



Barrio Gangs: Street Life and Identity in Southern California

By James Vigil

University of Texas Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Barrio Gangs: Street Life and Identity in Southern California, James Vigil, Within the Mexican American barrios of Los Angeles, gang activity, including crime and violent acts, has grown and flourished. In the past, community leaders and law enforcement officials have approached the problem, not as something that needs to be understood, but only as something to be gotten rid of. Rejecting that approach, James D. Vigil asserts that only by understanding the complex factors that give birth and persistence to gangs can gang violence be ended. Drawing on many years of experience in the barrios as a youth worker, high school teacher, and researcher, Vigil identifies the elements from which gangs spring: isolation from the dominant culture, poverty, family stress and crowded households, peer pressure, and the adolescent struggle for self-identity. Using interviews with actual gang members, he reveals how the gang often functions as parent, school, and law enforcement in the absence of other role models in the gang members' lives. And he accounts for the longevity of gangs, sometimes over decades, by showing how they offer barrio youth a sense of identity and belonging nowhere else available. Within...



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