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Annex 1 to the Grant Agreement
(Description of the Action)
Part B

Action Acronym: GANGS
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Principal Investigator: Dennis Rodgers
Host Institution: Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland
Additional Beneficiaries: Aalborg University, Denmark

3.0 State-of-the-art and objectives

Visions of gangs as paradigmatic embodiments of violence and danger are commonplace, whether in policy-making circles, among law enforcement officials, or the general public at large. Frequently depicted as an almost pathological form of brutality, they are ubiquitously associated with senseless destruction and chaos, and have consequently become feared bugbears and sources of anxiety and concern all over the world. This is currently perhaps most obviously the case in post-Cold War Central America, where gangs, known variably as "*maras*" and "*pandillas*", are widely perceived as the most important actors within a contemporary panorama of rampant criminality characterised by levels of violence often surpassing those of the revolutionary conflicts that affected the region during the 1970s and 1980s (Rodgers, 2009a). Not surprisingly, perhaps, Central American gangs have been portrayed as a critical regional security threat, a "new urban insurgency" aiming "to depose or control the governments of targeted countries" through "*coups d'street*" (sic), whose violence threatens to "spill over" beyond the isthmus (Manwaring, 2005: 2). The corresponding policy response has been brutally repressive, to the extent that it is no exaggeration to talk of Central American states having declared a veritable "war on gangs" in recent years (Jütersonke *et al.*, 2009).

Despite many scholars criticising such alarmist constructions of gangs as hype and stereotyping, both in Central America and beyond (Hagedorn, 2008; Jones, 2014), these remain widespread, in large part because they allow processes of scapegoating by the authorities, thereby justifying particular forms of control and intervention. Beyond such representational politics, however, the persistence of such depictions can also be related to the ubiquity of gangs, which are one of a small number of truly global phenomena, found in almost every society across both time and space. The historian Livy, for example, discussed the critical political role played by gangs in his famous 1st century BC history of Rome, *Ab Urbe Condita*, while studies have noted their existence in countries as disparate as the USA, France, Kenya, El Salvador, or China, among others (see Hazen and Rodgers, 2014). Almost 100 years of gang research have highlighted that gangs can vary enormously in form, dynamics, and consequences, but it is striking that while there are many insightful studies of gangs, the overwhelming majority are focused on a single gang or location. As a result, we still lack a proper sense of what kinds of gang dynamics might be general, and which ones are specific to particular epochs and places, and why. This is an issue clearly best explored through comparative analysis, and the GANGS project therefore aims to tackle this intellectual gap by developing a systematic global investigation of gang dynamics, to better understand why gangs emerge, how they evolve over time, whether they are associated with particular social configurations, and how and why individuals join and leave gangs and what impact this has on their potential futures. Drawing on ground-breaking, multi-sited, collaborative ethnographic research in Nicaragua, South Africa, and France, as well as the comparison of 35 gang member life histories from Asia, Africa, Europe, North and South America, it will explore ***how and why individual, group, and contextual factors articulate together under different conditions to determine distinct types of gang trajectories and outcomes***.

3.1 Conceptualising gangs

Gangs are inherently revealing social institutions; indeed, as Thrasher (1927: 3) pithily put it in his pioneering study of gangs in 1920s Chicago, they are in many ways "*life*, rough and untamed, [and therefore] rich in elemental social processes significant to the student of society and human nature". Certainly, gangs have been shown to be associated with a range of fundamental human activities, such as the exercise of power (Whyte, 1943; Zaluar, 1994; Arias, 2006; Stephenson, 2015), capital accumulation (Sánchez-Jankowski, 1991; Padilla, 1992; Contreras, 2013), socialization (Cohen, 1955; Vigil, 1988; Mohammed, 2011; Wolseth, 2011; Rodgers, 2017e), identity formation (Bloch and Niederhoffer, 1958; Feixa, 1998; Brenneman, 2012; Levenson, 2013; Rodgers, 2015), territorial control (Suttles, 1968; Keiser, 1969; Lepoutre, 1997; Rodgers, 2006a; Rocha, 2007; Pickering *et al.*, 2012; Gutiérrez Rivera, 2013), resistance (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Hagedorn, 1988; Brotherton and Barrios, 2004; Kessler, 2004; Rios, 2011; Zilberg, 2011; Rocha, 2013; Brotherton, 2015), or the articulation of gender relations (Moore, 1978 & 1991; Miller, 2001; Rubi, 2005; Hume, 2007; Baird, 2017). Such processes are in fact often observable in a much more direct and unmediated manner through the gang lens, and to this extent, gangs can plausibly be said to constitute particularly insightful "bellwether" institutions. This is arguably even more so the case when we consider that while gangs are clearly autonomous social phenomena, with complex internal logics

and dynamics, they are simultaneously also epiphenomena, fundamentally reflecting – and shaped by – broader social structures (Rodgers, 2016b).

The first systematic studies of gangs began to emerge almost 100 years ago, and many extremely insightful studies have been produced about them over the years (see Rodgers, 1999; Covey, 2003; Decker and Pyrooz, 2015; Kontos and Brotherton, 2008; Hazen and Rodgers, 2014; Rodgers and Baird, 2015; Fraser, 2017; Sanders, 2017). Broadly speaking, there are three basic approaches to explaining gang formation. The first links them to individual personality traits. This encompasses approaches that see gang members as psychopaths (Yablonsky, 1963), to more nuanced analyses that consider them to be representative of specific psycho-social personalities, such as "defiant individualism" (Sánchez Jankowski, 1991). This conception of gangsterism is rather self-serving, and no investigation has convincingly shown that gang members consistently display any particular personality type (see Covey, 2003; Curry *et al.*, 2014: 38-42; Klein and Maxson, 2006). Even if individuals by themselves do not make a gang, and there clearly needs to be a demographic "critical mass" (Fischer, 1975), numerous studies have however highlighted the importance that specific individuals can have in relation to a gang, whether as leaders (Whyte, 1943; Decker and van Winkle, 1996; Densley, 2013), or providers of specialised expertise (Keiser, 1969; Rodgers, 2016a).

The second major way in which gangs have been understood within the scholarly literature is as a corollary of group dynamics (see Short and Strodtbeck, 1965). The gang group is in other words a source of a particular form of socialization, shaping members' sense of self and identity, including the internalization of specific norms and practices. The question, however, is how this actually takes place beyond simply joining the gang. Thrasher (1927: 29-30) for example famously argued that gangs were the result of "spontaneous play-groups" acquiring "group-consciousness" through "opposition" to "a rival or an enemy", a process that effectively amounts to the institutionalization of gang dynamics through conflict. Such an assertion has been widely repeated by gang scholars in numerous contexts over the years – see Suttles (1968), DeFleur (1970), Lepoutre (1997), Jensen (2008), Sen (2014), or Stephenson (2015), for instance – yet few studies ever consider what it is about "opposition" that might institutionalize gangs as conflictual rather than submissive organisations. The notion of "spontaneous" group formation is similarly glossed over, except to the extent that Thrasher relates gang formation to race and ethnicity, effectively suggesting that they emerge based on pre-existing group dynamics – but this can also be linked to other, non-conflictual, forms of social organisation.

The third major approach to explaining gangs is contextually. Certainly, there exists a long tradition associating gangs with the consequences of poverty and marginality, for example (see Sánchez-Jankowski, 2003). This correlation effectively derives from the notion that that youth socialization normally occurs via a range of "primary" social institutions such as families, schools, or the labour market, which when absent or deficient (due to poverty and marginality), are replaced organically by more "secondary" institutions such as gangs (Núñez, 1995). The latter provide their members with a particular form of "street socialization" (Vigil, 1988 & 2002) that has been particularly well described by Anderson (1999) in his study of the "code of the streets" characteristic of poor inner-city black neighbourhoods in Philadelphia. Due to the pervasive scarcity and increased competition resulting from poverty and discrimination in these communities, Anderson (1999: 32-33) argues that "an oppositional culture" based on "the use of violence" emerges, "at the heart of [which] is the issue of respect – loosely defined as being treated 'right' or being granted one's 'props' (or proper due) or the deference one deserves". While the notion that material circumstances lead to particular norms and practices is not unreasonable, these will clearly be mediated by other factors, however. Contextual circumstances impact on all those living within a given context, yet studies suggest that only a minority of youth – generally less than 10 percent in any given context (Vigil, 1988: 422) – ever join a gang.

Much gang research has rather unsuccessfully focused on trying to determine whether one factor is more important than another, and what the literature can ultimately effectively be said to highlight is that gangs are multi-faceted institutions that emerge as a result of a range of factors including in particular individual agency, group dynamics, and contextual circumstances. At the same time, the sheer variety of forms, dynamics, and consequences associable with gangs across time and space also suggests that particular iterations of individual agency, group dynamics, and contextual circumstances can articulate together differently under different conditions and produce different gang configurations, practices, and outcomes. Understanding how and why this takes place is clearly much more critical to get to grips with than whether one factor is more important than the other, but it is not something that has been much considered in the gang literature, for three reasons: (1) the lack of consensus with regards to what actually

constitutes a gang, (2) the compartmentalisation of much of gang scholarship, and (3) the striking dearth of comparative gang research (this latter issue obviously also relating to the definitional ambiguities that surround the concept of a gang).

The term "gang" is often used in an extremely variable manner, for example applied to institutions ranging from organized crime syndicates to prison-based associations to groups of youths who gather spontaneously on street corners and engage in "anti-social" behaviour (see Mauger, 2006; Rodgers and Hazen, 2014). Partly because of this, the term "gang" is highly contentious, and there is little agreement within national contexts – let alone internationally – concerning the kind of phenomenon that should be classified as such. The most reproduced definition remains that originally proposed by Thrasher (1927: 57) in his foundational study of Chicago gangs: "A gang is an interstitial group, originally formed spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict. It is characterized by the following types of behavior: meeting face to face, milling, movement through space as a unit, conflict, and planning. The result of this collective behavior is the development of tradition, unreflective internal structure, *esprit de corps*, solidarity, morale, group awareness, and attachment to a local territory". The reason for the continuing appeal of this 90-year-old definition is clearly that it is broad enough to encompass a diversity of gangs, but as many scholars have noted, it can also describe phenomena that are not gangs, such as collective sports teams. Not surprisingly, much of the academic research on gangs since Thrasher's foundational study has consequently focused on refining the taxonomy of the phenomenon, proposing definitions and classifications based on a range of factors such as the number of individuals involved, their origins, the degree of violence exercised, etc.

As Hagedorn (2008: xxv) has highlighted, such categorizations arguably provide little basis for real insight into the underlying logic and dynamics of gangs because these exist as part of a continuum, and "today's youth gang might become a drug posse tomorrow, even transform into an ethnic militia or a vigilante group the next day". The volatility of gangs means that in order to "develop causal issues fully", any investigation must inevitably approach "the question of what accounts for the[ir] emergence, decline, spread and evolution" in a manner that avoids rigid typologies and categorisations while at the same time conceives of gangs in a fundamentally dynamic way, recognising that they are situated and connected to a range of other violent groups and actors (Ayling, 2011: 2). Much gang research is plagued by a compartmentalization that has led to something of a widespread "intellectual impasse" within the field, however (see Hagedorn, 2007). On the one hand, gang studies exist almost as an autonomous sub-discipline and rarely relate with other fields of studies, including for example those considering the nature of potentially analogous phenomena such as (other) armed groups or those exploring the broader contexts within which gangs emerge (such as particular urban spaces). On the other hand, there is also a general tendency for studies of gangs to remain focused on a particular theme, to the extent that studies of the relationship between gangs and politics rarely consider studies of gangs and economic activity, for example, despite the intimate link between economics and politics.

This intellectual compartmentalisation is one reason for the dearth of comparative gang research. Certainly, the overwhelming majority of gang studies are focused on a single gang or location, whether intra-nationally (see Durán, 2013: 9-10, on the US) or internationally (see Rodgers and Hazen, 2014: 8-11). This lack of comparative research is partly due to the widespread sense of "American exceptionalism" that exists within gang studies, well-illustrated by the eminent US criminologist Malcolm Klein's emphatic declaration that "the street gang is basically an American product" (cited in Hazelhurst and Hazelhurst, 1998: 3; see also Klein, 1995). This has clearly hampered comparative endeavours, both within US gang studies, which ignore the non-US literature, but also globally, insofar as non-US gang research tends to assume that there is little cross-cultural correspondence with US gangs, and generally does not engage with US gang literature beyond a few classics such as Thrasher (1927), Whyte (1943), or Bourgois (1995), for example (see Katz and Jackson-Jacobs, 2004; Mohammed and Mucchielli, 2007).

Three major exceptions to this general state of affairs stand out: (1) Hagedorn's (2008) ground-breaking global overview of gang dynamics in Chicago, Cape Town, and Rio de Janeiro, (2) the "Eurogang" initiative, which over the past two decades has sought to develop a systematic framework for comparing US and European gangs (see Klein *et al.*, 2001; Decker and Weerman, 2005; Esbensen and Weerman, 2005; Klein *et al.*, 2006; Van Gemert *et al.*, 2008; Esbensen and Maxson, 2012; Maxson and Esbensen, 2016), and (3) my own 2014 co-edited volume on *Global Gangs* (Hazen and Rodgers, 2014). All three provide valuable empirical and conceptual insights about gangs as a result of their rare comparative endeavours, but at the same time also suffer critical limitations. Hagedorn's study, for example, combines (excellent) primary research carried out in only one location, Chicago, with secondary

material about gangs elsewhere, and this inevitably leads his narrative to be very much epistemologically dominated by the Chicago gang experience. The Eurogang initiative, for its part, offers a veritable treasure trove of detailed country-specific case studies, however these are not only mainly juxtaposed rather than properly compared, but have all been carried out independently of each other on the basis of a common definition of a gang that "create[s] an artificial sense of similarity between diverse cultural contexts", and promotes a "static view" of gangs (Fraser and Hagedorn, 2016: 2).

In contrast, the definition shared by the contributors to my *Global Gangs* volume was eminently flexible, as they all had to explicitly engage with it, but could either adopt or reject it (see Rodgers and Hazen, 2014: 8). This meant that while they all had a common starting point, it did not constrain them, and the volume consequently emphasizes the differences as much as the similarities between gangs in different contexts around the world. This flexible definition was based on three criteria, namely that a gang is a collective group that: (1) constantly evolves but displays a measure of institutional continuity (whether of form or function) independent of its membership; (2) routinely engages in patterns of collective violence that are considered illegal by the dominant authorities and mainstream society (although not all gangs violence is collective); and (3) consists of individuals who are principally – but not necessarily only – youth (recognising that "youthfulness" is itself an extremely relative concept). While this conceptual suppleness worked well insofar as it allowed the contributors to the volume to engage with each other in a relatively coherent manner despite not sharing the same empirical references points, the fact that they had all already carried out the research before writing their contributions was a major limitation, and the *ex post facto* comparisons that emerged lacked systematicity. As a result, the volume clearly constitutes "a starting point rather than an end point" for comparative gang studies (Rodgers and Hazen, 2014: 13).

3.2 Towards a Global Comparative Ethnography of Gangs

As McFarlane (2010: 726) has argued, "comparative thinking can be a strategy firstly for revealing the assumptions, limits and distinctiveness of particular theoretical or empirical claims, and secondly for formulating new lines of inquiry and more situated accounts". The GANGS project aims to develop a ground-breaking global comparative investigation of gangs that builds on earlier comparative endeavours while avoiding their pitfalls. It will do so explicitly basing itself on original ethnographic research carried out across multiple locations, guided by an analytical approach that on the one hand recognizes the fluidity and contradictions inherent to the gang phenomenon while simultaneously establishing clear lines of inquiry through which to systematically explore the critical research question of ***how and why gangs emerge and evolve under different conditions across the world***. The GANGS project will be methodologically grounded in ethnography because, as Decker and Pyrooz (2012) have pointed out, ethnographic studies of gangs have generally been among the most insightful, due to the fine-grained and fundamentally contextualized nature of ethnographic inquiry which inherently allows for a dynamic focus on issues of process beyond mere description. At the same time, the contextually sensitive nature of ethnography means that "ethnographic data are not really suited to comparative methods inspired by the experimental mode of scientific comparison [which] usually requires …the careful selection of what to compare so as to identify common factors [that] will make it easier to explain the differences" (Lazar, 2012: 355). Rather than seeking to test specific hypotheses about gangs across different contexts or creating typologies based on rigid taxonomical frameworks, the GANGS project will instead engage in what Lazar (2012: 352) has called "disjunctive comparison", that is to say, the comparison of two phenomena not to measure the extent to which they might be similar or different, but to set them "alongside one another [in order to] see what comes out of an examination of their similarities and differences". The project's ambition is therefore to generate insights that lend themselves to innovative theory formation through comparisons that "raise fresh questions, suggest references to other observations…, and stimulate doubts about …underlying assumptions" (Kuper, 2002: 161).

The GANGS project will reprise the flexible definitional approach of my *Global Gangs* volume to identify gangs cross-culturally, but will compare them more systematically through three heuristically distinguishable but fundamentally interrelated lines of inquiry focusing respectively on "Gangs", "Gangsters", and "Ganglands". The first pays attention to the collective organisational dynamics of gangs, the second considers individual gang members and their trajectories before, during, and after their involvement in a gang, while the third reflects on the socio-spatial contexts within which gangs emerge. These constitute different ontological vantage points from which to explore the GANGS project's central focus on ***the relational articulation between individual, group, and contextual factors surrounding gang***

formation and evolution. Each line of inquiry will be explored through three interrelated eponymous sub-projects, further connected by overlapping empirical coverage. The "Gangs" sub-project will explore gang evolutionary dynamics in Nicaragua, South Africa, and France, the "Gangsters" sub-project will consider the life histories of 35 gang members from Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America, and the "Ganglands" sub-project will examine the political economies of three gang-affected cities in the Nicaragua, South Africa, and France. Each sub-project approaches the enterprise of comparison differently, the first through collaborative and then joint ethnographic research, the second via bringing together individual gang member life-histories on the basis of a collectively determined analytical framework, and the third is based on sequential collective ethnography. This combination of original empirical research and methodological innovation will allow the GANGS project to establish the basis for a ground-breaking, systematic global comparative ethnography of gangs.

4.0 Methodology

The GANGS project will run for 66 months, starting from 1 January 2019, and will be led and coordinated by Prof. Dennis Rodgers, the project's PI. I have a track record of cutting-edge research, including over 20 years of longitudinal ethnographic fieldwork on gang dynamics in Nicaragua, and have also worked on issues of urban conflict in Argentina and urban crime in India. Apart from being globally recognised as an expert on gangs and urban violence, I have also contributed significantly to debates about the possibilities, tensions, and limitations associated with "dangerous" fieldwork, including in particular with regard to ethical issues and security risk management. I also have extensive research management experience, having previously managed, co-managed, or participated in the management of four large-scale international research projects. I will be assisted in coordinating the logistics of the project by a 0.2 FTE student assistant. The project will also involve a senior researcher (Prof. Steffen Jensen, Aalborg University), a postdoc (to be recruited), 3 PhD students (to be recruited), as well as 28 sub-contracted international researchers. The GANGS project will furthermore benefit from an interdisciplinary International Advisory Committee (IAC), whose members have all agreed to review the project's progress and outputs on an annual basis, advise on research ethics, participate in the project launch, methodological workshop, two life history conferences, and the end-of-project international conference. In addition, IAC members will also be integrated individually as keynote speakers in the different GANGS project workshops and conferences, in line with their specific expertise. The following ten distinguished scholars have agreed to be part of the IAC: Prof. Javier Auyero (University of Texas-Austin, USA); Prof. Marie-Hélène Bacqué (Université Paris-Ouest Nanterre La Défense, France); Prof. Philippe Bourgois (UCLA, USA), Prof. Scott Decker (University of Arizona, USA); Prof. Carles Feixa (Universitat de Lleida, Spain); Prof. Robert Gay (Connecticut College, USA); Dr. Mo Hume (University of Glasgow, UK); Prof. Gareth A. Jones (London School of Economics and Political Science, UK); Dr. Oliver Jütersonke (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland); Prof. Kees Koonings (Utrecht University, the Netherlands).

The selection of empirical cases for the GANGS project has been driven on the one hand by the existing research expertise of the researchers involved, but also a desire to respond to a pervasive but under considered epistemological bias that exists in gang studies, whereby the majority of investigations either focus on gangs in the Global North – in particular the USA – or else take these as the major reference point through which to consider the dynamics of gangs in the Global South. As Robinson (2002) and Roy (2009) have argued in relation to Urban Studies more generally, such intellectual biases are not only a colonial legacy that needs to be challenged, but they are also fundamentally conceptually limiting, forcing particular forms of epistemological reflexivity and analysis. Robinson (2011 & 2016) has subsequently called for the development of "the comparative gesture" in order to promote a truly more global Urban Studies, suggesting in particular that there needs to be more South-North comparison. This has been a major intellectual inspiration for the GANGS project, which consequently proposes to develop a series of such South-North comparisons across cases in Africa, Europe, and Latin America, grounded in an ethnographic approach.

Among the great strengths of ethnographic research is that it allows for the collection of particularly fine-grained and often difficult to uncover empirical material that frequently cannot be obtained through other research methods. Due to its participatory nature, it also explicitly allows for a contextually-validated apprehension of causal mechanisms and processes that offer greater analytical insight than the simple correlation of phenomena observed independently and in isolation. Ethnography is however inherently a

"high risk, high gain" method, as researchers can never be sure how their investigation will work out and with what results, because ethnography is relational and interactive, and cannot be dissociated from the social processes that are being studied or from the personal positions of all those involved (including the researcher). Carrying out ethnographic research on gangs is arguably doubly challenging, since in addition to the general difficulties of ethnography, a researcher must also inevitably engage directly with gang members, who are often violent, unpredictable, and prone to mythologizing, and they must sometimes place themselves in dangerous contexts in order to engage with them. Gang ethnography can therefore clearly raise numerous methodological dilemmas and ethical quandaries (see Rodgers, 2007a; Venkatesh, 2008). At the same time, as almost 100 years of ethnographic research on gangs – see Decker and Pyrooz (2012) – have shown, gang ethnography is clearly not impossible, and there is much to be learnt from the existing literature in this respect (see Ferrell and Hamm, 1998). The GANGS project will moreover also build on my 20 years of experience carrying out longitudinal ethnographic research on gangs in Nicaragua (see Rodgers, 2007a & 2014, including with regard to ethical considerations, also discussed in more detail below). Considering the general complexities of establishing and negotiating access to the field and to subjects in the context of gang research, however, the majority of those involved in the GANGS project will be experienced researchers who have already established research relationships with gang members in their respective fieldwork settings, and the three sub-projects will moreover all involve ground-breaking forms of collaborative ethnographic research.

Because much of an ethnographer's insights into a particular field location rely on the bonds of trust and relations of confidence they build up with their informants and local communities, such collaborations are rare. Bringing an "alien" ethnographer into one's research context is fraught with uncertainty, all the more so when the focus is on gang members, with whom relations of trust can be very fragile. The inherent methodological difficulties of carrying out research with gang members are precisely the reason for engaging in collaborative forms of ethnographic research, particularly considering the comparative nature of the GANGS project and the need for a situated understanding of gang dynamics. This is especially the case of the "Gangs" and "Gangsters" sub-projects. The "Gangs" sub-project involves two types of collaborative research. First, between the GANGS project PI and the senior researcher, both of whom have extensive gang research experience, and who will together develop a comparison of gang dynamics in Nicaragua and South Africa based on collaborative ethnographic research and cross-site visits. Second, between the GANGS project PI, senior researcher, and the postdoc, who will draw on the PI and senior researcher's systematised comparison of Nicaragua and South Africa to conceive and jointly carry out comparable research on gangs in France.

The "Gangsters" sub-project will bring together 35 researchers from across the world who have previously collected gang member life histories. Under my leadership, we will, firstly, collectively determine a common empirical and conceptual framework through which to determine which life histories they have carried out are relevant for cross-cultural comparison, secondly, identify the gaps in the existing life history material in order to, thirdly, be able to go back and carry out interviews with the selected gang members to "fill in" missing elements in their life histories. The objective is therefore to generate a cross-cultural set of comparable gang member life histories to be able to meaningfully establish common trends and points of divergence between them, and consider what they might signify both empirically and conceptually for understanding gang dynamics. The final sub-project, on "Ganglands", is based on a different sort of collaboration. This is partly because it involves PhD students, who will inevitably be less experienced, and also because the sub-project focuses less on gangs or gangsters but rather the contexts within which they emerge. More specifically, the GANGS project will recruit three PhD students who will each be primarily responsible for carrying out ethnographic research in one of three gang-affected cities. They will each carry out six months of individual fieldwork in their primary city separately, before then spending two months carrying out joint research together in each city.

4.1 Sub-project 1: "Gangs"

This sub-project focuses on the collective organisational dynamics of gangs including in particular their evolutionary trajectories. It is divided into two phases, the first involving a comparative ethnography of gangs in Managua, Nicaragua, and Cape Town, South Africa, and the second a study of gangs in Marseille, France, that will build explicitly methodologically and conceptually on the former. Both endeavours are unprecedented in the history of gang studies. The choice to compare Managua and Cape Town reflects the long-term investigations that the GANGS project PI (Rodgers) and senior researcher

(Jensen) have been carrying out in these two cities. Between us we have over 40 years of ethnographic experience researching gangs in these two contexts (see table below), which makes for a unique longitudinal double case study. Marseille has been chosen because, firstly, as Montel (2007) and Pujol (2016) have highlighted, it is a city that has long been known for its street delinquency. Although a significant amount of research has been carried out on these topics – including the impressive quantitative and archival investigations of the *Observatoire regional de la délinquance et des contextes sociaux* (see for Mucchielli and Raquet, 2016) – contrarily to other French cities, such as Paris (e.g., Lepoutre, 1997; Kokoreff, 2003; Mohammed, 2011), very little of this research has been ethnographic. Moreover, both Jensen and I speak French – I am a French national – which is an important practical consideration, especially in relation to carrying out ethnographic research.

At the same time, the choice of these three cities has also been explicitly determined by a desire to look beyond "classic" gang cities. Certain (generally Northern) cities, such as Chicago (Hagedorn, 2015), New York (Schneider, 1999), or Glasgow (Fraser, 2015), for example, are paradigmatically associated with gangs, and have long histories of research on the phenomenon. Indeed, the few comparative studies of gangs that have been carried out have tended to focus on such "classic" cities (see Hagedorn, 2008), and while offering numerous insights, an underlying epistemological premise of the GANGS project is that analysis needs to be broadened out to less paradigmatic cases. Furthermore, a major epistemological innovation of the GANGS project is to take empirical and conceptual reference points about gangs in the Global South as starting points for exploring the dynamics of gangs in the North, and the results of the Managua-Cape Town comparison will be used to shape and develop the Marseille investigation, something that will constitute a significant epistemological innovation in relation to the vast majority of studies of gangs that take Northern cities as their primary reference points.

Jensen and I have both conducted extensive participant observation with gangs in Managua and Cape Town, as well as carried out numerous individual and group interviews with gang members (see table below).

Context	**Gang**	**Level of contact**
Barrio Luis Fanor Hernández, Managua, Nicaragua	*Los Sobrevivientes* (subsequently *los Dragones*, *el Cartelito*, *los del barrio*, *el Combo*)	Rodgers has been carrying out longitudinal ethnographic research on evolving gang formations in *barrio* Luis Fanor Hernández since 1996-97, returning in 2002, 2002-03, 2007, 2009, 2012, 2014, and 2016. He underwent ritual initiation into the gang during his first stay (see Rodgers, 2007a), and has sustained contact with both former gang members as well as successive generations of new gang members, both in person and virtually.
Heideveld & Lavender Hill, Cape Town, South Africa	The New Yorkers (subsequently the Cat Pounds and the Junky-Funkies)	Jensen's contact with the New Yorkers goes back to 1995, and he carried out doctoral research on them between 1997 and 2002. While his contact with the original gang and its successors, the Cat Pounds and the Junky-Funkies, decreased over the years, relations to the larger social and kin-based networks remain strong and operational. During his last research-related visit to Cape Town in 2018, he moreover reinitialised his Junky-Funkies contacts.

We have engaged with successive generations, followed the trajectories of individual gang members over time, tracing the impact that both joining and leaving the gang have had on their lives. We have also engaged with a wide spectrum of ordinary "gangland" residents, as well as community leaders, government officials, and policemen. We have considered the organisational dynamics of gangs, their spatial and territorial logics, their changing roles within their neighbourhoods, as well as the politics of the interventions and discourses they have generated and legitimised over the years. We have both published extensively and are widely recognised as major authorities on gangs in our respective research contexts (see Jensen, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012 & 2014; Rodgers, 1997, 2003, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c & 2017e).

We have also co-authored two articles where we juxtaposed Nicaraguan and South African gang experiences that explored: (1) gangs as proto-revolutionary social formations involved in far more than just the criminal activities on which policy makers and many academics often focus (Jensen and Rodgers, 2008); and (2) what makes gang members stop being gang members and how their different post-membership trajectories impact on their use of violence (Rodgers and Jensen, 2015).

The latter two articles were based on a rather *ad hoc* form of comparison, and the first part of the "Gangs" sub-project aims to develop a more systematic cross-cultural comparison of gang dynamics in Nicaragua and South Africa, drawing on our previous expertise but also developing innovative collaborative ethnographic research based on cross-site visits. Although gangs in South Africa and Nicaragua are different, our previous *ad hoc* comparative efforts suggest that they can be usefully related to each other, particularly when their evolutionary trajectories are considered in a longitudinal perspective. There for example seems to exist a remarkable correspondence between the evolutionary trajectories of gangs in the two settings, including in particular in relation to the way that their involvement in both politics and the drugs trade significantly transformed them – in latter case leading to a stronger institutionalisation, while in the former it weakened them – albeit with Nicaragua gangs lagging about 10 years behind South African ones. We did little beyond superficially noting this similarity in our previous joint articles, firstly because our comparison was not very systematic and lacked a consistent framework, but secondly because there were clear limits to our respective contextual understandings of each other's research setting. The "Gangs" sub-project proposes to directly remedy to the latter in order to develop the former. More specifically, it will involve systematically mapping out the trajectories of gangs in South Africa and Nicaragua together in order to be able to critically reflect on the significance of the similarities and differences that exist in relation to individual, group, and societal logics. This will for example involve tracing gang institutional histories, mapping out the territorial spread of gangs, developing extended case studies of gang wars, charting transformations in gang-society relations, or exploring the relationship between gangs and distinct types of economic activity.

The framework for comparison will be refined at the methodological workshop to be held straight after the launch of the GANGS project, and will benefit from the inputs of the project IAC, all of whom are familiar with our work. The aim is to then be able to carry out collaborative ethnographic fieldwork in Nicaragua and South Africa to generate coherent cross-cutting questions about gangs in the two contexts. Although we have already collected some of the necessary empirical material during the course of our previous and ongoing research, it will need to be updated, but most importantly, re-thought along comparative lines, which will require empirical clarifications and well as the development of a joint situated awareness of the respective contexts of Nicaragua and South Africa. This will be achieved through cross-site visits. Fieldwork will be carried out in mid-2019 and early 2020. Each round of fieldwork will last one month, with the PI and the senior researcher carrying out a total of 6 weeks of fieldwork made up of one month of individual presence in our respective fieldwork sites in order to prepare two-week cross-site visits. A second round of joint fieldwork will be carried out in the first half of 2023, after joint research has been carried out in Marseille. This means that we will spend a total of a month in each other's fieldwork sites in Nicaragua and South Africa. In August 2019, a special comparative workshop will be held with the IAC – IAC member Gareth A. Jones will be the keynote speaker – in order to discuss findings and refine the comparison parameters.

As Kuper (2002: 161) has argued, comparison is at its most basic "the business of contextualizing information", and the extended cross-site visits aim to enable Jensen and myself to gain a first-hand situated understanding of Nicaraguan and South African gang dynamics in order to be able to better understand the significance – or not – of particular individual, group, and contextual factors affecting gang formation and evolution, as well as the nature of the evolutionary trajectories themselves, and to be able to distinguish between general and context-specific processes. Although the bulk of the research will obviously be led and carried out by the more experienced researcher in each context, the presence of the other, and their active participation in the ethnographic process, will ensure that we develop a better all-round situated understanding of the Nicaraguan and South African contexts, and also centre the comparative calibration of the investigation, as the cross-site visitor will be able to directly query and draw attention to specific issues.

The Nicaragua-South Africa comparison will provide a baseline from which to design and implement the second part of the "Gangs" sub-project, a comparative ethnographic study of gangs in Marseille, France. Along with a postdoc hired for 2 years (with the possibility of a third year), we will use the insights, concepts, questions, and ideas from our Nicaragua-South Africa comparison to carry out

collective ethnographic research on the evolution of gangs in Marseille (most likely in a neighbourhood in the North of the city). The postdoc will carry out 12 months of fieldwork straddling 2021 and 2022, while the PI and the senior researcher will spend 1 month in 2021, followed by 5 months in 2022. The postdoc who will develop two distinct studies, the first a historical neighbourhood ethnography in Marseille that will explicitly draw on the longitudinal neighbourhood studies carried out by the GANGS project PI and Senior Researcher respectively in Managua and Cape Town, and the second, ethnographic research on contemporary gang dynamics in Marseille that will be carried out in active collaboration with the GANGS project PI and Senior Researcher. Both of these will reinforce different comparative dimensions to the project. In addition to constituting an experimental form of comparative collaborative ethnography, this will also shed lights on the extent to which comparative gang ethnography requires the same researchers to carry out all investigations across different contexts, or whether it can be done with a mixed team of some researchers working in more than one context, and the other not, and what kinds of limitations need to be overcome. During this second phase of Marseille fieldwork, a special conceptual workshop will be held in Marseille in collaboration with local research institutions – such as the *Observatoire regional de la délinquance et des contextes sociaux*, for example – as well as the IAC. The workshop will think through the meaningful similarities and differences between gang formation and evolution in Managua and Cape Town to establish a common methodological and analytical framework for a disjunctive comparison with gangs in Marseille, to be used by the PI, senior researcher, and postdoc. This will then be reverse validated by new fieldwork by the PI and Senior Researcher in Managua and Cape Town in early 2023. They will also present the results at feedback workshops in Managua's Universidad Centroamericana (UCA) and at the University of Cape Town (UCT), in order to share results and benefit from exchanges with local academics, as well as a results dissemination workshop in Marseille in mid-2023 with academics, policy-makers, and other local stake-holders. The final Nicaragua-South Africa-France comparison will also be presented at an international academic meeting such as RC21 annual conference in late 2023.

4.2 Sub-project 2: "Gangsters"

The second sub-project, "Gangsters", focuses on individual gang member trajectories, before, during, and after their involvement in the gang. Although the collective dynamics of gangs that are the focus of the "Gang" sub-project are important to understand, getting to grips with the agency of individual gang members – their motivations, incentives, and strategies – is just as important, especially considering how studies of gangs have highlighted that only a minority of youth in any given context join a gang, and the overwhelming majority of gang members moreover end up leaving their gang. The complex and contingent nature of agency means that this is something clearly best explored through biographical investigations. Certainly, there exists a long tradition of such research within gang studies, going back to Shaw (1930, 1931 & 1938) and Sutherland (1937), while more recent examples include Cintron (1998), Gay (2005 & 2015), van Gemert (2011), or Madzou and Bacqué (2008), among others. The latter, for example, brilliantly describes Madzou's trajectory from gang member to drug dealer and professional carjacker to community worker in the Parisian satellite city of Corbeil-Essonnes. The exceptionally rich and detailed narrative of his life trajectory allows us to understand his inspirations and incentives in a way that few other methodological approaches would permit. At the same time, even if "general forms have their vitality in particulars; and every particular is a Man", as the poet William Blake (1988: 250) famously put it, individual life histories clearly need to be considered in a way that distinguishes between "the personal, unique or idiosyncratic, on the one hand, and the culturally typical or normative on the other. …The goal of such an undertaking would not be to de-emphasize individual uniqueness or to eliminate the significance of personality in the study of change, but rather to specify with …the way individuality plays itself out against terms set by socio-cultural forces" (Mintz, 1979: 21-22).

In this regard, as Johnson-Hanks (2002: 865) has pointed out, it is important to recognise that most lives – whether of gang members or otherwise – are "negotiable and contested, fraught with uncertainty, innovation, and ambivalence", and we must avoid representing them as "totalizing transformations" involving an inevitable progressive movement from one life stage to another. Rather, what is important to understand are the points of "vital conjuncture", that is to say, the moments in individual's lives where broader structures and processes impact particularly strongly or where new opportunities appear, and which mark significant turning points in an individual's trajectory. These are not necessarily linear, however, and individuals do not inevitably "progress" from one "life stage" to another. Seen from this perspective, the sub-project will not aim to explore whether or not different trajectories can be classified

or categorised in certain ways, but rather, will seek to understand whether any common "vital conjunctures" can be identified across contexts, and determine how and why these might impact similarly or differently on trajectories in distinct places. The focus on individual lives also allows for a more fine-grained vision that goes beyond collective group dynamics on critical issues such as the gendered nature of gang membership, including how it fundamentally structures relationships between men and women, as well as vis-à-vis sexual identity and orientation (see Panfil, 2017). At the same time, life histories are inherently humanising, which is important in view of the frequently fraught issues of representation surrounding gangs – more specifically the stereotyping and alarmist depictions – and the "Gangsters" sub-project will explicitly aim to provide a counterpoint to vilifying portrayals.

Interviewing gang members is obviously a delicate process, all the more so as they are prone to lying, boasting, and exaggerating – more so than the average person – and getting to "the bottom of things" generally requires a long-term relationship, interviewing over a sustained period of time, and an intimate understanding of the broader context within which a gang member operates. For this reason, the "Gangster" sub-project will bring together a unique group of exceptional scholars who all have long-term experience studying gangs, and who have all collected life-histories previously. This group has been selected from the substantial international network of gang scholars that I have encountered over the course of my 20 years working on the topic, and includes the following 28 researchers working across Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America:

- **Africa:** Kieran Mitton, King's College, London (Sierra Leone); Henrik Vigh, University of Copenhagen (Guinea Bissau); Naomi van Stapele, University of Amsterdam (Kenya); Mats Utas, Uppsala University (Sierra Leone).

- **Asia:** Sally Atkinson-Sheppard, King's College London (Bangladesh); Atreyee Sen, University of Copenhagen (India); T. Wing Lo, City University of Hong Kong (China).

- **Europe:** Alistair Fraser, University of Glasgow (UK); Paolo Grassi, Università degli Studi di Padova (Italy); Robby Roks, Erasmus Rotterdam University (Netherlands); Svetlana Stephenson & Rustem Safin, London Metropolitan University (Russia); Elke van Hellemont, University of Kent (Belgium).

- **North America:** Philippe Bourgois, UCLA (USA); Randol Contreras, University of Toronto (USA); Martin Lamotte, EHESS (USA); Laurence Ralph, Harvard (USA).

- **South America:** Desmond Arias, CUNY (Brazil); Adam Baird, Coventry University (Colombia); David Brotherton, CUNY (Ecuador); Corentin Cohen, SciencesPo-Paris (Brazil); Anthony Fontes, American University (Guatemala); Gareth A. Jones, LSE (Mexico); Gabriel Kessler, Universidad Nacional de La Plata (Argentina); José Luis Rocha, UCA-Managua (Nicaragua); Ellen van Damme, Leuven University (Honduras); Elisabeth Velasquez-Estrada, University of Illinois (El Salvador); Veronica Zubillaga, Universidad Simón Bolívar (Venezuela).

The senior researcher will contribute a gang member life history from South Africa, the postdoc one from the Republic of Georgia (where she previously conducted research), and I will contribute one from Nicaragua, in addition to providing overarching intellectual leadership for the project. The selection of cases for the "Gangsters" sub-project has been determined the participants' previous research experience, but I have attempted to include as wide a range of country cases as possible. The specific selection of which gang member life histories to retain will aim to reflect a variety of gang roles, including leaders and followers, core and peripheral, current and former, older and younger, and male and female gang members. The above 28 researchers will be subcontracted on a non-stipendiary basis but provided with a lump sum of €4,000 to cover their research costs. All subcontracted researchers will sign a formal contract with the GANGS project outlining their responsibilities, including with regard to ethical standards and data collection and storage protocols.

Based on preliminary discussions with the sub-project participants, the PI will establish (a) what kind of individual trajectories should be included, (b) establish a common conceptual framework through which to think about life histories comparatively, (c) help participants select previously interviewed individuals to include in the study, and (d) identify the gaps in the existing material that the participants have in relation to the common conceptual framework for comparison. Each participant will then go back

to their respective fieldwork locations and carry out the new research necessary to "fill in" missing comparative elements of their gang member life history. A first group of participants will present their life histories at a first "Gang Lives" international workshop, to be held in Geneva in September 2022.A second group will present theirs at a second "Gang Lives" international workshop to be held in Geneva in September 2023. The workshops will have as central purpose to collectively identify common trends and points of divergence between individual life histories across different contexts, and consider what they might mean both empirically and conceptually. Both "Gang Lives" workshops will involve keynote speakers drawn from the IAC (Marie-Hélène Bacqué, Robert Gay). The workshops will also serve to explore the possibilities for alternative forms of representation of gangster life histories, including in particular more popular mediums (e.g., comic books, podcasts).

4.3 Sub-project 3: "Ganglands"

While it is widely acknowledged that gangs are primarily urban in nature, there have been surprisingly few studies explicitly exploring the relationship between gangs and cities as particular kinds of spaces since the classic "human ecology" investigations carried out by scholars associated with the Chicago School of Sociology during the first half of the twentieth century (e.g., Thrasher, 1927; Landesco, 1929; Shaw, 1930; Shaw and McKay, 1943). The latter have generally been interpreted as arguing that poverty and marginality were organically linked to the emergence of gangs, a perspective that has almost become conventional wisdom within gang studies, despite the fact that research has shown time and again that the correlation is overstated (see Rodgers, 2010b). Most subsequent gang research has tended to view the city as little more than a contextual backdrop, at best associating the existence of what Thrasher (1927) evocatively labelled as "gangland" with specific types of urban space such as ghettos (Venkatesh, 1997), slums (Suttles, 1968), or "the street" (Reguillo Cruz, 1991; Vigil, 2002).

Such an approach does not really get to grips with the way that cities are purposefully constituted, or in other words, the nature of the wider urban political economy, can fundamentally determine the formation and evolution of gangs in ways that are just as important to apprehend as the more individual and group perspectives explored in the "Gangsters" and "Gangs" sub-projects. As Wacquant (2008) has highlighted, violence is never disconnected from the way the collective social order is constituted, and it is therefore critical to look at how violent individuals and groups such as gangs and gangsters are purposefully integrated into – rather simply outside of – mainstream social, political, economic, and morphological flows. This can for example encompass understanding the spatial morphology of ganglands and the way this conditions social and spatial mobility (Rodgers, 2012), the construction of gangs as particular objects for policy interventions (Jensen, 2006), politicians' recourse to gangs to establish local power bases (Whyte, 1943; Rodgers and Young, 2017), as well as the nature of labour markets and the opportunities provided by illegal economic activity (Bourgois, 1995; Venkatesh, 2008; Rodgers, 2017b).

As Dimitriades (2006) has pointed out, it is precisely this kind multi-scalar analysis that was at the heart of Thrasher's original concept of ganglands, as his study focused on the role played by public policy, city planning, and municipal politics in creating and maintaining such areas, thereby producing gangs as a social modality intimately bound to the urban fabric (see also Rodgers, 2017d). The "Ganglands" sub-project will take inspiration from Thrasher's original work and approach the connections between gangs and their urban contexts through an explicitly relational perspective on the way such spaces are situated within the broader city political economy (see also Koonings and Kruijt, 2007; Auyero and Berti, 2015). More specifically, it will combine traditional neighbourhood ethnography with a mix of multi-sited network tracing, policy analysis, interviewing, as well as archival research in order to systematically map out who are the key actors, institutions, and practices involved in producing and maintaining distinct types of policies that shape and affect ganglands, whether socially, economically, politically, or morphologically. The general idea is to develop a better sense of how and why particular gangland configurations exist in comparable or contrasting ways across different cities, and to determine how distinct types of relations and connections contribute to producing and maintaining particular gang iterations and trajectories under different conditions.

The "Ganglands" sub-project will focus on the following three cities: Marseille (France), Naples (Italy), and Algeciras (Spain). The choice of these cities has been motivated by a combination of practical concerns (including in particular the limitations imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic), and the idea of developing a "Mediterranean" comparative arc within the project, to contrast with the North-South Marseille-Managua-Cape Town comparison of the "Gangs" sub-project. In order to reinforce this, the

GANGS project PI and Senior Researcher will extend the scope of their "Gangs" sub-project research in Managua and Cape Town to include emergent "Ganglands"-related issues in the second phase of their joint ethnographic research in the two cities, and we will subcontract an external researcher, Dr. Corentin Cohen of SciencesPo in Paris (who is also involved in the "Gangsters" sub-project), to opportunistically carry out a comparative study of Nigerian gang networks across Marseille, Naples, and Algeciras (as he has been already researching Nigerian gangs in Naples and France), in order to reinforce the cross-Mediterranean comparison, and also to create a "Gangs" sub-project level connection to the Managua-Cape Town-Marseille comparative arc.

Partly because the "Ganglands" sub-project will not be researching gangs directly, but focuses on the relational political economies of Naples, Algeciras, and Marseille, it is built around 3 PhD studentships rather than more experienced researchers with prior experience of studying gangs. I will supervise the students, and the project involves both individual as well as innovative collaborative ethnographic research methods to promote a comparative perspective. The students will begin by each carrying out six months of ethnographic research in one city, before then sequentially carrying out 2 months of joint research in each city. Each student will therefore carry out 12 months of ethnographic research, and each city will be investigated ethnographically for a total of 8 months. I, along with the Senior Researcher, will visit the students in each city when they are carrying out their joint research, to provide insights from the other two GANGS sub-projects, help the PhD students share the benefits of their research at local dissemination events, and reinforce the comparative element of the project. This will allow for a better exploration of the differences and similarities across the three cities. On the other hand, by each being primarily focused on one city, the PhD students will have the chance to develop their own independent comprehension of their city's urban dynamics, and develop their own original line of investigation and analysis, necessary for earning a PhD degree. On the other hand, the collective stays in each city will allow the PhD students to exchange notes, ideas, and to develop a more holistic narrative together through which to apprehend the three cities comparatively. This collaborative innovation is also an attempt to transcend the idiosyncrasies of the traditional "Lone Ranger" model of ethnography – whereby ethnographic research results are considered non-replicable, because extremely contingent and highly dependent on an ethnographer's particular skills set – and establish a baseline form of research validation.

4.4 Coda

Together, the findings of the three GANGS sub-projects on "Gangs", "Gangsters", and "Ganglands" will provide exceptionally detailed, fine-grained, and unprecedently global and holistic insights on how and why gangs emerge and evolve, under what urban conditions, and why individuals join and leave them. The perspectives from the three sub-projects will feed into a major monograph to be written by the PI that will draw on the different lines of inquiry to propose innovative, comparative, and multi-scalar analytical tools through which to re-think our understandings of gangs, gangsters, and ganglands across the world.

4.5 Ethical considerations

Any ethnographic research involving gangs obviously raises considerable ethical issues, whether in relation to data gathering, processing, or presentation. Research will inevitably involve observation of human beings engaging in illegal activities, interviewing about personal and sensitive issues, and in the case of the GANGS project, much of the data collection will also take place in developing countries. None of these issues are insurmountable, especially if ethnographic fieldwork is viewed first and foremost "as a dialogic *ongoing process* based on an *ethical relationship* with research participants" (Sluka, 2015: 120). The ethical foundation of the GANGS project is *non-maleficence*, or doing no harm, and protecting the safety, dignity, and privacy of research participants, both on an individual and a group level, will be a prime concern at all times. Because harm often occurs unintentionally and is multidimensional, the project will also actively integrate a process of constant reflection about ethics throughout its duration, including through the regular feedback of the IAC, while project workshops and conferences will all integrate sessions specifically on ethics.

All of the project's activities will follow the Code of Ethics drawn up by the American Anthropological Association (AAA) – one of the most comprehensive in the field – and will also adhere to national guidelines for ethics in social science research when doing fieldwork, as well as the Graduate

Institute of International and Development Studies' ethics, integrity, and research data management protocols. The latter provide clear guidelines regarding informed consent, the protection of both data and research participants, as well as data storage. These will be further strengthened by the fact that the GANGS project is built around researchers with solid social, cultural and linguistic knowledge of the fieldwork sites in question. Building on the PI and senior researcher's 20-year experiences of successfully conducting ethnographic research on gangs, crime, and political violence in Nicaragua and South Africa, will allow the project to anticipate many ethical quandaries, determine the potential impact of research endeavours, and assist in coherently planning fieldwork so that it respects social and cultural sensitivities and does not endanger vulnerable groups. In particular, in the latter regard, while we know that the members of the gangs, we will study tend to range between 14 and 25 years of age, we will focus our attention only on those aged 18 and over.

My previous experience and accumulated knowledge will also enable the GANGS project to anticipate sensitive issues such as the limits of participant observation and the risks of complicity (see Bourgois, 1995), as well as the frequently highly situational nature of ethics in the field (see Rodgers, 2007). I know for example from my previous experiences that written forms of consent are generally not possible to obtain from gang members, so we will document verbal consent instead. This means that it will be critical to explain the GANGS project's aims and purpose in a manner that is fully intelligible to all research participants, as well as the fact that participation in the research will be voluntary and that they will have the possibility to withdraw from the research at any time during an interview or during the project as a whole. This is particularly important considering that while gangs can obviously be seen to be ethically problematic from a societal point of view – although when they are conceived as instances of resistance to forms of oppression or structural violence (see Fanon, 1990), this becomes more ambiguous – their generally subaltern status and antagonistic relationship with the authorities means that they can also be considered a very vulnerable category of person.

Interviewing gang members about their lives, activities, and decisions obviously entails collecting sensitive personal data, and we will always prioritise our participants' safety. During fieldwork, interviews will be uploaded on secure internet platforms and subsequently deleted from computers and recorders in the field, and field notes will be kept in encrypted files or coded notebooks. Within project publications, specific names, places and events that can be used to identify individuals will be omitted or veiled, and all research participants will be pseudonymized. All sensitive material will be stored post-fieldwork in accordance with the Graduate Institute's research data storage protocol, and made publicly available on the basis of the credo "open when possible, closed when necessary". This will obviously have consequences for the extent to which the GANGS project can comply with EU data-sharing guidelines, as some of the material collected will clearly be too sensitive to be made openly accessible, and some might even be too sensitive to be stored. These are decisions that need to be balanced with the fact that the GANGS project investigates issues that are of larger societal concern. Many insights will be potentially beneficial for the societies researched, and there is therefore an ethical imperative to convey our findings to a wider audience. This is particularly important in relation to the low and lower middle-income countries of Nicaragua and South Africa, but applies equally to France, and we have planned on feedback workshops to engage in dialogue with local practitioners, planners and researchers, and disseminate our research in all of these contexts (as well as international conferences). Another critical issue here concerns representation. Gangs are frequently represented in alarmist and stereotypical manners, and we will pay particular attention to avoid such depictions. Indeed, one of the explicit aims of the GANGS project is to contribute to humanizing gangs and gangsters in order to combat their vilification.

Finally, studying gangs can obviously be a potentially dangerous endeavour for researchers. The PI and senior researcher both have long track records of successfully and safely carrying out ethnographic research on the topic in their respective research contexts, and will draw on this knowledge in order to carry out regular risk assessments, particularly in relation to introducing new investigators (each other) into their respective long-term research contexts. We have both shown that gang research in Nicaragua and South Africa to be possible previously, and we have both have long-standing relationships with the communities, families and the gang members we are proposing to work with, which ultimately will be the best guarantee of safety. The collaborative nature of the research in Marseille, as well as between the PhDs – even if the latter's research will not engage directly with gangs – is an added means through which to minimize practical safety risks. Such practical concerns will furthermore be constantly reflected upon retrospectively after each stage of fieldwork.

5.0 Timetable of project activities

The GANGS project will begin with a public launch event in February 2019, which will include keynote contributions by IAC members Javier Auyero, Philippe Bourgois, and Mo Hume. This will be combined with a methodological workshop to prepare the first phase of the "Gangs" sub-project. In addition to the PI and the senior researcher, the entire GANGS project IAC will participate. The PI and senior researcher will then carry out two rounds of collaborative ethnographic research in Nicaragua and South Africa, first in 2019 and 2020, and then in 2023. In between the two periods of fieldwork, the PI, the senior researcher, and the entire GANGS project IAC will participate in an intermediate comparison workshop in order to consider the developing comparison (IAC keynote speaker: Gareth A. Jones). The second phase of the "Gangs" sub-project will begin with the postdoc's fieldwork starting in April 2021, as well as the PI and Senior Researcher's joint fieldwork in Marseille in August 2021, followed by 5 months of fieldwork in January-May 2022. The PI, senior researcher, postdoc, and the entire GANGS project IAC will also participate in a conceptual workshop in Marseille during this period, along with representatives from local research institutions. After the second period of Nicaragua-South Africa fieldwork in 2023, two feedback meetings will be held in Nicaragua and South Africa, respectively at Managua's Universidad Centroamericana (UCA) and the University of Cape Town, to disseminate preliminary results and benefit from exchanges with local academics. The sub-project will culminate with a dissemination workshop in Marseille in 2023 with academics, policy-makers, and other interested stake-holders. Results of the Managua-Cape Town-Marseille research will be presented at international conference (e.g., EASA, RC21) in mid-2022 and 2023. The "Gangs" project furthermore includes a series of writing retreats to write up research results collectively rather than separately, for the PI and the senior researcher in 2019 and 2020, and in 2021, 2022, and 2023 for the PI, senior researcher, and postdoc.

The "Gangsters" sub-project will begin with project participants carrying out their respective updating fieldwork between mid-2021 and mid-2022. A first group of participants will present at a first "Gang Lives" international workshop, to be held in Geneva in September 2022. A second group will present at a second "Gang Lives" international workshop to be held in Geneva in September 2023. Both of the conferences will involve keynote speakers (IAC members Marie-Hélène Bacqué and Robert Gay). The "Ganglands" sub-project is organized around 3 PhD studentships, which will begin in September 2019 and finish in November 2023. The PhD students will carry out 6 months of individual fieldwork in one of Marseille, Naples, and Algeciras between April-September 2021, and rotating 2-month stints of joint fieldwork in each city between October 2021-February 2022. The PI and Senior Researcher will visit the PhD students each city in the latter period.

As part of the PhD training, a GANGS seminar series will be organized regularly at the Graduate Institute between October-December 2019, 2020, and 2022. External speakers from Europe and internationally will be invited to present, and selected invitees also be asked to comment on the work of the PhD students. The PhD students will present the joint results of their "Ganglands" comparison at an international conference (e.g., RC21) in late 2023. The GANGS project will end with a public international conference on "Gangs, Gangsters, and Ganglands" that will take place in Geneva in March 2024, to disseminate findings and solidify the international collaborations that will have developed through the GANGS project. IAC members Scott Decker, Carles Feixa, and Kees Koonings will be the conference keynote speakers. At the same time, this conference will not only be about dissemination, but it will also contribute to developing new avenues for future research based on the analytical findings of the GANGS project, through deliberation and interaction with up to 20 leading global scholars who will be specially invited to participate. After the conference, the PI will participate in two dissemination events that will be organized in Brussels and Geneva, to highlight potential international policy-relevant lessons to be drawn from the GANGS project.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
January		SP1: Nicaragua Geneva workshop	SP1: Nicaragua-South Africa writing retreat 4 (virtual)	SP1: Marseille fieldwork 2 & IAC visit		SP1: General writing retreat 1
February	GANGS project launch &	SP1: Nicaragua fieldwork 1				

	methodological workshop					
March		SP1: South Africa fieldwork 2 (interrupted)			SP1: Nicaragua fieldwork 2 and feedback workshop (PI & SR) & SP2: Comparative life histories fieldwork (PI)	GANGS International Conference
April			SP3: PhDs begin fieldwork		SP1: South Africa fieldwork 2 and feedback workshop (PI & SR) & SP2: Comparative life histories fieldwork (SR)	SP1: General writing retreat 2
May	SP1: South Africa fieldwork 1		SP1: Nicaragua-South Africa writing retreat 5 (virtual)		SP1: Marseille-Nicaragua-South Africa writing retreat	GANGS dissemination events (Brussels)
June		SP1: Nicaragua-South Africa writing retreat 2 (virtual)			SP1: Marseille dissemination workshop	GANGS dissemination events (Geneva)
July			SP1: Marseille fieldwork 1	SP1: Marseille writing retreat 1	International conference participation (RC21)	
August	SP1: Nicaragua-South Africa writing retreat 1 SP1: Nicaragua-South Africa mid-term comparison workshop			International conference participation (EASA)		
September	SP3: PhDs begin	SP1: Nicaragua-South Africa writing retreat 3 (virtual)		SP2: Gang Lives international workshop 1	SP2: Gang Lives international workshop 2	
October	GANGS seminar series & SP3: November Violence & Gender research methodological workshop			GANGS seminar series & SP1: Marseille writing retreat 2		
November					SP3: PhDs finish	
December						

6.0 Impact, outputs and deliverables

The GANGS project aims to provide new knowledge and insights into global gang dynamics, and how and why gangs emerge and evolve under different conditions around the world. It includes a range of outputs, deliverables, and dissemination initiatives to share the findings and benefits of the research. These include:

- Conferences, workshops, or conference panels: The project involves a range of conferences, workshops, and conference panels that will variably aim to disseminate both information about the GANGS projects and its finding to academics, practitioners, and policy-makers. These will include organising three major international academic conferences: the two "Gang Lives" workshops, and the GANGS end-of-project conference. Specific events aimed at disseminating more policy-oriented findings of the GANGS project will also be organised in France, Nicaragua, and South Africa, to reach out to local practitioners and policy-makers, as well as Brussels and Geneva, to connect with international actors. Local feedback workshop with local academics will be organised in Nicaragua, South Africa, and Marseille, and GANGS project panels will be submitted to three major academic conference (AAA, EASA, RC21).
- Academic publications: The "Gangs" sub-project will lead to two monographs (one comparing gangs in Managua and Cape Town co-written by the PI and senior researcher, one on Marseille co-written by the PI, senior researcher, and the Marseille postdoc, and at least two journal articles (one methodological and one an overview article, co-written by the PI and the senior researcher). The "Gangsters" sub-project will give rise to a volume bringing together gang member life histories edited

by the PI, as well as a journal special issue. The PI will also write a methodological article on comparing gangster life histories. Finally, the "Ganglands" sub-project will lead to 3 doctoral theses, as well as sole-authored articles by each of the students and one co-written methodological article, while the PI will write an article re-conceptualising the notion of the "gangland". In addition, the PI will write an overarching monograph offering a global overview of gang dynamics. The articles will all be published Open Access, while the books will be submitted to Oxford University Press, with a view to having them published Open Access under the terms of a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 International license, similarly to recent volumes by Green (2016) or Andrews *et al*. (2017).

- Popular outputs: Gangs are a topic of major popular interest, and the PI will write a series of popular outputs reflecting the GANGS project's findings, to be submitted to general public-oriented magazines, newspapers and blogs such as *New Left Review*, *The Guardian*, *Libération*, *Courrier International*, or *The Conversation* (UK and France), for example, as well selected outlets in Nicaragua and South Africa. In addition, the project will explore publishing some of the "Gangsters" life histories in a more popular medium (e.g., comic books, podcasts).
- Policy outputs: Two specially targeted policy briefs will be written, one on the dynamics of gangs in Marseille for a dual audience of the Marseille municipal authorities and local NGOs and associations, and the other distilling the key policy findings of the GANGS project for global policy-makers at international organisations in Brussels and Geneva.
- Website: The GANGS project will establish a dedicated interactive website. Regular postings covering research updates, podcasts from the field, notices of events and publications, and a blog will all be essential elements of the website. This will include a dedicated stream on research ethics. Generally, the aim will be for the GANGS project website to become a one-stop hub resource for academics, especially students, policy-makers, think-tanks, NGOs and others, working on gangs, and it will also collate information about institutions, research, and policies on the topic.

7.0 Resources (including project costs)

The PI will dedicate 60% of his time over the whole duration of the research project. 80% of the PI's working time will be spent in an EU Member State or Associated Country. The timetable of the project has also been organised so that the PI can concentrate most of their (reduced) teaching duties between September-December during the project, allowing them to focus exclusively on the GANGS project for three quarters of the year.

Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (Fondation pour l'Institute de hautes études internationales et du développement) :

Personnel: Staff costs have been calculated according to the Graduate Institute's salary scales for the PI, postdoc, PhD students, and student assistant. The postdoc will be appointed on a 70% basis for 2 years, with a possible extension of up to a year depending on budgetary available. The three PhD students will be appointed on a 100% basis for 4 years, with a further six months depending on budgetary availability, starting in September 2019. Student assistance will be contracted on a 20% basis for the whole duration of the project to help organize and coordinate workshops and conferences, make travel arrangements, and manage the project website.

Travel: Costs associated with the ethnographic fieldwork for the "Gangs", the "Gangsters" and the "Gangland" sub-projects include travel, accommodation and subsistence. The PI and Senior Research will carry out a total of 4 months of ethnographic research in Managua and Cape Town and 6 months in Marseille. The PhD Students will each carry out at total of 12 months of fieldwork in Algeciras, Marseille, and Naples. This category also includes travel and accommodation costs for the IAC members and the senior researcher related to the project launch event and associated methodological workshop, intermediate comparative workshop, and Marseille conceptual workshop (including travel and accommodation for the PI, the Postdoc and PhD Students). The travel, accommodation, and subsistence costs for the research team for the Nicaragua and South Africa feedback and the Marseille dissemination workshops (for the "Gangs" sub-project), the PhD feedback events in Naples, Algeciras, and Marseille, and the GANGS project dissemination events in Brussels and Geneva are also included in this category. It also includes the costs of the PI and Senior Researcher travelling to Marseille, Algeciras, and Naples to visit the PhD students.

Six in person 1-week writing retreats have been budgeted as well as the costs of inviting around 8 speakers per year for the GANGS seminar series. The travel and accommodation costs of the two "Gang Lives" conferences to take place in Geneva over 3 days, convening the international advisory committee and the 28 "Gangsters" sub-project researchers, as well as the end of project international GANGS conference have also been included. Participation in one international conference (e.g., AAA) for the PI and senior researcher, and two European conferences for the PI, senior researcher, and postdoc (e.g., EASA), and for the PI, senior researcher, postdoc and PhD students (e.g., RC21) are planned. Cost include travel, accommodation, subsistence as well as conference fees.

Consumables: Secure hard drives, digital voice recorders, encryption and referencing programmes needed for fieldwork are included in this category.

Publication: Costs associated with setting up the project website, developing multimedia content, Open Access publications (books and articles), copy-editing and indexing of 3 monographs and one edited volume, and editing, layout, and printing of two policy briefs have been included.

Other costs: This category includes costs to cover the final project audit, as well as translation, field assistance (including helping to organise interviews, providing transportation, carrying out mapping exercises, keeping diaries, facilitating connections to specific individuals, obtaining local permissions, etc.), and security-related costs for the ethnographic fieldwork. Finally, the catering and venue costs for the above-mentioned conferences, workshops, and seminars organized by the project are also included in this category.

Subcontracting: 28 researchers from around the world will be subcontracted to participate in the "Gangsters" sub-project on a non-stipendiary basis, but each receiving a fixed sum of €4,000 to cover their fieldwork costs. The costs of €16,000 to subcontract Dr. Corentin Cohen to carry out a comparative study of Nigerian gang networks across Marseille, Naples, and Algeciras, are also included in this budgetary category.

Aalborg University:

Personnel: Costs have been calculated according to the Aalborg University's salary scales for the senior researcher. The senior researcher will be involved on a 30% basis for years 1-5 of the project. The responsibilities of the senior researcher are detailed in the Consortium Agreement between the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies and Aalborg University.

8.0 References

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