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EUROGANG PROGRAM MANUAL

Background, development, and use of the Eurogang instruments in multi-site, multi-method comparative research

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1. The Eurogang Program

1.1 Introduction

This "Eurogang Manual" contains information about the background of the Eurogang Program of Research and offers additional guidelines for the use of the Eurogang instruments. It is intended as a companion to the Eurogang instruments, which are available for viewing at http://www.umsl.edu/~ccj/eurogang/instruments.htm. This manual is provided as an extra service to researchers who want to conduct comparative research on street gangs or troublesome youth groups.

The idea for this manual developed during a Eurogang meeting in Los Angeles that was held in May 2008. This meeting, initiated by Malcolm Klein, was intended to introduce new scholars to the program and its instruments, and to discuss the possibilities and pitfalls of doing cross-national, comparative research. Members of the steering committee and the instrument working group leaders gave several presentations and introductions. In addition, brainstorm sessions were held with the participants to get an overview of methodological problems and solutions of cross-national comparative research on gangs.[1] At the end of this fruitful and vibrant meeting, we decided that the material (powerpoints, presentations, and notes) could be worked into a document that would be a complement to the instruments on the website. The current manual is the result of this work.

We start this document by providing an overview of the background of the Eurogang Program and its basic ideas. A short historical overview is given, with special attention to the meetings and workshops that were held over the course of the past decade. Following this, the principle agreements of our research program are presented and a short overview of the available instruments is provided.

The second chapter addresses our experiences and suggestions regarding the complex task of doing comparative research on street gangs and troublesome youth groups in different countries. It covers several methodological problems and dilemmas one confronts while setting up such a study and offers several options for resolving these issues. It also describes the practical barriers that almost inevitably will occur during such a study. Last but not least, the chapter delves into ethical problems and data security issues that must be addressed during a comparative gang study.

The third chapter elaborates on each of the instruments that are developed thus far.[2] Each of the sections describes the background and developmental history of the instrument, addresses the philosophy behind it, and offers practical guidelines for using the instruments in an actual study. The chapter starts with the fundamental Definition "Instrument" that provides the foundation for all other instruments. The chapter then progresses from the broad and general city-level instruments (the City-Level Instrument, the Expert Survey, and the Prevention and Intervention Inventory) to focused instruments on the individual and group level (the Youth Survey and the Ethnography Guidelines). We conclude this chapter with information about the form that users of the instruments are required to complete and give a description of the instruments' use thus far.

[1] The authors of this manual thank the other participants of the workshop for their enthusiasm and cooperation. Their input contributed importantly to the writing process. We also thank Malcolm Klein for his comments on the draft of this manuscript.

[2] In the future, new instruments may be added, and the manual may be updated.

1.2 History of the Eurogang Research Program

Eurogang got its start in a small conference room in the béguinage[3] in Leuven, Belgium, following a conference on restorative justice held in 1997. After publishing an exploratory article about the presence of gangs in Europe (Klein, 1996), Malcom Klein convened a small group of scholars that had responded to his invitation to discuss how the study of street gangs in Europe might be conducted. Another exploratory meeting was held later that year in San Diego, California.

Following the enthusiastic response of researchers who were present at these meetings, and from others who were unable to attend, a *first* Eurogang workshop was organized in Schmitten, Germany in September, 1998. About forty people from thirteen nations attended Eurogang I. Guided by the presentations of prepared papers, meeting participants learned about state of the art gang research in the United States (US) and Europe, as well as a number of European studies of other youth groups that might or might not be called street gangs. These presentations acted as a catalyst for the first of many lengthy discussions about gang definitions and research methods. Perhaps the primary issue at this meeting was the sensitivity to the topic of gang existence in Europe: whether gangs existed in Europe. Some observers did not see the entities they expected based on sensationalized, media-driven accounts of US gangs. Adding to that were the understandable concerns that acknowledgement of European gangs might cause a "moral panic" that could stimulate a suppressive over-reaction to the phenomenon. Nevertheless, there were many reports about troublesome youth groups that were recognized as clear examples of "street gangs" by the American gang researchers present at the meeting.

Two important outcomes resulted from the Schmitten workshop. First was the agreement to compile the presented papers and a few others into a published volume (Klein, Kerner, Maxson, & Weitekamp, 2001). The second major product was a spirit of enthusiasm for fostering systematic research on gangs in Europe. This has provided the basis for everything that has resulted from the Eurogang Program until now: at least eight more workshops, numerous informal meetings and panels at professional conferences, the collaborative development of a package of instruments, two additional published volumes of research, and several funding applications for systematic, cross-national, multi-method studies of street gangs in Europe.

During this first meeting, an initial research design was suggested, embracing multiple methods of gathering information about gangs, a commitment to implementing standardized designs across multiple sites, and a multi-layered design that would provide city- and neighborhood-level contextual information to the more detailed accounts of gangs and youth groups. The fundamental characteristics of the Eurogang group process were also evident at this first workshop: numerous intense discussions of core issues in research and policy, respect for different perspectives, and a furtherance of social integration and communication among researchers. The Eurogang group's operating principles are detailed more formally in the following section 1.3.

The *second* workshop was held in 1999 in Oslo, Norway. This meeting was pivotal in producing the organizational framework that would propel the methodological development of the instrument packages. Five instrument-based working groups were formed: city level descriptors, expert survey, youth survey, ethnography, and a program inventory. An additional group agreed to hammer out the thorny definitional issues and another took responsibility for seeking out funding opportunities for further meetings and research. There

[3] Lacking suitable men following the Crusades, single women chose to live in communities called beguinages.

was not much enthusiasm for a proposed workgroup on archival methods (using police or judicial data), and subsequent attempts to promote interest have not been successful until now.

Oslo meeting participants aligned themselves with at least one, and sometimes several, workgroups. Group facilitators volunteered to guide the groups toward draft instruments. Those interested in participating that were not in attendance at the Oslo meeting were quickly enlisted. Within each working group, between ten and eighteen individuals participated in the instrument development discussions during the most active periods. It was understood that although much of the work would be accomplished within the working groups, it was critical to adopt common measures across different instruments. Therefore, the final decisions had to be adopted in plenary sessions. The initial work of the groups was given extra momentum by the convening of the *third* Eurogang workshop in Leuven, Belgium, that was held only a couple of weeks after the Oslo meeting. A primary discussion that emerged during this meeting revolved around whether multi-investigator, multi-site, systematic ethnography was possible, or desirable. The ethnography working group tentatively agreed to develop guidelines for ethnographic researchers rather than the more specific instruments that were in development in the city, expert, and youth workgroups. After this meeting, instruments were developed further using electronic mail communications.

Initial drafts of most of the instruments were introduced and discussed at the *fourth* Eurogang workshop that was held in the autumn of 2000 in the Netherlands, at the North Sea resort town of Egmond aan Zee. During this meeting, attention focused on the content of the instruments. Each instrument working group derived a series of topics they thought important to cover. Furthermore, a first attempt was made to arrive at a common definition of gangs/troublesome youth groups, the subject of study within the Eurogang Program.

The following workshops, the *fifth* and the *sixth* Eurogang meetings, were very intensive. Both were held at the Correctional Training Facility of Bavaria in Straubing, Germany in the summers of 2002 and 2003. During the *fifth* Eurogang meeting, agreement was reached (after lengthy discussions) about a consensus Eurogang definition that would be adopted in Eurogang work. The first drafts of the instruments were elaborated into complete questionnaires and protocols. Recognizing that not all topics could be included in all instruments, discussion was initiated to clarify which topics or items fell within a first level of "must" include (i.e., items that captured the definitional elements of a street gang), a second level of "should" include (i.e., elements which prior research revealed were common descriptors of gangs), and third level of variables that would be "useful" to include (i.e., variables or measures that prior research indicated were correlates of gang involvement).

The *sixth* Eurogang meeting served as a platform to review the results of pre-tests of successive versions of the instruments, discuss translation issues, coordinate common measures across different instruments, and refine the content of the instruments. In addition, a draft of a gang prevention or intervention program inventory was introduced. During these meetings, participants began to address the issue of use policies for the instruments. Would use be limited to the Eurogang participants who had worked so hard to develop them, or would we make the instruments available to all who might want to use them? If there was free access, how could we learn from others' experiences to refine the instruments? Another topic of discussion concerned the way in which different research traditions and different locations might handle informed consent procedures. Finally, the management of the Eurogang electronic listserve and maintenance of official membership was lodged at the University of Tübingen under the direction of Hans Juergen Kerner. Currently, there are over two hundred subscribers. The Eurogang website (www.umsl.edu/~ccj/eurogang/euroganghome.htm), originally set up by Tore Björgo from Oslo, now resides at the University of Missouri, St. Louis, under the direction of Finn Esbensen.

During both meetings in Straubing, several presentations were given which employed the Eurogang definition of gang/troublesome youth group and used several of the instruments (sometimes in earlier versions). A number of these presentations, together with a few additional chapters, were combined into the second volume of Eurogang research (Decker & Weerman, 2005).

The *seventh* Eurogang workshop was held in 2004, for the first time in the US in the city of Albany, New York. This meeting was partly focused on a substantive issue: the role of violence in street gangs. Findings presented at this meeting were published in the European Journal of Criminology (Klein, Weerman, & Thornberry, 2006). Besides the substantive focus on violence, results of a final round of pre-tests were discussed. The participants concluded that the instruments should be deemed "final" and made available to any interested researcher. Subsequently, the five instruments and the definitions essay were posted on the Eurogang website but electronic access remains contingent upon contact with the Eurogang's "Use Master" so that the experience with the instruments can be tracked (see description in section 3.7).

The Albany workshop marked the close of the instrument development phase of the Eurogang Research Program and the beginning of Phase II, wherein Eurogang participants shifted focus to the conceptual and empirical issues that engage us as researchers and scholars. This change was evident in the *eighth* Eurogang workshop held in May, 2005 in the Basque city of Oñati in Spain. This meeting included substantive presentations that were focused on the issues of migration and ethnicity. Several of these presentations, together with others, were combined into the third volume of Eurogang research (van Gemert, Peterson, & Lien, 2008).

Other substantive research was presented at the two Eurogang panels that were organized alongside the 2006 European Society of Criminology (ESC) meeting in Tübingen, Germany (2006). A *ninth* Eurogang workshop was convened in Los Angeles, California in May, 2008. Rather than focusing on furthering the instruments and the Eurogang research agenda, this workshop had the purpose of raising the visibility of the Eurogang Program to US researchers and engaging a new generation of young scholars with Eurogang activities. To support these aims, a monograph was written which exemplifies many of the issues raised in this manual (Klein, 2008).

A possible third phase of Eurogang efforts reflects our original purpose to foster multi-method, comparative research on street gangs. Our research design is ambitious and expensive to execute. Eurogang participants have gathered on two occasions, in Amsterdam, the Netherlands in 2000 and in Manchester, England in 2007, to develop study research designs and write research proposals. We have submitted three applications for research funding to the European Union, but have not yet secured the resources to implement the intended study design of the Eurogang Research Program. However, hopes remain that funds will be found for a large scale comparative study. When granted, this would herald the real beginning of Eurogang's Phase III.

1.3 Eurogang "Principles"

Several core "principles" represent the foundation of the Eurogang Program. These were evident at the first meeting in Schmitten and represent a consensus view of the goals and objectives of the group, as well as our operating assumptions.

First, the group is committed to promoting systematic, empirical research on street gangs. As Maxson notes in the first Eurogang volume, the intent is to support "a coordinated process that can develop useful descriptions of European street gangs in such a manner that

similarities and differences can reliably and validly be identified and not be undermined by methodological variations" (Maxson, 2001: 304). Implicit in this principle is the recognition that without common measures, comparisons are threatened by the specter of measurement bias. On an operational level, this means that instrument development, including pretesting procedures, needs to occur along similar lines despite location (as much as is appropriate for different methods). Also, in adopting the instruments to different languages, it is important to include independent back translations so that variations in language interpretations can be identified.

A second basic principle of the group is to be explicitly comparative. We embrace the assumption that knowledge is best accumulated when research designs explicitly compare gang to nongang youth, youth in multiple neighborhoods or communities, gang situations in multiple cities and towns, and in multiple countries.

Third, we note that while researchers have preferences and skill sets associated with particular methods, we believe that building knowledge about gangs can best proceed with a multi-method approach. We acknowledge the multiple sources of important information and the need for broad, descriptive approaches, as well as rich qualitative methods. Information about gangs is best framed within the larger context of social, political, and demographic arrangements within a particular locale. Quantitative methods conducted with larger samples enable generalization of results with regard to characteristics of gangs and gang members, while qualitative or ethnographic methods provide a more detailed in-depth insight into the structure and dynamics of gangs.

Notwithstanding these first three principles, the group recognizes the need for flexible designs to incorporate individual researcher interests as well as place-specific issues. We recognize that researchers must limit the scope of their inquiries, and thus we only seek to provide direction for core elements that are useful in completing comparative gang research. The preservation of the exact wording of the definitional elements is critical to the goal of compiling comparative information. It is the group's intent to be inclusive and dynamic. Our core objective is to foster research and researcher collaborations. We want to encourage interest in gang research by young scholars, as well as established colleagues that might wish to take a new direction to their research. We welcome new members and recognize that the design of the research needs to be dynamic according to changes in interests among members.

Another principle adopted from the early stages of the Eurogang process was the recognition of the importance of separating street gangs from other forms of law-violating youth groups, and to conduct research to understand better the difference between them. The development of the Eurogang consensus definition was an attempt to further this type of inquiry.

Finally, the Eurogang network assumes that the expansion of comparative, systematic research on street gangs will produce information that can be beneficial for the development of policy and programs. We believe that responses to gangs should be built properly upon empirical evidence about the nature and dynamics of gang activity.

1.4 A Short Overview of the Eurogang Instruments

Along with the fundamental Definition "Instrument" that underlies all other instruments, five instruments have been developed and pre-tested. Here, the nature of these five instruments is introduced. The background and practical use of these instruments will be elaborated on in Chapter 3.

City-Level Instrument: This consists of a table containing a list of suggested city or neighborhood level variables. These variables may organize the collection of data/information to provide a good overview of the context of street gangs/troublesome youth groups in one location. It can also be used as an inventory of the availability of city-level information at different research sites.

Expert Survey: This compact questionnaire can be used to conduct a survey or interview (telephone or in-person) with local "experts" on the presence of street gangs/troublesome youth groups. These experts may be police officers, youth workers, or anybody else who has a good knowledge about the gangs in a neighborhood or city. The questionnaire covers the existence of gangs according to the Eurogang definition, information about the demographics and other characteristics of these gangs, and the "gang type" to which they belong. It provides a general picture of the amount and nature of gangs in a certain area.

Prevention and Intervention Inventory: This short questionnaire can be used to collect information about prevention and intervention programs or measures in a certain neighborhood or city. The items deal with the existence of special programs, the type of prevention or intervention, and possible evaluation efforts. It can be administered to prevention/intervention program administrators or other (local) policy makers. It is also possible to combine it with the Expert Survey.

Youth Survey: This extensive questionnaire can be used to collect quantitative individual data from young people. The Youth Survey is designed to be administered in classrooms in secondary schools using paper and pencil methods, but it can also be used in other ways (e.g., using community or institutional samples). Several items are used to determine whether respondents belong to a gang/troublesome youth group according to the Eurogang definition. Additional items cover structural and cultural characteristics of the group to which respondents belong.

Ethnography Guidelines: A document containing guidelines and advice to collect qualitative information on one or more street gangs/troublesome youth groups using ethnographic approaches. One part of the document offers methods and advice about fieldwork that is needed to do one or more case studies of gangs. This part is flexible, as researchers may prefer different methods (observational methods and/or in-depth interviews with gang members or key informants). Another part of the document offers a list of topics that needs to be addressed in a Eurogang ethnographic research project. These topics are focused on group characteristics, gang culture, individual members, and the historical and local context of the gang under study.

2. Doing Comparative Gang Research

2.1 Introduction

Conducting multi-method, multi-site gang research is a challenging and complex task. First, it is difficult to combine different methods and instruments in one study. It is a challenge to organize data collection in such a way that one can make general statements about subjects and questions, particularly when very different approaches of data collection are used. This is most pressing when the researcher wants to combine qualitative and quantitative data, but it can also be problematic when the data are collected at different levels of measurement (e.g., city-wide and individual). Equally difficult is the combination of different sites of research. Every research location has its own characteristics. The challenge here is to find a way to maintain comparability over different places and cultures, but at the same time optimize the data collection for the local situation and circumstances. Last but not least, doing gang research in itself is already challenging. Gang members are involved in illegal and relatively secretive behavior, which makes it more difficult than usual to get access to the research population, and to obtain valid and reliable data. There are also ethical issues and privacy problems that must be resolved.

In this chapter, we discuss several problems and dilemmas that a researcher might encounter when conducting comparative gang research within the Eurogang tradition. We offer several possible solutions, some of which are drawn from our experiences while others are simply suggestions for future research. Some of the research strategies we suggest are very ambitious and would result in a "dream study"; other strategies are more practical and realistic. The chapter starts with a section on general design issues of comparative gang research with special emphasis on choices that have to be made with regard to sampling. This is followed by a list of practical barriers and problems that may occur in multi-site gang research. The chapter concludes with a thorough discussion of ethical issues and data security considerations in gang research.

2.2 Design Issues and Sampling Choices

Imagine that a researcher - or more likely a research team or an international collaborative group of scholars - wants to conduct a comparative gang study in two countries. For example, they want to compare the gang situation in the US and a European country. Probably, the researchers want to gather as much information as possible that can be used to compare these two vastly different areas (e.g., differing history, culture, geography, and/or demography). However, the possibilities are limited by the available means of research in terms of money, time, and people. The researchers must optimize the balance between what is practical and what is preferable. In the following, we will highlight several decisions that must be made in designing a comparative gang study.

General purpose and design of a study

The first and most basic decision is about the purpose and research questions of the study. Researchers have a wide range of interests, and may choose to pursue various topics. However, very ambitious research questions require more extensive research designs (and

more larger investments of time and money), and it is important to formulate reachable goals for a comparative study.

An example of a modest research question is one that focuses on the prevalence of street gangs or troublesome youth groups in the locations of research. To investigate this, it would be necessary to use either the Expert Survey or the Youth Survey among a sample that is representative of both locations of research. It is of course preferable to employ both instruments, since they offer access to different sources of information. The Expert Survey can offer a city-wide overview of street gangs that are clearly visible in the public area. The Youth Survey offers information about less visible youth groups, but it is usually more difficult to get a sample that covers the whole city, especially the most problematic gang youths.

It is also possible to focus on individual youth gang members and their characteristics. The Youth Survey would be a very helpful instrument to get a gross estimate of the proportion of youth that are involved in youth gangs, provided that the sample is relatively representative of the population of interest. The Youth Survey is also very well suited to investigate the causes and correlates of gang membership, because it covers many independent (risk factors) and dependent (deviant behavior) variables. Conducting an ethnographic study would add more in-depth information about the background and lifestyle of gang members. Although this instrument is not aimed at getting a representative view of gangs and gang members, usually it results in profound insights into the processes that lead to gang formation and membership, and the codes and cultural values that play a role in sustaining or promoting gang life.

Researchers may also be interested in comparing the nature and characteristics of gangs in different places. Again, it would be preferable to use multiple methods to get a triangulated and more complete impression of street gangs in different places, although separate instruments also offer valuable information. The Expert Survey can give a general impression about the types of gangs that are present in a certain area, especially whether there are traditional (or "classic"), neo-traditional, compressed, collective, or specialty gangs (the typologies developed by Maxson & Klein, 1995). The Youth Survey can offer comparative data about elements that are present in gangs and troublesome youth groups about which respondents are reporting. In particular, structural and organizational features are covered by the questionnaire, including the size and make-up of the gang, whether the group has its own colors, symbols, and rituals, and whether there is leadership in the group. Ethnography can offer more in-depth qualitative information on the culture of the gangs, expectations of members for each other, and the way that gang members interact with each other and the surrounding neighborhood.

A more ambitious research design would include the wider societal context of gangs and troublesome youth groups. Researchers might be interested in the role of neighborhood or city characteristics, the impact of social exclusion and social support policies in different societies, or in the use of different prevention and intervention strategies in multiple locations. These kinds of questions would necessitate the inclusion of two contextual Eurogang instruments: the City-Level Instrument and the Prevention and Intervention Inventory.

Finally, one could strive to conduct a kind of "dream study" in which gangs and potential gang members are followed over time. This would require longitudinal data collection, in which several instruments are used repeatedly in different locations. Such a study might shed more light on the developmental factors that lead to gang membership, changes that occur over time within gangs, and the impact of policy changes or intervention programs on gangs and the behavior of gang members.

Selection of research locations

The second basic question is about the locations where a comparative gang study would take place. In case of a cross-national comparison, the usual strategy is to conduct the study in one or more cities in each country. The big challenge is to pick cities that make legitimate comparisons possible. If one were to pick a metropolis in one country and a rural village in the other, comparisons clearly would be biased. But how can we optimize comparability across locations?

One strategy is to match cities on certain key characteristics. That means that for each country, a city would be chosen with, for example, roughly the same population size, age distribution, proportion of immigrants, and unemployment. The more criteria included in the matching procedure, the more difficult it is to find two cities that are comparable in all respects. However, if the primary purpose of the study would be to compare countries instead of cities, it is not necessary to find completely similar cities.

A more straightforward strategy would be to choose two cities that are more or less representative of a country. Of course, it is difficult to find a city that is completely representative of a whole nation. A more pragmatic approach for this would be to decide upon the type of location in both countries (for example, a large or medium sized city) and then try to find a place that is not at odds with what is usual in a country. Often, researchers select a location where they are based or that is nearby. That can be fine, but it must not depart strongly from the locations from another country with which one wishes to make comparisons.

Another, more ambitious, strategy is to include multiple locations in each country that are representative of different sized cities. In that way, the researcher can also explore whether there are differences within a country that may be even more important than differences between countries. Of course, this is an expensive and time consuming strategy, but it can offer important insights into street gangs at different locations.

Sampling considerations

The third question that must be considered is about sample selection and sample size. The choices depend on the purpose of the study and the instruments to be used in the research design. Several general remarks can be offered about each Eurogang instrument.

With regard to the *Expert Survey*, the general advice is to interview as many key persons as possible to get a good and validated overview of the gang situation at the chosen site. This depends partly on the size of the city; a small village or one neighborhood would require just several of the local experts, but a medium sized or large city would require many more experts, divided over different areas and neighborhoods. Who the experts are depends on the local situation. In the US, there are specialized gang units in law enforcement agencies that can be approached. In European countries, this is usually not the case. There, neighborhood or youth officers may be approached, as well as local social workers. However, it is important to realize that the answers of the experts are not always objective and can say more about their personal opinions than of the local situation. Gang unit cops will definitely give a different picture of local youth gangs than social workers, despite the fact that they may be talking about the same groups. Therefore, it is beneficial to either interview different types of experts in each area, or to match the type of experts that are interviewed in different research sites.

Because the *Prevention and Intervention Inventory* also involves experts, the same considerations may apply. The general guideline here is to find as many experts as needed to get a complete overview of the prevention and intervention efforts in a particular location. There is one important additional problem with this instrument, which has to do with the general social policies in different societies. In the US, for example, gang problems and the underlying socio-economic causes often are tackled by designing special intervention programs. These programs frequently include social measures to support poor families, to increase job availability for young persons, or to enhance education and activities for young people. In many European countries, these kinds of measures are already part of the general social policy or existing programs of the local government. Therefore, to get a valid comparison, it would be wise not to limit oneself to an inventory of special prevention and intervention programs, but to include also general policing strategies and social policies of a city or country.

Choosing a sample for the *Youth Survey* can be more complicated. First, a researcher has to decide whether a representative sample is needed. A representative sample would enable researchers to estimate prevalence of gang membership among young people in a particular city or country. However, this is difficult to achieve. Often one has to be satisfied with a less optimal sample for the survey, for example, a sample that exclusively consists of a "high-risk" population (e.g., students attending schools in relatively poor neighborhoods). Prevalence figures in such a sample would be biased, but it would still be possible to get an impression of gang characteristics and to relate a broad range of risk factors and deviant behavior to gang membership. It might also be an option to limit the Youth Survey to one or two neighborhoods that are targeted for ethnographic data collection (if that is part of the study design). That might enable the researcher to compare and enrich the quantitative survey data with qualitative fieldwork material. The survey also may be used to recruit respondents for qualitative interviews that become part of an ethnography.

Another choice that must be made with regard to the Youth Survey involves the age of the respondents. In general, it is not necessary to have respondents from all ages, though it would be preferable to have an age-range as wide as possible. Most important is that the sample includes a substantive portion of youths that have reached ages at which they are likely to have experiences with gangs or troublesome youth groups. In practice, researchers often rely on middle and high schools to recruit their respondents. The lower age bound for a sample would then be the starting age of secondary education. The upper bound may depend on the last grade of secondary education. It is also very important to look at compulsory education laws and make sure that the samples in different research locations have about the same age ranges.

The final choice that must be made is the size of the sample. To get reasonably reliable prevalence estimates of gang membership, one needs at least several hundred respondents, preferably more than 500. Because researchers want to divide their sample into categories (e.g., boys and girls), and to estimate correlations and effect sizes, large samples are required. The larger a sample, the higher the statistical power, providing a greater possibility to detect correlations and differences between subgroups. In general, useful quantitative samples in criminological research on juvenile crime consist of several hundred respondents, and the largest ones range between 1,000 and 4,000. However, the size of a sample also depends on the number of schools that are willing to take part in the study and the amount of money and time that is available to the researchers.

Although it is not a quantitative instrument, the *Ethnography Guidelines* require thinking about sample selection. The primary issue here is usually which particular gang(s) or gang area one needs to study. Ethnographers often choose one particular gang as the focus of their fieldwork. They may be tempted to choose the most remarkable, violent, and media-

covered group as their subject. This can be very interesting and important, but it may result in a description of gangs that is far from representative for a city or neighborhood. For comparative purposes, it would be advisable to choose one or more troublesome youth groups that are more representative for an area. This is not an easy task, since the researchers often do not know the characteristics of a group beforehand. However, the results from an Expert Survey (and to a lesser extent from the Youth Survey) may offer clues for suitable locations and groups. It also is possible to include several gangs as the focus of ethnographic research, to get a more complete coverage of the different types of gangs in an area. In that case, the most remarkable or interesting gang may well be part of a representative ethnographic sample.

Ethnographic research can also take the form of qualitative in-depth interviews with gang members. In that case, it is important to think of a good sampling procedure. One strategy can be to use the Expert Survey to select a number of representative gangs or areas where a researcher tries to recruit some respondents. Another strategy may be to start with the Youth Survey and look at the answers to identify gang-involved respondents for a follow-up interview. It may be wise to replenish the sample with gang youth that do not go to school anywhere, for example older adolescents or school dropouts. With regard to sample size, a general guideline is to move on until "saturation" is reached. That means that interviews can stop when no new information is uncovered by talking to additional interviewees. In practice, qualitative interview studies often need samples within the range of about fifty to one hundred to reach saturation and to obtain a good insight into variation among respondents.

2.3 Some Specific Problems in Comparative Gang Research

International comparative research on gangs often brings about specific obstacles. Some obstacles come as a surprise, but others are predictable and can be prevented. In the majority of cases, this kind of research involves international collaboration with people working from various places in different countries. This collaboration can lead to obstacles that hamper communication or interfere with the process of data collection. Some of these obstacles are of a practical nature while some are cultural in essence.

Communication problems

Obstacles often relate to language differences. Even though most academic scholars are able to communicate in English, the level of this ability may vary considerably. Misunderstandings and miscommunication happen easily.

As a rule, chances of miscommunication diminish if you work with people you know. Choosing partners from the Eurogang network may be a good idea, but because of the large number of participants, it is possible that you never will have met them. On the other hand, one can expect Eurogang participants to be well informed of the Eurogang instruments and major publications.

Intensive communication is essential to keep track of each other's progress in joint research and to secure good results. We advise meeting before the research starts and while it is ongoing. This implies that travel costs need to be anticipated in the research budget. It may also be a good idea to train workers from multiple teams together. This can ensure a proper, or at least a comparable, use of instruments in all participating research sites.

Of course, communication is not limited to face-to-face contacts; telephone, email, and videoconferences add to the possibilities. One practical issue is that, because of different time

zones, these direct modes of communication may find partners on the other side of the globe to be asleep while one is working on his or her side. Furthermore, researchers from various countries may differ in the timing of their holidays or in their working days (full-time or part-time employment). A research partner may also be occupied with other research projects or teaching responsibilities; good colleagues may not have the same priorities.

Cultural variety

Comparative research may be hindered because concepts or questions touch upon taboos, meaning things you can ask in one country but not in another. Measurement scales and standard response options can be interpreted differently from country to country. Furthermore, stereotypes of certain concepts may exist in one of the collaborating locations. Another problem may be that people in different research locations differ in their perception of gang problems. The possibility that there are street gangs in an area seems to be differentially accepted in different countries. Some city councils or formal institutions, such as the police, can be, consciously or unconsciously, in a state of denial about the presence of gangs. In another place, the same organizations may exaggerate the gang problem out of moral panic, biased media attention, or even political reasons. These different perceptions or representations may influence the reports of experts or key informants, or the willingness of respondents to talk about their gang affiliations.

Data collection problems

Data collection may vary from country to country and from location to location. One reason can be the availability of data and/or the possibility of getting access to data. In some places, it is relatively easy to get cooperation from government officials or school boards, while this is complicated in other places. In other words, data sources in different areas may differ vastly in their availability. This may lead to a much bigger effort for one of the partners to collect comparable data.

Language differences may also complicate comparable data collection in different countries. When research instruments are shared, as is the case in Eurogang research, it is vital that the original text of the instruments is properly translated. In practice, this is not always the case. Fortunately, most Eurogang instruments have been translated in several languages, and back-translations were provided to check quality. If a researcher wants to use an instrument in a language for which a translation is not available yet, it is important that a back-translation is also provided and offered to the research partners or one of the Eurogang working group coordinators. However, it is also important to note that questions and answer possibilities may still be interpreted differently in different languages. Back-translations help a lot in increasing the comparability of translations, but it is impossible to have a perfect match between the way instruments are perceived in different countries and cultures.

We realize that a paragraph like this may not add much enthusiasm for international research on gangs. However, if one knows what to expect, problems can be anticipated and prevented. In general, it helps when partners have met and know each other well. That way it is easy to ask direct questions of each other and to communicate in an open way. This is at least our personal, very positive experience within the Eurogang network.

2.4 Ethical Dilemmas

Introductory social research books include guidance for novice researchers about ethical issues and some professional disciplinary bodies (e.g., societies for sociology, criminology, and anthropology) have produced guidelines to inform ethical practice in research. Researchers in each of the countries participating in the research may consult these texts. However, there are some unique and particular ethical problems linked to comparative gang research. First, there are obstacles in relation to the sensitivity of the data that are collected. For example, researchers want to ask gang members about their illegal behavior. They also must keep in mind that gangs may be territorial and in conflict with each other. Second, researchers working in different countries often employ different ethical practices in their research, even when the principles that underlie these practices are the same or similar. The following focuses on ethical issues unique to gang research, particularly gang research that is comparative and conducted across different countries.

Anonymity in dissemination

It is common practice among researchers to make the individuals from whom they collected data (in the form of interviews, observations, or questionnaires) anonymous at the point of public dissemination of their results. This is usually done by replacing names with pseudonyms, numbers, or simply labels (e.g., "13-year-old gang member").

Some gang researchers have attempted to maintain anonymity at higher levels – groups (the gangs themselves), neighborhoods, and even the cities in which research is conducted. This might be done for a number of reasons. First, gangs in many European cities are relatively small by American standards. Identification of the gang and city therefore may identify a fairly small population. Combined with the kinds of descriptive information from interviews, this can increase the likelihood that individuals become identifiable to some readers. Second, as some gang researchers have argued, the communities in which gang research is carried out tend to be over-researched and stigmatized as problematic areas. Identification of these in publications may lead to further stigmatization. Third, some gang researchers have argued that gangs can be glamorized and strengthened by the attention they receive through published research that identifies them and their cities. Finally, some gang researchers have found this strategy to be critical in getting key community stakeholders and gang members themselves to participate in the research.

Together with the ethical "gains" of maintaining anonymity at the level of the gang or city, there are simultaneously analytic losses associated with this strategy. It becomes more challenging – but not impossible – to situate research findings within data that provide historical, geographical, and socio-economic context, limiting to some extent the possibility of comparing results across locations. It also implies that policy makers and the public are not informed fully about what happens in their own cities or neighborhoods. When designing comparative gang research, decisions about levels of anonymity in dissemination are likely to be influenced by the different traditions present in different countries. It is not strictly necessary for different partner countries in the research to employ the same strategy, as long as the research results are still comparable.

Informed consent: Research with children, parental consent, active consent, and passive consent

Gang researchers commonly conduct interviews or administer surveys to young people who are primarily in their second decade of life – children, adolescents, and young adults. Conducting research with young people, especially minors, brings special ethical considerations for the researcher who must be sure that children are sufficiently mature and intellectually developed to understand what is required of their participation. In other words, they must give effective consent. Typically researchers are required to get parental consent for the participation of children who are under the age of sixteen or eighteen, depending on the country where the study takes place. However, in some instances, obtaining parental consent may increase the risk/danger to young people that have been involved in gangs, for example by abuse from parents who are unaware of their child's gang activities. Recently, researchers in the US and United Kingdom (UK) have attempted to deal with this problem by employing an uninvolved knowledgeable person (a sort of parent "surrogate") to oversee the consent process, talk with the young people involved about the study/risks/etc., answer their questions, and make sure their rights are protected.

A second consent-related issue arises when gang researchers conduct surveys in schools. Typically, representative surveys in schools involve targeting all children, or a sample of them, with the aim of estimating the prevalence of gang membership, and thus include young people who are not gang-involved. Consent from parents can be gained in different ways. With "passive consent," parents are asked to contact researchers only if they do not want their child to participate. Under "active consent," parents who either fail to make contact or actively indicate that they do not wish their child to participate are included amongst the refusals. Active consent therefore results in lower participation levels/response rates than passive consent procedures, because many parents who do not return consent forms under active consent do not actually wish their child to be excluded, but are instead "latent consenters." These lower rates of participation can be associated with biased results, especially when non-responding parents are more likely to have children involved in gangs. National regulations, institutional ethics review boards, or even the schools themselves, may insist on a particular approach to consent. Moreover, when conducting comparative research, participating institutions may insist on different consent procedures, which can reduce the comparability of results across locations. Therefore, it is ideal to use passive consent (to boost response rates), but also to use consistent consent procedures across research sites in order to facilitate comparison of results.

Territoriality and neutral locations for fieldwork

As mentioned before, territoriality can play an important role in gang dynamics. Practitioners who work directly with gang-involved young people recognize that services for gang members need to be provided in "neutral" territories. To invite young people to be interviewed from neighborhood A to a youth center in neighborhood B, where a different gang operates, is likely to result in non-compliance with researchers at best, or an invitation for trouble at worst. Various solutions to these problems are possible. The most obvious solution is to conduct interviews only in a venue or location within the territory of that gang. However, other solutions are also possible. For example, one can identify a venue seen to be "neutral" by young people from different gangs, perhaps in a location that is completely separate from the gang territories themselves like university offices.

Reducing the risk to fieldworkers

Studying gangs in natural settings involves acknowledging inherent risk. This risk cannot be reduced to a zero level but can certainly be minimized. There is a small but growing "reflective" academic literature surrounding the problems posed to social researchers conducting fieldwork in risky or "dangerous" contexts (see Lee-Treweek & Linkogle, 2000). Institutional ethics review boards can pose constraints on researchers, designed to protect both the researchers themselves and their institutions from liability, when these researchers are perceived to be carrying out research in dangerous contexts. Researchers who conduct gang research "in the field" (e.g., ethnographic research involving participant observation), therefore, may find themselves simultaneously battling over-restrictive ethics review boards and being concerned to take sensible and necessary precautions that do not interfere unnecessarily with the conduct of research.

Yet another problem faced by research managers is the fact that the fieldworkers and research assistants they employ can have varying attitudes toward "danger." Sometimes fieldworkers that are attracted to ethnographic research with gangs can have a worryingly high threshold for perceiving danger. Particularly when you employ fieldworkers and other assistants for whom you are responsible, there is a complex balancing act between protecting the employees and acknowledging that dealing with danger is inherent in this kind of research. There are no easy solutions. However, as with research generally, having procedures and strategies in place at the outset of a project (even if they are revised later based on experiences in the field) is better than constantly being in "reactive" mode. The following strategies have been effective:

- Avoiding unnecessary exposure to dangerous situations, times, and places.
- Having strategies to ensure periodic contact between researchers in the field and research managers or others at base. It is important that these strategies anticipate how managers will react when fieldworkers do not respond (say to a mobile/cell phone call) when expected. A research team at the University of Manchester, for example, provided the phone number of a pre-arranged contact person within the local police for a research manager to ring if a dangerous situation arose.
- Ensuring confidentiality of participants. Make very clear to the participants that measures will be taken to hide their identities from the police, the public, and fellow gang members.
- Making clear to the participants the role of the researcher.
- Training in conflict diffusion
- Implementing a rule that fieldworkers carry a mobile/cell phone at all times, but avoid the use of expensive or "flashy" technology.
- Giving fieldworkers mobile/cell phones and numbers employed only for the project to avoid giving out personal contact details to gang members.
- Implementing a rule that fieldworkers do not carry valuables (aside from research equipment) or wear flashy clothing.

2.5 Data Security

Keeping data secure is an increasingly complicated task for researchers, especially when data are stored digitally. The secure storage of data is an important ethical issue, as it is related to the promise of confidentiality that is made to research participants. Particularly data gleaned through qualitative methods, such as interview recordings/transcripts and fieldwork notes based on conversations and observations, are sensitive to security issues.

Many researchers believe that digitally held data are inevitably "better" than paper-based alternatives. However, digital data are as vulnerable as, or maybe even more vulnerable than, paper-based alternatives primarily because of the ways that digital data proliferate. Digitally held data are stored in numerous *locations* during multiple moments in the research process. They are kept in "the field," the homes of researchers, in the university offices of researchers, and "in transit" between locations. They are used by numerous *individuals with a variety of roles* on a research team: interviewers, fieldworkers, transcribers, research managers, and those responsible for data analysis. They can be stored on a number of different *devices* during data collection and analysis (e.g., recorders, computers and memory sticks, or CDs), and in different forms (e.g., MP3 format, word-documents, or data files).

The following advice and guidelines can help to improve the security of digitally held qualitative data.

Passwords to protect access to files, computers, and devices are useful. However, the protection offered by many password features is flimsy. "Good" passwords combine letters, numbers, and symbols (like # and %), uppercase and lowercase characters, and are sufficiently long (longer is better, at least 8 characters). Researchers can use different passwords for different purposes.

It is possible to use encryption software to create "encrypted space" on computers and storage media (like memory sticks) for all research data. A number of different approaches to encryption of text-based data are available. Use of encryption software means that in the event of loss or theft of a device it becomes extremely difficult for someone to access the encrypted files. Encryption is not permanent, and only exists as long as files are held within encrypted areas on devices, ideal for qualitative researchers. If this possibility is used, it is important to make back-ups of data from encrypted computer disks only on portable encrypted media (e.g., memory sticks) that are stored or carried separately. When there are only two copies of data that are being transported together, everything would be lost.

It is important to insist that all people who will be dealing with your research data, including those not directly employed by your institution, use security procedures at least as good as the ones you employ. Transcription work is sometimes contracted out to external companies. Do not assume that their security procedures are sufficient; ask them to demonstrate their procedures and ask if they are willing to adopt your procedures for the work they do for you.

It is acceptable to employ the style of field note taking (on paper or digitally via voice or text files) that is most suitable to the research and that suits personal preferences. However, researchers should delete and permanently destroy notes held temporarily in any medium that is not encrypted (e.g., paper notes or voice recording) as soon as possible, and preferably in a more permanent encrypted storage away from the field setting. The same holds for paper copies of computer files that are printed to facilitate reading or analyzing.

Simply deleting files from a computer's hard drive does not remove them permanently. However, there are methods to delete files permanently and completely so that they cannot be recovered and to "clean" the spaces on the drive from where files have been deleted. Various software products are available to accomplish this (e.g., Steganos Security Suite). This is important because computers can be sold or recycled within research institutions, or stolen.

Former employees may retain possession or access to data. It is a good practice to make agreements with those employed to work with data (e.g., fieldworkers or transcribers) that these individuals return data and media. They also should employ "deep cleaning" hard drives that remain in their possession where data have been stored but deleted. To be sure about this, these activities should occur when the employee is still working for the study.

Early anonymization of interview transcripts and fieldwork notes is also a good practice. If anonymized transcripts are lost or stolen, problems in relation to confidentiality are minimized. Each name, place, and organization should be replaced with unique identifiers (e.g., a pseudonym or a number). However, "unique identifier" anonymization may be impossible at an early stage. In gang research, interviewees can spend a lot of time talking about other known individuals, and references to these can be considerable across interviews.

The problems of data security continue beyond data collection and analysis into the final stages of data archiving. Some gang researchers have found that interview data pose confidentiality problems that prevent them from being publicly archived. For example, extensive anonymization can sometimes result in impoverished or misleading data. Therefore, consider putting in place the possibility for individually negotiated agreements allowing other researchers to access your data in order to facilitate secondary analysis and comparative research.

3. About the Instruments

3.1 The Definition "Instrument"

The basic "instrument" that underlies all other instruments is the consensus Eurogang definition of a street gang/troublesome youth group. The development of a common understanding of our research subject was a lengthy and thorny undertaking. During the second Eurogang meeting in Oslo, a separate working group was established, called the "Definitions" group. This group was charged with the task of accomplishing what seventy years of American gang research had not been able to accomplish – providing a consensus definition of what constitutes a gang. Malcolm Klein spearheaded this daunting task. Numerous discussions within the working group and during the Eurogang meetings were processed in a number of draft definitions. Finally, during a plenary session at the fifth Eurogang meeting, consensus was reached on the definitive wordings of the definition.

Development of the definition: Definers and descriptors

The consensus definition was reached in a number of steps. The first discussions in the working group (mostly by email) lead to consideration of an array of "gang qualities" that should or could be incorporated into a definition that would attract widespread acceptance and one that would be suitable for multiple cultural contexts. In short, the intent was to specify the *necessary* elements for a group to be classified as a gang.

Early in the deliberations, an important distinction was made between gang "*definers*" and gang "*descriptors*." This distinction proved to be a significant step towards agreement on a definition. Gang definers are those elements that are absolutely essential to characterize the group as a gang, while descriptors refer to those elements that help to describe specific characteristics of a particular group. For example, group names, colors, or symbols, and the use of tattoos are elements that are often ascribed to gangs and their members. However, does a group have to use a name to be considered a gang? Does a group have to adopt specific colors or symbols to make it a gang? And is it essential to have a tattoo in order to be a gang member? The answer to these questions is no. Although these characteristics might help to *describe* a gang or gang members, they are not essential elements of a gang.

What then are the key components that *define* a gang? In the working group, the focus turned to such elements as size, age composition, location, stability, and group identity. To start with, it is clear that a gang is a group. Therefore, a gang must consist of more than one person. Although some police agencies consider two members sufficient to be a gang, most people agree that to constitute a gang there must be at least three members. Given that our interest is in "youth" gangs, we must also place parameters on the age range of members. A group comprised primarily of twenty and thirty year-olds would not fit well within the category of youth. Also, the types of behavior that evoke public and law enforcement concern need to be considered. We do not dispute the fact that many groups (primarily middle class and/or suburban youths) may be involved in troublesome and illegal behavior from time to time; however, the street-oriented aspect of gangs is what elicits fear and concern. In addition to this street-oriented nature of gangs, what other criteria help to differentiate a gang from other street-oriented groups such as mobs? One defining criterion is that gangs persist over some period. They do not assemble for just one day or one event. Groups that endure over time and those that dissipate virtually upon formation are qualitatively different. One other

defining element of gangs is that they have a sense of "we-ness" or group identity. Without such an identity, we cannot speak of gang membership or gang activity.

One persistent debate in the gang literature is the relevance of involvement in illegal activity. The working group was unanimous in its assessment that group involvement in illegal activity is a critical distinguishing element of youth gangs. Without this illegal activity, the group would not generate the policy interest that gangs currently and historically have.

These defining elements, then, were combined to establish the Eurogang definition of a gang: "*a street gang (or troublesome youth group corresponding to a street gang elsewhere) is any durable, street-oriented youth group whose identity includes involvement in illegal activity*."

The definition is accompanied by a number of explanations about the elements that are used. With regard to "*durable*," we remark that this term is a bit ambiguous. It is clear that groups that only exist for one or a couple of days, or during one or more events, are not durable. There are also many gang-like groups that exist for a short period of time, for example, during summer. These groups come together and dissipate within a few months. Therefore, the working group provided a guideline that a period of at least several months can be regarded as durable. In the Youth Survey, this is more exactly specified as three months or more. Further, it is important that the element of "durability" refers to the group, which continues despite turnover of members.

The element of "*street-oriented"* implies spending a lot of group time outside home, work, and school. It is not necessary that the group always be found on a street location. Street-oriented groups may also meet in malls, in parks, in cars, and so on. We regard groups as street-oriented when they hang out predominantly in public places without the supervision of adults.

The element of "*youth"* can be ambiguous. Usually, street gangs are more adolescent than adult, but some gangs include members in their twenties and even thirties. However, to be regarded as a gang in the sense of the Eurogang Program, it is necessary that most members be in their teens or early twenties. The Youth Survey, more specifically, requires that the majority of the members should be between the ages of twelve and twenty-five.

With regard to the element of "*illegal behavior as part of the group identity*," two remarks can be made. First, the phrase illegal behavior generally means delinquent or criminal activities, not just bothersome behavior. Second, group identity refers to the identity and culture of the group, to what is normal and accepted behavior in the group. It does not refer to the individual self-image of separate members of the gang.

Finally, the definition also includes reference to a "*troublesome youth group corresponding to a street gang elsewhere*." This phrase is added to the definition because there is a considerable number of researchers who do not want to use the word "gang," or more specifically, translations of this word in their own language, like "bande" or "jeugdbende." It is possible that the public in one country has strong stereotypes or associations in mind that are connected to these words. The discussion about this problem was resolved by allowing local researchers to use the phrase "troublesome youth group," or its translation, instead of the word "gang" if they want to prevent misconceptions by the general public. During Eurogang meetings and other conferences, however, researchers commonly refer to "gangs" as their subject of research.

The defining elements just reviewed constitute what we refer to as the *core* or *Level I* measures. These should be incorporated into all of the methods of data collection. In addition to these questions, there are a number of descriptive elements that would be desirable to include in a study of street gangs. These descriptive items would provide additional information about individual gang members and the gang as a group. We divided these descriptors into two additional categories, cleverly referred to as Level II and Level III, in

which we ranked the desirability of their inclusion in the study. In other words, Level I consists of measures that are required in all instruments, Level II are measures that are very desirable to collect but not strictly necessary, and Level III is a list of suggestions for interesting additional measures that can be included in a comparative gang study. The three levels contain the following variables, divided into individual variables and group characteristics:

Individual variables
- Level I: Demographics
- Level II: Family background, Parental schooling, Employment, Prevention, Intervention, Suppression experiences, Victimization history outside of gang, Self-reported delinquency, Illiteracy, Parental monitoring and supervision, Girl/boyfriends, Legal status/immigrant, Proportion close friends in gang, Ex-gang status, Siblings
- Level III: SES background, Personal networks beyond the gang, Mental health, School and family attachment, Residence of family

Group characteristics
- Level I: Age, Common group crimes, Drug, alcohol use, Duration, Ethnic composition, Gang or not, Negative peer commitment, Sex, Group size, Illegal activity, Immigrant composition, Name (what is it and who gave it), Reasons for joining, Street orientedness, Subgroups, Term used, Territory
- Level II: Attachment to group, Entry and exit criteria, External antagonists, Other groups that are present in location, Fights with other groups, Group values, History of gang, Key events/incidents, Roles, Symbols and colors, Structured narratives
- Level III: Class composition of gang, Hanging out together, Kinship, Political orientation, Proportion of members co-located

Using the Maxson/Klein Typology

The definition working group determined that it would be beneficial to assess the applicability of a gang typology developed by Maxson & Klein (1995) to the European setting (see Klein & Maxson, 2006 for specifics). Based on a number of studies, this typology distinguishes five types of gangs that differ in size, duration, territoriality, age composition, and type of activity. The use of this typology may be another strategy to measure and describe gang affiliation. For example, it is possible to provide respondents with each of the distinguished gang types and ask them to indicate whether their group, or groups that they defined as gangs, fit into one of the typologies. This approach is explicitly used as part of the Expert Survey instrument, but it is also applicable to other methods of data collection.

The five types identified by Maxson & Klein (1995) are described as follows:

The Classical (or Traditional) group is a large, enduring, territorial group with a wide age range and several subgroups based on age or area. Classical groups often exist for twenty years or more, with members as young as ten years old and as old as thirty or more. Classical groups with subgroups often have a hundred or more members, and they claim and defend their territories.

The Neo-Classical group is a newer territorial group with subgroups, generally with a history of ten years or less and fewer members than the Classical group. Neo-Classical groups may be

medium-sized, including fifty or more members. They usually have subgroups based on age. They have a narrower age range than Classical groups, and they claim and defend their territories.

The Compressed group has a relatively short history and usually is comprised of adolescent youth from about age twelve to twenty. Typically, Compressed groups have fewer than fifty members and do not form subgroups. They have existed less than ten years and often only a few years. They may or may not claim and defend territories.

The Collective group resembles a disorganized mass of adolescent and young adult members without the clear characteristics of the other four groups. Collective groups are bigger than the Compressed groups and with a wider age range between younger and older members. They might have as many as a hundred members, but without clear sub-groups despite being in existence for ten to fifteen years. They may or may not claim and defend territories.

The Specialty group is focused on a narrow crime pattern, and exists more for criminal than social reasons. Its smaller size and area of operation serve its criminal purposes. Typical examples are drug sales groups and skinhead groups. The other four types of groups commit a wide variety of crimes, but Specialty groups are more organized around their narrow criminal purpose.

3.2 The City-Level Instrument

One of the key aims of the Eurogang Program is to develop a better understanding of how the context contributes to gang emergence, its dynamics, and the behavior of gang-involved youth. Context has played a significant role in explanations developed by gang researchers. Traditionally, context has been incorporated through the analysis of local conditions in single-location ethnographies or by incorporating neighborhood information in survey studies, often by linking survey data to other existing administrative data sources. However, much of this research is limited in scope and fails to develop a comprehensive understanding of how context matters.

The study of context becomes even more relevant in cross-national comparisons where significant differences can be found in local history, spatial urban configurations, and social and criminal justice policy. For example, there are important differences between countries in and outside Europe in the way that structural disadvantages are spatially configured. There is an ongoing debate whether Europe has anything like American ghettos or barrios. Authors like Loic Wacquant (2008) have argued that this is not the case. Although there are pockets of concentrated disadvantage, these have not yet reached levels similar to those we find in the US, where most gang research has taken place. The same applies to other dimensions of context that are relevant, such as social and criminal justice policy, histories of immigration and racism, and levels of criminality and violence. Although some accounts by gang researchers highlight the contribution of globalization to the spread of a global gang culture (Hagedorn, 2008), we have a very limited understanding of how local and national contexts shape the particular ways in which the gang phenomenon is socially constructed and developed across different national and local contexts outside the US.

Cross-national research of the type advocated by the Eurogang Program aims to develop an understanding of how different national and local circumstances across Europe impact the gang situation at different sites. It is for this reason that a Eurogang working group under the leadership of Elmar Weitekamp developed the City-Level Instrument. This

instrument has not received the same degree of development and testing as most other Eurogang methodological tools. One of the reasons is the lack of funding to date to conduct a multi-site, cross-national comparison among members of the Eurogang Program. Therefore, tools that are more amenable for single-location or independent studies have received most attention until now. The City-Level Instrument should be considered a tool in development that can help researchers to identify particular dimensions of local context that may matter in terms of understanding gangs. Nevertheless, the instrument does contain an extensive list of variables and can be very helpful in obtaining a more complete and in-depth overview of the local gang context than has been reached in many studies.

Practical challenges and the content of the City-Level Instrument

Access to data will not be the same across collaborating partners. Much of the information about context that is used in criminological research is obtained from secondary sources such as the census or criminal justice agencies. National traditions of data sharing may vary greatly across collaborating countries. There are important differences in the degree to which administrative agencies facilitate data to researchers, the formal or informal bureaucratic processes that need to be embarked upon to obtain the data, the cost of accessing the data, the quality and ease of technical (i.e., digital or online) access of the data, and so on.

The type of data collected and the categories of measurement used also will vary significantly across country. A good example of this is the measure of ethnicity or race. Although ethnic composition of a neighborhood is considered an important contextual variable in most criminological research, the way in which this is conceptualized and measured differs enormously from country to country. Some countries do not collect statistics on race or ethnicity at all for legal and political reasons; others routinely collect extensive data. These differences should not be underestimated when thinking of cross-national comparisons.

Given such practical challenges, the current configuration of the City-Level Instrument is as an assessment tool that does not collect information directly, but rather assesses whether this contextual information is available at both the city and the neighborhood level for participating sites. After suggesting a wide range, or wish-list, of possible indicators, the working group attempted to determine what sort of contextual information was available by asking Eurogang partners to complete the instrument about their city. The instrument lists these indicators and then asks the researchers to indicate how available and accessible they are. Because this appeared to be more time consuming than initially thought, an overview of the availability of the indicators in different countries has not been finished at this moment. Nevertheless, the instrument might be useful in future comparative research to get an overview of possible indicators and to investigate their availability for collaborating research sites.

The instrument mixes quantitative and qualitative indicators:

- Demographic indicators for which you can clearly obtain figures, such as the number of males and females in a particular area
- Indicators that require some form of qualitative or narrative descriptions, such as "historical events," "policies affecting youth," and "important cultural characteristics"
- Indicators that could be either qualitative or quantitative, such as "accessibility of schools to students" or "employment opportunities for youth"

The instrument uses a template most appropriate for quantitative information. For example, it asks about the periodicity of collection of information. In its current state of development, no guidelines exist to inform the reader about appropriate answers for the qualitative indicators or categories for the quantitative indicators. There are also no definitions provided for the theoretical concepts that are included. These shortcomings illustrate the preliminary status of this instrument. Further development depends on the availability of funding for more elaborate comparisons of Eurogang research sites and on the commitment of interested Eurogang members. In fact, it could be argued that in its current configuration the Eurogang set of tools is well designed to illustrate similarities and differences in gang dynamics and behavior across national locations. However, a lot of work needs to be done to explain those differences.

Possible sources of comparable contextual information

Researchers interested in cross-national analysis of gangs will find useful the following list of resources with both survey and administrative information about different European countries and cities.

Eurostat: This institution produces a number of publications with information about nations, regions, and cities in Europe. Particularly relevant is the Urban Audit that includes most of the quantitative indicators included in the City-Level Instrument about demography, employment, and crime for all the major European cities. The Urban Audit also includes data from a survey of perceptions about services available and quality of life. Most recently, available data correspond to the 2006/2007 audit.

UNDP: The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) produces a set of indicators on human development that are used commonly in cross-national comparative research.

International Crime Survey: The European Commission partly funded the last edition of the International Crime Survey to produce comparative survey crime data at the national level for all European Union countries for the first time. The Unitied Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) provides access to reports and the historical databases from previous editions of the survey.

Eurobarometers: The European Commission also supported a large number of opinion polls on a variety of topics that could be used to provide contextual information at the national level.

Drugs: The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction is an invaluable source of information about trends in drug use and control across Europe.

3.3 The Expert Survey

The primary purpose of the Expert Survey is to gather detailed information about specific gangs in a geographic unit (e.g., a neighborhood, police district, or census tract) and to gather information in several places within the same city. Thus, the Expert Survey might be used to estimate the prevalence of gangs in several areas of a city, and to compare the characteristics of different gangs both within and across geographic units. Moreover, due to its relatively low

cost, results of several Expert Surveys might be compiled and compared across several cities in a country (as is done annually in the US by the National Youth Gang Center), as well as across several countries.

Development of the instrument

A working group to develop an Expert Survey was formed during the second Eurogang meeting in Oslo. This decision was inspired by successful experiences in the US with gathering information by surveying informants from law enforcement agencies about local gang situations. Six to ten working group members communicated by email and met subsequently at the Eurogang meetings in Leuven and Egmond aan Zee to form a consensus about the survey's content and approach. The group considered questions asked in previous US surveys (e.g., the National Youth Gang Survey, and national surveys by Curry, Curry & Decker and Maxson & Klein) and considered comments from other participants as we reported our progress in plenary session at the meeting. A draft for the first pilot test was produced after the first Straubing meeting in 2002 and a second round of pilot testing occurred after the results of the first test were incorporated into a revised instrument. As measurement decisions were made on other instruments, in particular the Youth Survey, similar changes were incorporated into the Expert Survey in order to maximize comparability across methods. Although there were about ten working group members at any time, it should be noted that several Eurogang participants expended considerable effort to gather and report on pilot data even though they were not working group participants.

The results of the second pilot test suggested few revisions and these were accomplished following the Eurogang meeting in Albany. Since that time, the Expert Survey has been distributed to all those who request it. The instrument has been pre-tested in Greece, France, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, England, and Russia. In addition to these relatively small-scale pilot efforts, the survey has been used to document gang prevalence and characteristics in London (over two hundred gangs identified by Iain Agar), in Trinidad and Tobago (roughly fifty police districts were surveyed by Charles Katz) and in Amsterdam (Frank van Gemert identified thirty-nine street gangs from one hundred and thirty-seven police officers and seven youth worker respondents). The comments below derive from the experiences reported by those conducting the pilot studies, as well as those employing the Expert Survey in area gang studies.

Content of the instrument

The survey is designed to be administered by mail, phone, or in a personal interview, and also may be delivered in a group setting. Appropriate respondents are familiar with youth groups in at least one specific geographic unit; these may include police officers, personnel from social welfare agencies, school personnel, youth service providers, community advocates, and other residents. Multiple types of respondents for the same area are desirable and some respondents may be able to respond to multiple geographic units by completing several surveys.

Respondents are asked a few questions about the area (e.g., total number of gangs and gang members, groups that are no longer active, and programmatic responses to gangs), but the bulk of the survey requests specific descriptive information about each group with which the respondent is familiar. A series of questions comprise the core Eurogang definitional items (Level I): group size, age range and modal category, duration, subgroups, street

orientation, territoriality, illegal activity, and acceptance of illegal activity. Other items refer to common gang descriptors or issues of particular interest to members: use of name or symbols, year of formation, sex and ethnic composition, turf defense, advocacy of political issues, and the types and frequency of illegal activity engaged in by the group.

The respondents are also asked to identify the type (according to the Maxson/Klein Typology) to which the gangs in the area belong. To accomplish this task, each of the typologies is described in a short narrative. Respondents are asked to indicate whether the gang, or gangs, about which they report fit into one of the typologies. "I want you to read [or listen to] these five descriptions and indicate which one *best* describes this group. If none of them describe it that's o.k. also -- just say so and indicate why." It also is possible to derive the gang type from the respondents' answers on separate survey items about age, duration, territoriality, and type of behaviors described. Nevertheless, providing narratives to the respondents can serve as a validation of the quantitative data from the survey. Furthermore, it can validate whether the groups that respondents report on are really gangs according to the Eurogang definition. When none of the types is applicable, it may imply that the groups that are reported on are not really gangs. However, it also is possible that they do not completely fit in the typology. Further information from the informants should be scrutinized to clarify this.

Experiences

Users reported that it was a relatively straightforward process to gather the survey information. There might be some decay in enthusiasm if respondents are required to complete specific information on many gangs in an area. Some users reported very high response rates; others experienced a very low response to the first mail attempt and would be required to follow up with potential respondents. In one country, researchers found that the mail survey would require special permission procedures whereas the face-to-face interview was more comfortable for respondents. Some participants felt that the survey was too long and at least one researcher reported that respondents did not spend time reading the narrative descriptions of the structures. One research site determined that these structure descriptions were inappropriate to the gang situations in that city. Some respondents reported difficulty in estimating group size, as well as whether gangs had subgroups. One researcher reported a high rate of illiteracy among police respondents and needed to switch from a written mail survey to a personal interview.

Problems also were identified during the process of translating the instrument into several languages. As expected, identifying geographic boundaries, and even the geographic unit most appropriate to study, can be a challenge, and might vary from site to site. The appropriate terminology for program responses (e.g., campaigns or projects) will also vary. One researcher reported that the use of "please" was problematic so adjustments would need to be made in that particular language. Another researcher indicated that "traditional gang" meant something entirely different than was intended, and that translation used "classical" instead (which has been adopted since then as an alternative label for the "traditional gang"). The researcher instructions alert users with potential replacements for "geographic area," ethnic categories, "illegal," and "traditional," but the experience thus far in translating the Expert Survey indicates a critical need for independent back translation.

Translations are available in the following languages:

- Dutch (Van Gemert)
- French (Petrova)

- Norwegian (Lien & Haaland)
- Russian (Sashkin & Salagaev)
- Finnish (Perho)
- Greek (Spinellis, translation of an earlier version of the survey)

These translations can be obtained from the working group coordinator or the translators themselves.

3.4. The Prevention and Intervention Inventory

The interest in European programmatic and policy responses to gangs was evident at the first Eurogang workshop. The goal of the Prevention and Intervention Inventory is to identify what strategies or programs are initiated that may help to prevent or respond to gangs in different countries, and to learn something about the nature of such programs.

Development of the instrument

The development of this instrument lagged a bit behind other Eurogang instruments in the beginning. Although a working group on the issue was already established at the second Eurogang meeting, working groups for the other methods were able to mobilize their work products more quickly. One reason is that many European governments do not recognize a particular gang problem in their country that needs to be responded to with specialized programs or policies. Another reason is that there are important cultural differences between countries in the way in which responses to social problems are organized (see Carlsson & Decker, 2005). The US and some European countries develop special programs to respond to emerging social problems whereas other European nations provide a broad safety net of health, employment, and social services to their populations. The latter model tends to increase the capacity of existing social institutions in response to emerging social problems, but it also implies that there are often no gang-specific responses or programs that need to be developed. Therefore, there were large differences among participants in the perceived relevance of an inventory of specialized prevention and intervention measures.

Discussions of these issues were held during several Eurogang meetings, eventually settling on the goal of enumerating a wide array of preventions and interventions. These programs or measures can be directed toward gangs or troublesome youth groups, but they may also be targeted at delinquency, groups of offenders, or youth groups in general. Participants in the sixth Eurogang meeting in 2003 discussed a draft of the instrument. The instrument was pre-tested only in St. Louis, Missouri and these results were presented at the Eurogang meeting in Albany a year later.

Use of the instrument

The instrument can be delivered in questionnaire or interview form. It can be administered to an individual or a group of informants from the same agency. The instrument is currently available only in English.

Appropriate respondents would be all individuals knowledgeable about the program activities or interventions under consideration. Appropriate programs can be identified through a variety of paths, such as:

- service directories, especially youth service listings
- contact with service providers and youth advocates
- contact with public officials in relevant national and local departments or units
- contact with police and correctional agencies, at both national and local levels
- information that results from an item that was included for this purpose in the Expert Survey

In some cases, it might be necessary to conduct a preliminary screening to ensure that the program provides activities or strategies to prevent or address gangs as the Eurogang network has defined them. The instrument asks about the length and content of the intervention, number and type of clients served, foundational research and evaluation, agencies involved, and cost. It also uses a typology that was developed by Spergel & Curry (1993). Five types of intervention are distinguished: suppression, social opportunities provision, crisis intervention, organizational change, and community mobilization.

Thus far, there has been relatively little interest expressed in the use of this instrument, either within or external to the Eurogang network. We speculate that this might be due to the issue of special programs mentioned earlier, or it may be the result of the relatively recent recognition of gang issues in Europe. We have not received feedback as to why the instrument in its current form is not attractive to potential users. Hopefully, interest will be revitalized and further work will ensue to produce a Prevention and Intervention Inventory that better meets the needs of program and policy researchers.

3.5. The Youth Survey

The purpose of the Youth Survey is to gather quantitative individual-level information from relatively large samples of individual youth. It can be used to establish the level of gang membership among a youth population, delinquent behavior among those who do and those who do not belong to gangs, risk factors for gang membership, and the characteristics of the groups about which the survey respondents report. It provides a general overview of who is and who is not involved in gang behavior in a certain area, and offers many possibilities for cross-national comparisons.

Development of the instrument

During the second Eurogang meeting in Oslo, a "community/youth" working group was charged with discussion of strategies that might prove beneficial for measuring gang membership, gang characteristics, individual risk factors, and community factors associated with youth gangs. Early discussions led the group to develop a questionnaire focused on youth: an instrument that could be administered in interview or questionnaire format in a variety of contexts. Over the ensuing four years, the working group met during all Eurogang meetings as well as communicated via email to develop the youth instrument. Following the fifth Eurogang meeting in Straubing, a working draft was circulated to working group members. Researchers in six countries translated the instrument (see below) and pre-tests were conducted in five of these countries (France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Russia) and the US. Translation issues and pre-test results were presented and discussed at the 2003 meeting in Straubing; a final English (or, as some would say, American) version was presented to the entire Eurogang group for approval.

Translation of the Youth Survey is available in the following languages:

- Dutch (Weerman)
- French (Petrova)
- German (Reich & Weitekamp)
- Norwegian (Haugland & Lien)
- Russian (Sashkin & Salagaev)
- Spanish (Medina)

Quite some time was spent discussing translation issues during the Eurogang meetings (e.g., the importance of back-translations, literal versus conceptual translations, and changing the ordering of questions or changing response categories). There were different approaches to pre-testing; some researchers aimed at assessing the predictive validity of the instruments, others were more oriented towards assessing the appropriateness and comprehensibility of the questions. Fortunately, a healthy mix of these two strategies was used by the pre-testing teams so we were able to benefit from the experiences of both pre-testing approaches. Finally, the pre-test activities and discussions about the issues that were raised during these activities resulted in the production of the Youth Survey that is available on the Eurogang website.

En route to this final product, several problems had to be resolved with regard to the actual questions posed and the response categories provided. For instance, school configuration and age of mandatory attendance differ across nations and therefore had to be considered when discussing sampling strategies and appropriateness of school-related questions. Questions about race/ethnicity needed to be carefully worded. In some nations race is the defining status while in others it is parents' nationality or country of birth. These not-so subtle differences required the attention of the workgroup. Family structure or composition questions also needed to be sensitive to the variety of living situations that present themselves when conducting comparative research. Extended multi-generational households are common in some settings while smaller nuclear households are the norm in others. Measurement of parental educational attainment also posed challenges. Other specific issues related to the fact that some terms were culturally specific or inappropriate. The term "illegal drugs," for instance, was perceived as redundant in Russia and the Netherlands. And, although neighborhood is a term understood by most American youth, it is a concept that is not recognized in some European countries.

Content of the instrument

The Youth Survey is designed to be administered in classrooms in secondary schools using paper and pencil methods. During its development, there was some discussion as to whether the survey should be used primarily with community samples or with school samples. Community samples have the advantage that they may be familiar with a neighborhood or area in which the researcher is primarily interested. It may also include dropouts and truants that cannot be reached in schools. Community surveys, however, tend to be costly and time consuming. Recruiting students in schools, especially when conducting group-administered questionnaires, is generally less costly and less time consuming. Schools also give the researcher access to a broad population of young people from a variety of backgrounds, and in many places, schools are community or neighborhood based. This allows researchers to link their findings back to the neighborhood of interest. For these reasons, it was decided that the Youth Survey would be administered among school youth. Nevertheless, researchers are free to recruit a community sample if they have the time and resources to do so. It is also possible to focus the Youth Survey on a particular group of youth, for example, on young offenders

who are detained in a juvenile justice institution. This may offer more insight into gang membership among offenders, which provides information about gangs from a segment of the population that is not reached through schools.

The Youth Survey contains a series of core questions that are necessary to determine whether respondents belong to a gang. This differs from the practice commonly referred to as the *filtering* approach, in which subjects are asked to indicate if they are gang members. Much gang research in the US has relied upon this technique. Although this approach has been used with good success in the US, where most people have a good understanding what constitutes a gang, its suitability in cross-national research is questionable. Not the least of issues is whether the word gang can be translated into other languages and retain its meaning. Another issue is that there are many gang stereotypes and misconceptions in other countries (but also in the US), often based on popular media, like newspapers, TV, movies, and music.

To address the difficult issue of measuring gang membership without relying on the respondent's perception of what is a gang, the Eurogang solution was to develop a so-called *funneling* technique. A series of questions are asked in which each of them contain an element of the Eurogang consensus definition of a gang. The responses on each item limit the number of respondents that meets all criteria, thus funneling towards those who do really belong to a gang in the sense of the Eurogang Program.

To properly set the stage for the "core gang questions," an introductory question should be posed first about membership in formal or organized groups ("During the past 12 months, have you participated in any teams, scouts, sports club, or other formal groups in your school, neighborhood or city?"). This introductory question prevents respondents from thinking about such formal groups and focuses their attention on the groups in which we are interested.

After this introductory question, seven defining questions are asked. The *first* question asks whether respondents belong to an informal peer group ("In addition to any such formal groups, some people have a certain group of friends that they spend time with, doing things together or just hanging out. Do you have a group of friends like that?"). The *second* question asks about the age range of the group. The *third* question determines whether the group is "street-oriented" ("Does this group spend a lot of time together in public places like the park, the street, shopping areas, or the neighborhood?"). The *fourth* question investigates whether it is a "durable" group that existed three months or more. Respondents that pass through these questions belong to an informal street-oriented youth group.

The next two questions determine whether illegal behavior is part of the group identity. The *fifth* question asks, "Is doing illegal things accepted by or okay for your group?" The *sixth* question asks, "Do people in your group actually do illegal things together?" When illegal behavior is also normal in the group and done by group members together, respondents are considered gang members according to the Eurogang definition.

The *seventh* question asks whether respondents consider their group of friends to be a gang. This item is not necessary to determine gang membership according the consensus definition, but can be seen as a contrast to the six preceding questions. It can be used to see whether gang members perceive themselves as such.

Apart from these seven core questions, there are additional questions on gangs and gang membership that researchers are strongly encouraged to include in their studies. These questions cover the structural and cultural characteristics of the groups to which respondents belong, the reasons for joining a gang and the illegal behaviors and activities in which gang members are involved. The Youth Survey instrument also contains questions that are recommended for inclusion in Eurogang studies. These questions are aimed at getting data on individual demographics of the respondents, personal characteristics, and social circumstances. These questions are based on important past criminological studies and cover

major criminological theories. Including them in a study highly enhances comparability with other studies. The survey also contains a self-report measure for delinquent behavior. Respondents are asked whether and how often they committed a number of offenses during the last year. They are also asked whether they have been a victim of an offense.

The complete questionnaire is very useful for inclusion in multi-site research on gangs. Researchers may decide to leave out some of the recommended items and/or to add items of particular relevance to their own research. It is important, however, to keep the exact wording and ordering of the core questions necessary to implement the "funneling" definition.

3.6 The Ethnography Guidelines

The purpose of the Ethnography Guidelines is to guide ethnographic data collection in such a way that qualitative information about gangs in different locations can be compared with each other. One part of the guidelines gives advice about possible methods to conduct ethnography. Another part lists the types of information that need to be covered to get a complete picture of the youth gangs under study. The guidelines provide methodological flexibility, but with delineated topics on which data should be collected. The data collection procedures outlined in these guidelines, or protocol, when adopted consistently by researchers in different sites, will allow for systematic comparisons.

Development and use of the instrument

From the beginning of the Eurogang Program, it was clear that qualitative research should be an important part of the multi-method approach that we adopted. Related to this, a so-called T-model for research was suggested. In this model, the upper horizontal line of the T represents a broad but superficial overview of the gangs in a particular area, using survey methods (the Expert Survey and/or the Youth Survey). The vertical line stands for in-depth insights that are obtained by ethnographic case studies. Later, a "comb"-model was suggested, in which the spine of the comb stands for general surveys and the teeth for more in depth studies and methods.

An ethnography working group was established at the second meeting in Oslo. The Ethnography Guidelines were created over a period of several years, with input from all working group participants in Leuven and Straubing. Discussions about the instruments were lively and focused on brainstorming instead of talking about literal formulations of survey questions. Formulating the guidelines has been a process in which we have asked ourselves what is the essence of an ethnographic study, and through which techniques necessary data could be collected. During this process, peripheral elements were stripped away, and a condensed set of guidelines was formulated.

The final instrument became available at the second Eurogang meeting in Straubing (2003). The protocol has been tested and used in several European countries, including:

- England (Aldridge, Medina, & Ralphs)
- Italy (Gatti and colleagues)
- The Netherlands (Van Gemert & Fleisher; De Jong)
- Norway (Lien)
- Russia (Salagaev and colleagues)

Philosophy behind the guidelines

In our view, ethnography is an approach that aims to describe a certain population, its context, and its culture. This means it is not just a set of methods to study the subjects, but it also includes a theoretical frame. Ethnographers commonly use interviews, documents, and (participant) observations as their methods for data collection.

We realize that in research, different approaches can be used, and that a variety of methods can be combined. Methods that are typical for ethnography can be part of a larger design that has a different theoretical orientation. This is mostly the case in qualitative research that focuses on "hidden" populations, not uncommon in the field of criminology. We hope the Ethnography Guidelines will not so much be used to make a "quick scan" of problem areas or rule breaking populations, but that they can contribute to in-depth studies. At the same time, the guidelines must facilitate the central Eurogang goal of comparative international research on gangs.

Ethnographic research means dealing with the dynamics of fieldwork. Collecting data in real life situations inevitably leads to unexpected events that may interfere with research planning in a practical sense. As a result, the focus of attention can change over time, sometimes moving away from initial themes. On the other hand, the Eurogang goal requires that, to a certain extent, data from different settings be of the same kind. For this reason we speak about ethnography "guidelines" that enable methodological flexibility, but at the same time point to delineated topics on which data should be collected in order to facilitate comparisons. These comparisons can be cross-gang and cross-site. The depth of findings emerging from qualitative investigation can thus be embedded within larger comparative contexts.

Content of the instrument

The Eurogang Ethnography Guidelines do not cover all possible ways of conducting ethnographic research, but merely offer practical, as well as theoretical, solutions for this type of research to arrive at the Eurogang goal of international comparisons.

In an ideal situation, ethnographic research occurs in tandem with data collection utilizing other Eurogang instruments. This would be in line with the T-model, or comb-model, that combines in-depth qualitative ethnographic research (vertical) and quantitative survey research (horizontal). In reality, for a variety of reasons, the research design can be limited to a specific phenomenon, and use methods that are more restricted. Given the fact that Eurogang research is based on a shared definition and agreed-upon methods, isolated projects can still generate comparable data and will not lose their value.

In the protocol, ethnographic research is seen as an in-depth case study of individual street gangs. Ideally, the data collection effort for each youth gang case study would involve the following: (a) participant observation; (b) semi-structured interviews with gang members; (c) the examination of key events; and (d) interviews with non-gang community members. Other data collection techniques may be used to supplement these at the discretion of the researcher(s). Examples include focus group interviews or the employment of video-techniques, such as providing youths with video cameras to document various features of their experiences.

Information will be gathered about (a) history and local setting, (b) the group, (c) individual gang members, (d) gang culture, (e) interventions, and (f) context. Upon completion of the ethnographic investigation, the researcher is asked to create a brief summary description (approximately a half page to a page in length) of the gang under investigation. This description will provide a snapshot of information for comparison with

other groups investigated using ethnographic methods. This should address the following questions:

- What is the age/age range of group members?
- What is the gender/sex composition of the group?
- What is the ethnic composition of the group?
- Are members of the group members of an immigrant group?
- Is illegal behavior accepted and performed? (if yes, describe)
- What are the most common crimes?
- Is alcohol and drug use accepted and performed behavior?
- What is the size of the group?
- Does this group have a name? (if yes, what is it?)
- Does this group regularly spend time in public places? (if yes, describe)
- Are there subgroups within this group? (if yes, what are the criteria that separate these subgroups?)
- What is the term used to define this group? (e.g., gang, bande, clique)
- Does this group have a territory it defends? (if yes, describe)

In contrast to other Eurogang methods, these guidelines are in English only. The reason is that this is not an instrument with strict questions for respondents. The ones that read and use this are researchers, and thus far, the common language for Eurogang is English. In the future, it may be wise to consider translating these as we have done with other instruments. One argument for translation is that Latin American countries offer a highly interesting field of research that may be excluded from the Eurogang enterprise if we continue to work exclusively in English. A second reason is that in non-English speaking countries, the day-to-day routine of fieldwork often is not in English. Implicitly, there has to be a local version of the instrument, even if it is just in the head of the single researcher. The necessity of a translation varies with the ability of researchers to combine the two languages. A translation also may be more urgent when publication will not (only) be in English.

3.7 The Use Form

As we approached the final stages of development of the instruments in the second Straubing meeting in 2003, the group discussed whether the instruments should be made available for use outside the Eurogang network. Some participants voiced concern about protecting the intellectual property and effort that had been expended by the group. Participants also were concerned about monitoring access through further development and changes to the instruments. Many wanted to have the work broadly accessible to our colleagues so that instruments could be used and we could build on that experience. We also decided to seek information about copyright procedures and to investigate procedures for public access.

The instruments were determined to be complete at the Albany meeting in 2004 and participants decided that they should be made available to anyone to use. To enable the Eurogang Program to monitor instrument use and to learn from others' experience, we decided to post "view only" copies of the instruments on the Eurogang web site, along with a Use Policy and Use Form. The Use Policy invites researchers to use the instruments, as well as encourages them to maintain contact with the facilitator of the used instrument working group and send new translations and reports of findings to the facilitator. Importantly, users are strongly encouraged to use instruments in their entirety and minimize changes. Facilitators put potential users in touch with the "Use Master" who receives Use Forms and supplies the

most current electronic copies of the instrument to requesters. Therefore, the Use Master is able to maintain contact with users and receive periodic updates regarding problems with the instrument items. This Use Policy pertains only to users who are not members of the Eurogang network; Eurogang participants are free to use all instruments and it is assumed they will keep their colleagues informed about their experiences.

Since the implementation of this policy in 2004, electronic copies of instruments have been sent to more than two dozen researchers in Europe, Canada, the US, and Central and South America, although most people who request the instruments either do not use them or fail to respond to requests for feedback. Nevertheless, we have identified the use of Eurogang instruments in Estonia, Kent and Canterbury, Dublin, London, Trinidad and Tobago, Toronto, Calgary, and Ontario, as well as in multi-site studies in progress in Scotland and the Netherlands. In addition, Eurogang participants have used the instruments for studies in Manchester, Amsterdam, and a multi-site evaluation of a youth program in the US. Selected items from the Youth Survey have been used by the British Offending Crime and Justice Survey and the International Self Report Delinquency II Study.

4. Concluding Remarks and Acknowledgements

At the end of this manual, we want to stress that the preceding comments are not obligatory rules but should be seen as suggestions and good advice. Researchers will need to ignore what is too ambitious within their budget and time limits and they should feel free to combine our guidelines with their own approaches and research interests. What is described in this manual constitutes what we see as an "ideal" comparative study. In reality, it is almost impossible to reach complete comparability across countries. Researchers often just have to make do with what they have.

We also want to remind the reader that up until now, truly comparative gang research has been scarce, and every additional study will be an important contribution to the field. What has been produced is mainly "post-hoc" comparison of existing Eurogang studies, after they were conducted by separate researchers. This includes the three Eurogang volumes (Klein et al., 2001; Decker & Weerman, 2005; Van Gemert et al., 2008), as well as the article on gang violence by Klein et al. (2006). The Eurogang volumes are largely collections of chapters on national studies, mainly in several European countries, the US, and Russia. In summarizing chapters, findings from these studies were compiled, and cross country comparisons were made. The first volume concentrated on the differences between the situation in the US and in Europe. The second volume gave an overview of differences and similarities among European gangs with regard to structure and characteristics, individual backgrounds of its members, the role of neighborhoods and turf, and the relationship with delinquent behavior. The third volume focused on the role of immigration and ethnicity in European and non-European gangs, and highlighted the importance of the local immigration history and situation. The "violence" article by Klein et al. (2006) summarized findings from the first two volumes and presented additional quantitative data from four separate studies.

There are also two chapters in which survey data from two countries are directly compared (one chapter also appeared as an article). The first one (Huizinga & Schumann, 2001) compared delinquent behavior of gang members in Germany and the US, the second one (Weerman & Esbensen, 2005; see also Esbensen & Weerman, 2005 also analyzed individual risk factors and group characteristics for gangs in the Netherlands and the US.

To conclude, although there has been a lot of comparative work conducted under the umbrella of the Eurogang Program, none of the studies has been designed as a truly prospective cross-national, multi-site, multi-method gang study. We hope that this manual can inspire and help other researchers in contributing to comparative research on gangs and filling the gaps in our Eurogang Program.

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