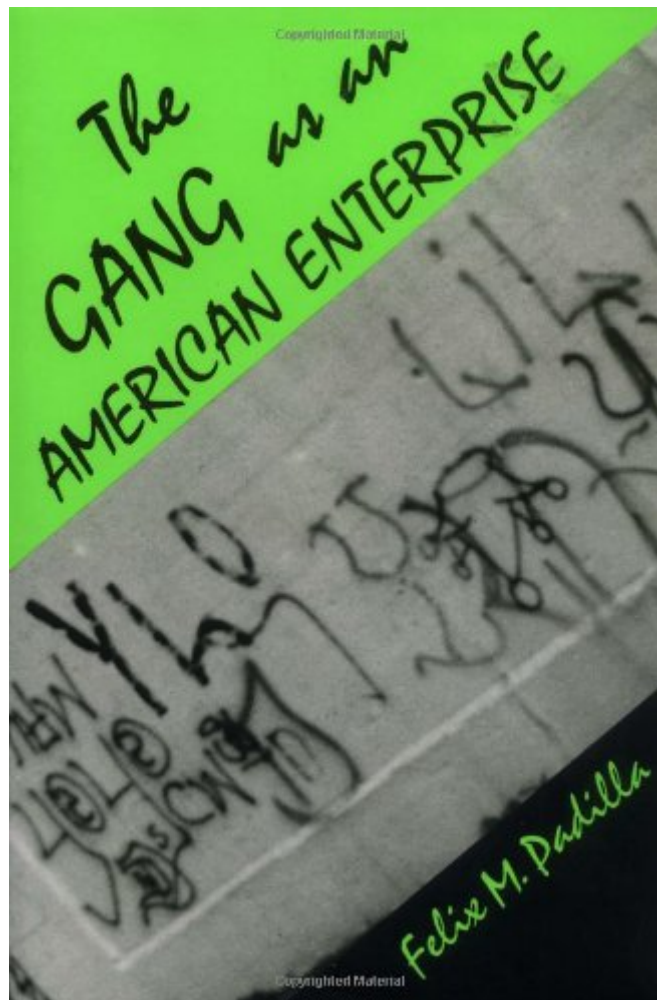


## The Gang as an American Enterprise PDF



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The Gang as an American Enterprise by Felix M. Padilla ISBN 0813518067

"Padilla writes with earnestness and concern ... the author never exploits or sensationalizes the kids he has written about ... this is vastly preferable to other recent titles on this timely subject."- Publisher's Weekly "This is the most thorough look at the operation of a violent street gang."- Library Journal "Makes a unique contribution to the literature on Puerto Rican ethnicity, a turf already centrally occupied by the author."-Jeffrey Fagan, Rutgers University "Padilla has dealt with gang drug dealing-one of the more sensationalized features of urban life-in a down-to-earth and realistic fashion. The reader begins to understand poor minority adolescents in a broad sociological context. This book is a significant contribution to urban ethnography."-Joan Moore, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee The Diamonds are a Chicago street gang whose members are second-generation Puerto Rican youths. For Felix Padilla the young men who join the Diamonds have made a logical choice. The gang is an alternative and dependable route to emotional support, self-respect, material goods, and upward mobility. Although Padilla shares the same ethnic background

as the gang members and also grew up in a Chicago barrio, gaining the trust of the Diamonds was not easy. But eventually he was able to get close enough to the members to interview and observe them. Padilla shows us the process behind the decision to join the Diamonds. From early childhood, boys develop positive images of the gang. They realize that the dominant culture promises mobility, but that their paths to the mobility are blocked. By joining a gang they can creatively oppose the dominant culture. Padilla does not paint a romanticized picture of the Diamonds. Some members come to understand that when they sell drugs, they benefit the gang's leaders and suppliers more than themselves. Further, they recognize that the gang is also subject to problems of domination and inequality. Padilla shows that though the Diamonds are sometimes violent, they are not psychopaths. While we need not approve of what they do, Padilla urges us to understand it as a rational response to the doors these young men see closed around them. Felix M. Padilla is a professor in the Department of Latin American and Puerto Rican Studies at Lehman College-CUNY.

## **The Gang as an American Enterprise Review**

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