



# Islands in the Street: Gangs and American Urban Society

By Martin Sanchez-Jankowski

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**Islands in the Street: Gangs and American Urban Society** By Martin Sanchez-Jankowski

From the Introduction:

The overall goal of the research project was to understand the gang phenomenon in the United States. In order to accomplish this goal, I thought it necessary to understand what was similar in the way all gangs behaved and what was idiosyncratic to certain gangs. In addition, I thought it was also necessary to understand why certain gangs grew, others declined but lingered on, and others declined and died. What follows is an explanation of the research design, the method of data gathering, the method of data analysis and presentation, and some ethical issues related to the research.

Past research on gangs had for the most part focused on gangs in one section of a city, gangs in one city, or gangs of one ethnic group. In order to understand the nature of the gang as an organization and the gang phenomenon in general, I believed it was necessary to undertake a comparative study. This was the only way to understand what gangs have in common with each other and what is idiosyncratic to particular gangs.

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## **Islands in the Street: Gangs and American Urban Society By Martin Sanchez-Jankowski Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #402033 in Books
- Published on: 1991-01-08
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .90" w x 6.00" l, 1.19 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 382 pages

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#### Review

"The value of this extraordinary book . . . is that it offers bold and fresh thinking on a subject that desperately needs it. . . . It helps demystify gangs, presenting them as human organizations with human members, not as evil or pitiful creatures to be either despised or patronized."--"Christian Science Monitor

#### From the Inside Flap

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--Leonard Bushkoff, *Christian Science Monitor*

"*Islands in the Street* is more than a lively, descriptive report. It is also a highly polished sociological analysis and interpretive story of why youngsters join gangs, why gangs accept them, how gangs are organized, and how they relate to the community, law enforcement, and the media."

--Jerome H. Skolnick, *The American Prospect*

"Specialists in juvenile delinquency, juvenile and criminal justice, and the several disciplines that study these topics will certainly welcome the publication of *Islands in the Street*. The data and interpretations are likely to be controversial."

--James Short, Past President, *American Sociological Association*

"Vivid, lively, and yet theoretically informed, a triumph of patient and sustained fieldwork. . . . Jankowski presents the gang and its members not as pathological departures from social norms, but as shrewd and resourceful operators."—Michael Lipsky, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

"*Islands in the Street* fills a wide gap in the literature on gangs. Jankowski's innovative model of gang participation and organization is important and elegant, guaranteeing that this will be *the* book on gangs for the next ten years, if not longer."—Ruth Horowitz, University of Delaware

#### From the Back Cover

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