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## *Gangs in the Global City: Alternatives to Traditional Criminology.* John M. Hagedorn, Editor. Reviewed by Matthew T. Theriot.

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## Book Reviews

John M. Hagedorn (Ed.). *Gangs in the Global City: Alternatives to Traditional Criminology*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007. \$65.00 hardcover, \$25.00 papercover.

The past 100 years have seen tremendous changes in urban street gangs. Born from the rapid industrialization of cities in the early 1900s, these gangs have evolved from small immigrant groups defending neighborhood turf to highly-organized and economically-prosperous multinational organizations. Today, gangs exist in the suburbs and rural areas. They are expected to be found in most urban areas. Gangs are popular, with new members joining every day and young children aspiring to join someday. These gangs have a strong influence over members, families, and the neighborhoods where they are located. Decades of criminological theory and research describe the power of these gangs to recruit and socialize new members, impact local crime rates, and proliferate in spite of increased attention from law enforcement.

As technology leaps forward, the world seems to shrink. Communication across continents is easier and faster than ever and everything from business to entertainment is becoming increasingly global. Given how gangs have adapted and thrived for decades, it should be no surprise to see them evolve in this direction too. While such changes have clear implications for understanding today's gangs and their place in the world, scholars generally have been slow to study the globalization of gangs. For these reasons, *Gangs in the Global City: Alternatives to Traditional Criminology* is an important and necessary new book. Edited by John M. Hagedorn, this collection of chapters is authored by notable scholars from around the world and offers several new ideas to advance academic discourse about gangs.

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As described in the introductory chapter to the book (and elaborated on throughout the subsequent chapters), this collection challenges traditional criminology in three areas. First, while traditional thinking defines gang involvement as deviant and temporary adolescent pursuits, it is proposed here that gangs are institutionalized in many locales around the world. Next, the book argues that gangs are international and responsive to globalization. They are not a strictly American creations. Finally, gangs are described here as “social actors” who are defined by ethnic and racial composition, their economic pursuits and gender. These topics are approached from different perspectives and the book offers an appropriate mix of theory and critique.

The first three chapters focus primarily on theories and their application. The first chapter, by John Hagedorn, is particularly interesting since it connects new ideas with early, traditional theories about gangs (such as those offered by the *Chicago School*). This effort early in the book makes a nice link with the past and helps make explicit how it builds upon strong criminological foundations. Subsequent chapters then examine topics such as gangs in Europe and Australia, the formation of female gang identity, and ideological differences across gangs, cultures and continents. Luis Barrios and David Brotherton contribute noteworthy chapters exploring the religious, political, and social aspects of New York’s Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation. These chapters augment the authors’ previous work on this topic, including the excellent book *Gangs and Society: Alternative Perspectives* (co-edited with Louis Kontos). The final two chapters summarize key, recurrent themes from the preceding chapters and review challenges confronting gangs (and our thinking about gangs) in this global context.

Beyond addressing the basic need for books exploring gangs in a global context, perhaps the greatest strength of this book is its collection of authors. In a book like this that promises an international focus, one would expect diverse perspectives. This book more than satisfies this expectation by delivering chapters written by internationally recognized sociologists, criminologists, and anthropologists from countries such as the United States, Mexico, Australia, and England, among

others. Moreover, the authors, including Luis Barrios, David Brotherton, Jock Young, and James Short, Jr. (just to name a few), are among the leaders of gang research. The authors are respected scholars and are more than qualified to contribute meaningfully to this volume.

This strong mix of fresh ideas offered by top authors in well-written and well-researched commentaries makes this book an important publication. The challenges to traditional criminology offered here are welcome and reasonable given the changing nature of gangs as well as the international influences on gang activities. The book is recommended reading for criminologists, sociologists, and anyone else with an interest in understanding street gangs and crime in a global context.

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John Louis Recchiuti. *Civic Engagement: Social Science and Progressive Era Reform in New York City*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007. \$59.95 hardcover.

John Louis Recchiuti, Professor of History and Director of the American Studies Program at Mount Union College, Ohio, has written a lively and well-researched study of activist intellectuals in New York City during the Progressive Era of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It complements the many studies of the Progressive Era published each year, illustrating ongoing scholarly interest in a period that saw an outpouring of social thought and action by broad array of reformers from proponents of the Social Gospel to pioneering social scientists that included women, African Americans such as W.E.B. DuBois and George Edmund Haynes, and others who searched for ways to bring an increasingly complex society into conformity with its egalitarian ideals.

Recchiuti focuses on New York City, arguably the most dynamic and important city in the United States at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A magnet for business, banking and immigrants looking for opportunities, the city attracted young social scientists, including college educated women with backgrounds in history, economics, anthropology and political science, who