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A STUDY OF GANG DISENGAGEMENT IN HONDURAS

NOVEMBER 2020

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIR	American Institutes for Research
DI	Democracy International
FIU	Florida International University
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LAC-YVP	Latin America and Caribbean Youth Violence Prevention
LACC	Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

CONTENTS

EXHIBITS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Can a gang member in Honduras leave the gang, abandon criminal activities, and rehabilitate? What factors facilitate the process of disengagement from gangs in Honduras? To answer these questions, the American Institutes for Research (AIR), the Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center at Florida International University (LACC-FIU), and Democracy International (DI) conducted a study with Honduran gang members and former gang members across the country. The study is based on a survey with a sample of 1,021 respondents with a record of gang membership and 38 in-depth interviews with former gang members and other community members. Active gang members do disengage from the gang and its activities, but this disengagement depends on a myriad of factors, including the types of social relationships which the individual establishes outside the gang, the type of gang organization, and the availability of faith-based programs willing to reach out to the individual.

This study, funded through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Latin America and Caribbean Youth Violence Prevention project, builds on previous academic scholarship on gangs in Honduras and Central America. We conducted the survey interviews in three adult penitentiaries, three juvenile detention centers, two juvenile parole programs, and several faith-based centers which work with former gang members in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. We complemented the information with semistructured interviews with 14 former gang members in the metropolitan areas of San Pedro and La Ceiba. We also interviewed 24 subject-matter experts and community members in Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, and La Ceiba. We contracted a local firm, ANED, to conduct the survey interviews and trained a local team of interviewers, who collected the information under our direct supervision. For the in-depth interviews, we contracted and trained two local specialists. Data collection was conducted between October and December 2019.

PRIMARY RESULTS

The results indicate that gangs remain a predominantly male phenomenon, and the average age at which males join a gang is 15. Interviewed females joined the gang at an average age of 13.2. Nearly 46 percent of the subjects interviewed for this study are active members of a gang, while the rest are in different stages of gang membership. Approximately 54 percent of the subjects interviewed in the survey belong—or have belonged—to Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), while 35 percent expressed their loyalty to the 18th Street Gang, also known as *Pandilla 18* (or 18th Street Gang). The rest of the interviewees indicated membership in smaller gang groups: Los Chirizos, El Combo que no se deja, Los Olanchanos, Los Vatos Locos, etc.

Education

The average number of years that individuals with a record of gang membership spent in school was 9.6 years, and 90 percent of our respondents never finished high school. Half of the respondents have a household income of less than 250 USD, and 84 percent did not have a regular job, either in the formal or informal sector, even before going to prison. One in every four gang members lived with their parents or step-parents, while 31 percent lived with other relatives or alone. Furthermore, 56 percent of gang members had children of their own, and 45 percent were married or in a stable relationship.

Gang Activities

Violence and criminal activities are essential components of gang life. Extortion, murder, and drug trafficking are the most common crimes of which gang members are accused. Nearly 69 percent of the respondents were accused of committing these types of crimes in addition to assaults, robberies, and illicit association. In Honduras, both gangs control territories through the use of extortion, drug

trafficking, and violence. Such activities, in combination with seniority as an active gang member, are critical components for ascending the gang structure ranks. Contrary to the common assumption that gang members had to complete a "mission" to join the gang, evidence collected by the study suggests that most of them did not have to go through rites of initiation or perform a mission. Rather, "missions" become an important mechanism by which to ascend the gang ranks once the individual has joined the gang.

Gang Structure

Over the past two decades, the structures of MS-13 and Barrio 18 seem to have evolved and "mutated." Gangs appear to be more structured and mandated by a system of unwritten norms and rules common to each organization and shared by the diverse subgroups who share the same gang affiliation. Gangs preserve a regionally fragmented structure (sectors and cliques) which enables them to operate with certain autonomy while adhering to the rules established by membership.

The structure of both MS-13 and Barrio 18 include different levels of management, which typically start with the clique as its lowest operational level (i.e., at the neighborhood level). Cliques are the basic gang unit and are composed of several members. On average, cliques are composed of 36 male members, but they vary by size. However, cliques from other gangs (Los Chirizos, El Combo que no se deja, etc.) tend to be larger on average, with 45.8 male members per clique. Cliques are clustered in regional groups called *sectores* (sectors). Both cliques and sectores are run by a senior member of the gang. Senior members of the MS-13 gang are known as *Compas* and *Palabreros*, and Barrio 18 leaders are known as *Toros* and *Homies*.

Half of the survey respondents (49 percent) held what can be considered a soldier position within the structure of the gang, 17 percent held some position of leadership, and 25 percent were aspiring members of the gang who served as collaborators or informants. Gang leaders do not consider collaborators or informants to be official members of the gang, yet they participate in core activities and play a significant role in the dynamics of gang survival and operation.

Joining the Gang

From the standpoint of former and active gang members, most (63 percent) joined the gang because of the "pull forces" which peers in the gang exert over them in their teenage years. Gang involvement revolves around the opportunity of disenfranchised teens to join a group which provides them with affection and care, which many do not find at home. Thus, gang members value the "solidarity," "social respect," and resources the gang provides, which otherwise would be absent if they were not part of the organization. Evidence suggests that several gang members grew up in environments in which problematic families, lack of opportunities, and lack of respect and affection from their communities were common. Gang recruiters appeal to youth by promising to supply such needs to grow and exert stronger control inside their territories. Thus, findings suggest that most people end up joining gangs in Honduras for "innocent" reasons rather than because of criminal intent.

Gang Disengagement

The findings of this study suggest that many members do in fact disengage from gangs, but they go through a process in which the interaction of several conditions determines how soon or how complicated the separation could be. More than half of active gang members want to leave the gang. There are four significant predictors of active gang members' intentions to leave a gang: the type of organization to which the person belongs, the number of years that the person has been active in the gang, the individual's religious affiliation, and the person's immediate social circle.

Members of the two major gangs expressed less intention of leaving the gang compared to members of the smaller gangs. Active members of MS-13 demonstrated fewer intentions of leaving the gang compared to their rivals in Barrio 18. Additionally, there is a U-shaped curve relationship between the number of years in the gang and intentions to leave. During the first years of gang membership, intentions to leave are stronger; then they subside for a while and start growing again after six years of being in the gang. This pattern suggests that the early months and years of gang life are probably full of doubts about membership. These doubts are later quenched by gratifying experiences as a gang member and then re-emerge as the individual matures. This finding is significantly different from that in Cruz and colleagues' 2018 study in El Salvador, in which researchers found that intentions to leave the gang are low during the first years of gang membership and then grow as time passes.

Religion plays an important role in the process of leaving the gang, although comparatively, this role seems less prevalent than in El Salvador. Belonging to an evangelical church not only contributes to one's intention to disengage from the gang but also is approved by leaders of the gang (more specifically, MS-13). Further, evangelical churches seem to be more successful than other denominations in connecting with the spiritual needs of the gang population. In the in-depth interviews, half of the respondents referred to a connection to God as the most powerful change mechanism which enabled gang members to disengage from the gang.

Survey data also reveal that one of the most important factors in an individual's intention to leave a gang is social interaction. Gang members who spent the most time with non-gang individuals (their family, non-gang friends, or even alone) before they were detained in prison were more prone to thoughts about leaving the gang. Thus, one's social circle has a significant influence on the intent to disengage. Gang members who are exposed to social groups different from the gang appear to be more willing to abandon gang life.

Reintegration

The process of leaving a gang doesn't end there. Rather, being a defector is the beginning of a series of challenges and obstacles which a former gang member has to face. The most common reintegration challenges by a former gang member include lack of opportunities, insecurity, police abuse, social discrimination, poverty, and lack of family support. Most study participants (69.2 percent) said that church or faith-based organizations are the appropriate institutions to lead rehabilitation and reintegration programs. Otherwise, 14.6 percent of respondents said that nongovernmental organizations should lead rehabilitation programs. Few people interviewed saw government agencies leading rehabilitation efforts, and experts interviewed thought there was little to no political will to approach the gang phenomenon from a rehabilitation standpoint.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our research indicates that violence prevention efforts should target the root causes of joining a gang, which are mostly related to absence of positive youth development opportunities in their communities, including lack of employment, insufficient access to education, weak family structures, and negative peer influences. We recommend that programming focus on providing relational, educational, community, and economic supports to young people from an early age to both prevent youth from joining gangs, as well as to support those who have disengaged. Prevention strategies should include efforts to support disengagement from the gangs during the first years of gang membership, when many youth are considering disengagement. Finally, once gang members disengage from gangs, we recommend supporting rehabilitation and reintegration of former gang members to help them become productive members of society and prevent their reinsertion into gang activity.

I. INTRODUCTION

Why do some Honduran youth join street gangs? What are the factors behind the decision of some children and teenagers to integrate into some of the most violent street gangs in the Western Hemisphere? In Honduras, many officials and experts believe that once a person joins a street gang, he or she will be there for life. But is this so? Can a gang member leave the gang, abandon criminal activities, and rehabilitate? What factors facilitate the process of disengagement from gangs in Honduras? What can public institutions do to rehabilitate these persons and reduce the prevalence of violence? Can the community accept those who disengaged from gangs and support their reintegration?

To answer these questions, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) requested that the American Institutes for Research (AIR) scope out a study on gang disengagement as part of the Latin America and Caribbean Youth Violence Prevention (LAC-YVP) project. The three goals of that program are to (1) summarize the latest evidence on preventing youth violence, (2) generate new evidence through awarding of grants to local organizations for innovative ideas and then rigorously evaluate them, and (3) disseminate the evidence to key stakeholders through an array of distribution modalities. Under this LAC-YVP task order, AIR, Florida International University (FIU), and Democracy International (DI) assembled a team of researchers to develop a study with the aim of understanding gang disengagement in Honduras and Guatemala.

This report presents the results of the study on gangs in Honduras. It builds on a similar research study conducted by FIU, through its Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center (LACC), in El Salvador in 2017. The research aims to expand our knowledge on gangs in the Northern Triangle of Central America (Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador) and to guide programming on the challenging phenomenon of youth violence in the region.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The focus of this research project is the process and the conditions which lead to gang disengagement in Honduras. However, as part of a broad data collection effort, we worked with USAID, local missions, and other relevant partners to answer key questions related to gang life and reintegration in Honduras. We designed the study to answer the following questions.

1. What is the current structure and organization of street (and local) gangs?
2. Why do Honduran youth become involved with gangs, and what are the differences in terms of gender and age?
3. Why do active gang members decide to leave their gangs?
    a. What are the underlying conditions and/or drivers which influence decision making?
    b. What implication does level of group involvement have on the leaving process?
4. What do youth experience when they try to leave gangs?
    a. What are the differences in disengagement mechanisms by gender and age?
    b. How do interpersonal interactions with gang members and communities change?
    c. What challenges do they face?
    d. Are some gang-affiliated youth more able to leave the group than others (e.g., involved in low-level activities, girlfriends, people with disabilities)?

5. What are the roles of public and private institutions (education system, law enforcement, civil society organizations, etc.) in the processes of gang integration and disengagement from the perspective of both gang members and institutions? How do community members think about underlying issues (youth, violence, gangs, opportunities, etc.) and reintegration specifically?

1.2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

To answer the questions about street gangs in Honduras, we conducted a multimethod research project in which we interviewed more than 1,000 people with a history of gang membership. This project consisted of a nonprobabilistic national survey and in-depth interviews with former gang members and community stakeholders. The research process followed three phases. First, we conducted a series of preliminary interviews to collect contextual information about the gang phenomenon in Honduras. This stage was instrumental in both the sample design and the development of the collection instruments. In the second stage, we conducted the nonprobabilistic survey with gang members and former gang members in the main metropolitan areas of Honduras. In the third stage, we held in-depth interviews with former gang members and subject-matter experts in Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, and La Ceiba.

Given the sensitive nature of the topic, the security and confidentiality of the respondents and data collectors were essential components of our study. For implementation of the survey and in-depth interviews, the research team underwent several rounds of full board review with FIU's institutional review board (IRB) to ensure that all provisions of human subject protection were followed during the project. Because this project was a collaboration among several organizations, AIR, FIU, and DI agreed that the FIU IRB would serve as the IRB of record for AIR and DI. We provide detailed information about the methodology of this study in Appendix A. In this section, we summarize the key elements of the methodology.

1.2.1 Quantitative Approach Summary

For the survey, we interviewed 1,021 gang members and former gang members in adult penitentiaries, juvenile detention centers, parole programs, rehabilitation centers, and faith-based organizations which work with at-risk youth in several Honduran cities (Exhibit 1). We designed a purposive sample, and we selected the participants based on the distribution of gang members across the different centers of detention and rehabilitation which house gang members in Honduras. We conducted the survey between October and December 2019 with the fieldwork support of ANED, a Honduras-based firm specialized in survey research. We trained a team of 12 interviewers, who conducted the totality of interviews under the direct supervision of the FIU research team. Nearly 55 percent of the survey respondents were active gang members, while 45 percent said they no longer were in the gang organization. This study is the largest one on street gangs conducted in Honduras to date.

The survey focused on a questionnaire containing more than 130 questions which touched on social and demographic characteristics, history of gang membership, family and friends, reasons for joining the gang, intentions to leave the gang, and expectations for the future, among others. The questionnaire is based on the Salvadoran study but expands significantly on the number of topics covered.

Exhibit 1. Survey Data Collected, by Location Type

Center	N	Percentage	Location
El Pozo I	293	28.7	Ilama, Santa Bárbara
Penitenciaría Nacional de Támara	243	23.8	Tamara, Francisco Morazán
Iglesias Tegucigalpa	143	14.0	Tegucigalpa, Francisco Morazán
El Pozo II	90	8.8	Morocelí, El Paraíso
Renaciendo	80	7.8	Támara, Francisco Morazán
Medidas Alternativas (Tegucigalpa)	39	3.7	Tegucigalpa, Francisco Morazán
Centro Sagrado Corazón de María	36	3.5	Tegucigalpa, Francisco Morazán
El Carmen	29	2.8	San Pedro Sula, Cortés
Medidas Alternativas (San Pedro Sula)	29	2.7	San Pedro Sula, Cortés
Iglesias San Pedro Sula	31	3.0	San Pedro Sula, Cortés
Proyecto Victoria	8	0.8	Cofradía, Francisco Morazán
TOTAL	**1,021**	**100.0**	

The survey yielded an unprecedented wealth of data about individuals with a history of gang membership, and it allowed for statistical comparisons across different group categories. We complemented the study with semistructured, in-depth interviews with community stakeholders, subject-matter experts, and community members with former gang involvement.

1.2.2 Qualitative Approach Summary

For the qualitative component of this research, we interviewed 38 respondents in the Metropolitan Area of Tegucigalpa and in the departments of Atlántida and Cortés between October 2019 and January 2020. In addition to Tegucigalpa, the departments of Cortés and Atlántida register the highest number of gangs in the country (Dudley, Pachico, & Martinez, 2016). The interviewers used a snowball sampling technique to identify and contact respondents, including former gang members, religious leaders, psychologists, and youth workers. Exhibit 2 shows the qualitative study sample.

Exhibit 2. Qualitative Interviews Conducted in Honduras

Regions in Which Interviews Were Conducted	N	Community Members	Formerly Involved in Gang
Francisco Morazán (Tegucigalpa)	7	7	–
Cortés Department (San Pedro Sula, Choloma, other)	26	13	13
Atlántida Department (La Ceiba and other locations)	5	4	1
TOTAL	**38**	**24**	**14**

The qualitative team monitored data collection through a tracking sheet which interviewers used to track metadata (i.e., length of interview, location, respondent type, and gender of respondent). The interviewers digitally recorded all interviews for which we received permission from the respondent to record. An external agency transcribed and translated the interview recordings from Spanish to English. The research team consulted the audio recordings as necessary to verify content.

1.3 BACKGROUND: VIOLENCE AND GANGS IN HONDURAS

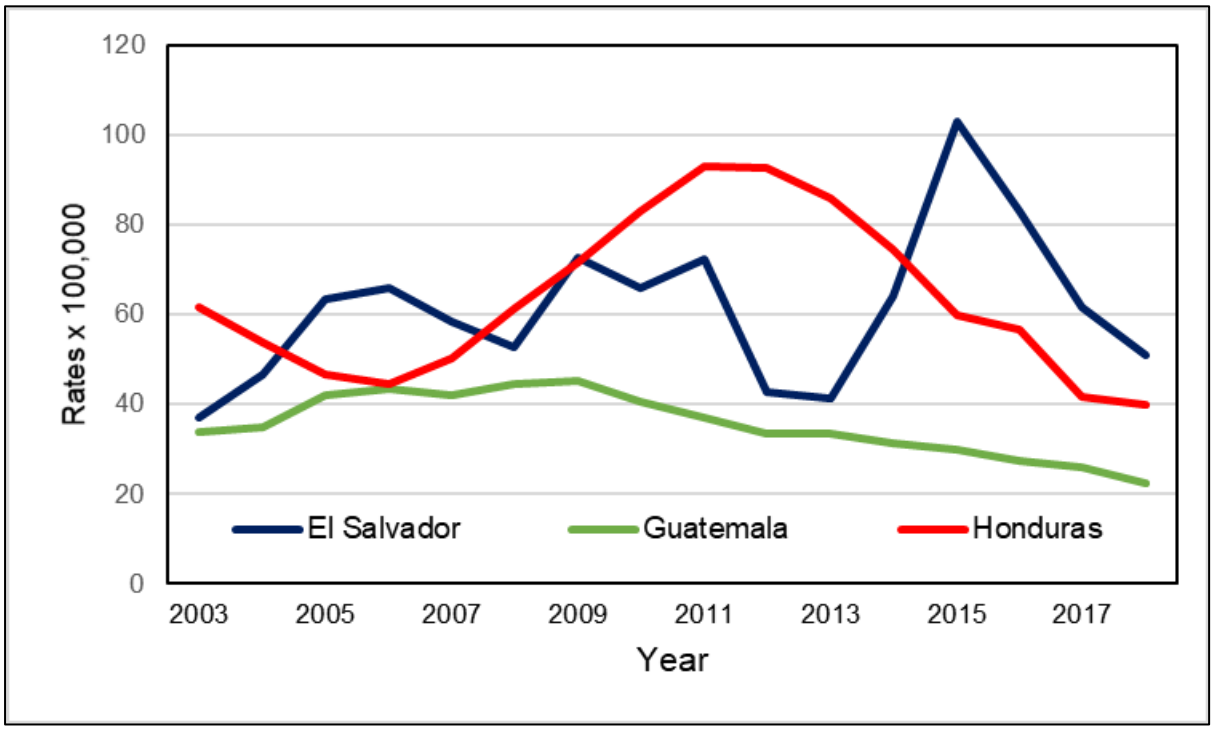
Honduras is home to some of the most notorious youth gangs in the Western Hemisphere: Barrio 18, also known as *Pandilla 18* (or 18th Street Gang), and Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13). These organizations are composed of networks of turf-based groups of youth and adults. They share the same group identity, and they engage in diverse criminal activities (Cruz, 2010a). There are other, smaller gang groups with comparatively limited reach, such as Vatos Locos, Los Chirizos, and El Combo que no se deja. There is no certainty about the precise number of gang members in Honduras. In 2012, for instance, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimated a total of 13,000 gang members in the country (UNODC, 2012). However, after surveying different sources in Honduras, InSight Crime, an Internet site which focuses on organized crime in the Americas, published a more recent report in which they contend that it is difficult to gauge with accuracy the number of gang members in Honduras (Dudley et al., 2016).

Government sources have offered conflicting information about the total number of gang members in Honduras. For instance, in 2016, the police believed that there were close to 25,000 gang members across the country, while the National Program for Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Social Reinsertion (Programa Nacional de Prevención, Rehabilitación y Reinserción Social) put the total number at less than 6,000 members in the same year. In interviews conducted in the preparatory stages of this research in 2018, officials of the National Police's Gang Intelligence Directorate (Dirección de Inteligencia de Pandillas) estimated a total of 13,000 active gang members concentrated in the metropolitan areas of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. Furthermore, according to data from the penitentiary system, by December 2018 2,058 gang members were imprisoned in the adult penitentiaries, and close to 1,400 gang members were detained in centers and programs under the juvenile system in Honduras.

Despite the difficulties in pinpointing the precise number of active gang members in Honduras, government officials and experts view street gangs as responsible for an important share of the criminal violence taking place in the country. However, as with the number of gang members, there are no reliable data about the number of murders and crimes committed by gangs in the country. According to a report prepared by InSight Crime, a significant share of murders in the areas which gangs control appear to be "gang-related" (Dudley et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the report does not cite a precise number of homicides which can be attributed to gangs, given the lack of contextual information in most homicides reported to the police. Tomas Andino, a specialist on gangs in Honduras, contends that there is some evidence that street gangs have reoriented their activities to other types of crimes, especially extortion (Andino Mencía, 2016). In fact, most of the criminal activities perpetrated by gangs focus on racketeering, extortions, and local drug peddling within the territories they control. These activities create a demand for controlling territory, which is the basis for the bloody conflicts between gangs.

Regardless of the precise share of criminal violence committed by street gangs, they are an important element in the levels of insecurity and violence in Honduras. For the last two decades, this Central American country has been one of the most violent countries in the world (UNODC, 2011; UNODC, 2019) (Exhibit 3). Between 2010 and 2016, for instance, Honduras had an average national homicide rate of 71 murders per 100,000 inhabitants (UNODC, 2019). Although homicide rates declined to 40 per 100,000 in 2018 (Landa-Blanco et al., 2020), this country remains one of the most dangerous countries in the Western Hemisphere, especially among those without civil conflict (Berg & Carranza, 2018).

Exhibit 3. Homicides per 100,000 Persons, Northern Triangle of Central America, 2003–2019



Source: UNODC (2011, 2019).

To date, there are no reliable studies which explain this dramatic reduction in homicide rates. The government claims the reduction is related to three factors: (1) its offensive against police officers linked to organized crime (the so-called "police depuration"); (2) tightening of controls in the penitentiary centers, from which gang leaders issue orders to kill rivals; and (3) the creation in 2018 of the Anti-Gang National Force (Fuerza Nacional Anti-Maras y Pandillas), integrated by police officers, military police, staff from the national intelligence agency, and prosecutors.[1] While a more effective police crackdown against gangs in Honduras may account for some of the reduction in homicide rates, the decrease also may be explained by issues in the quality of the homicide data. As with the gang-related statistics, scholars and journalists interviewed by the research team maintained that the data are not completely reliable. More importantly, however, the gang problem in Honduras continues to be severe, even with the reduction in homicide rates. First, homicide rates at 40 per 100,000 continue to be high (Exhibit 3). Second, despite the reduction in homicide rates, citizens' perceptions of insecurity have remained high but stable since 2012. According to the latest Latin American Public Opinion Project AmericasBarometer survey, 37.7 percent of Honduran citizens believe the neighborhood where they live is insecure. Furthermore, 54.1 percent of citizens say they have little trust in the police (Montalvo, 2019).

A Brief History of Honduran Gangs

Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) and the 18th Street Gang (Barrio 18), the two largest street gangs operating in Honduras, originated more than four decades ago in Los Angeles (Covey, 2003). They are the result of complex social processes which include circular migration between Central America and the United States and drastic socioeconomic changes in the countries in which gangs appeared. Barrio 18 originally was formed in the late 1960s by Mexican Americans, or "Chicanos," and undocumented Mexican workers. MS-13 was formed primarily by Salvadoran immigrants. Police crackdowns in the city of Los Angeles sent several youth immigrants to juvenile centers and

[1] Interview with members of the Fuerza Nacional Anti-Maras y Pandillas, Tegucigalpa, December 2018.

prisons across the state of California, where they got in contact with other Central American immigrants and contributed to the expansion of gang culture (Ward, 2013; Zilberg, 2011).

Several authors maintain that during the 1990s, Honduran members of these two Los Angeles gangs who were deported to Honduras then founded the MS-13 and Barrio 18 gangs in Honduras (Arana, 2005; Boerman, 2007). However, by the early 1990s, street gangs bearing the MS-13 and Barrio 18 names already existed in Honduras (Castro & Carranza, 2001). According to a Honduran National Police officer, the Barrio 18 gang was established in 1989, and the MS-13 gang formed in 1993. Several factors contributed to the emergence of gangs. Before the deportees bringing gang culture and identities arrived in Honduras in the mid-1990s (Mateo, 2011), local street gangs appeared, in part, as a result of the pattern of industrialization followed in the country. Castro and Carranza (2001) assert that the maquila industrialization (in-bond workshops), which started in the late 1980s, contributed to abrupt social changes which eventually fueled the conditions for the emergence of street gangs in Honduras. Some of those changes included a massive rural migration of workers to the cities, especially to San Pedro Sula; the accelerated growth of suburban shanty towns lacking basic social services; and the rapid rise in employment among women in the maquila industry. In a short period of time, young males found themselves growing without schooling or sufficient employment opportunities and were left meandering unsupervised in the streets of the expanding metropolitan areas. According to police data in the early 1990s, there were 45 different gangs in Tegucigalpa alone (Salomón, 1993). A list of the most prominent gangs of the time includes Los Avioncitos, Los Poison, La Cementerio, Mau Mau, Los Phantos, and Los Demonios (Salomón, 1993).

The Honduran government began to turn its attention to the problem of youth gangs in the mid-1990s, just when Honduras was experiencing profound economic changes and political transition (Andino, 2006). Between 1990 and 1996, Honduras underwent a process of reform in the public security sector which separated the military from public security and created a civilian-led police department (Castellanos & Salomón, 2002). The early influx of immigrants and deportees returned by the United States brought American gang culture to the streets of the urban centers, and existing gang groups adopted the identities of the American groups, which were more expressive and visible (Mateo, 2011). Several observers viewed the emergence of these gangs as evidence that the reforms in the public security sector were undermining the ability of the Honduran state to control the emerging criminal groups.

In the early 2000s, Honduran authorities responded to these concerns by launching heavy-handed security policies known as *Cero Tolerancia* (Zero Tolerance), and anti-gang legislation (Gutiérrez Rivera, 2011). In 2003, Honduran legislation introduced a series of reforms to the penal code which essentially criminalized "illicit association." Security forces under the command of President Ricardo Maduro moved forcefully against gangs and used a broad interpretation of Article 332 of the Honduran Penal Code to round up and incarcerate many suspects across the country (Gutiérrez Rivera, 2010). These policies sought to incarcerate members of street gangs, who were viewed as responsible for the growing rates of violence. The incarceration of hundreds of youths contributed to the growth of gangs inside prisons (Andino, 2006; Andino Mencía, 2016;). Although criminal violence decreased right after the enactment of the zero tolerance crackdowns, it rebounded as different criminal groups—including gangs—strengthened in the prison system and in low-income barrios and areas. The political turmoil around the 2009 coup d'etat compounded the situation as security forces turned their attention away from public security (Cruz, 2010b). Gutiérrez Rivera (2011) argued that during this period, gangs expanded through the use of territorial strategies which enabled them to defy state authorities in low-income barrios and prisons.

Since that time, and particularly over the last two decades, street gangs have been a major security concern. A national survey conducted by Vanderbilt University's Latin American Public Opinion Project in 2016 found that 30 percent of Hondurans reported the presence of street gangs in their communities (Cohen, Lupu, & Zechmeister, 2017). Gangs typically extract rents through extortion, selling "protection" services to small businesses, residents, taxi drivers, and public transportation companies. They are also involved in drug trafficking. However, the prevalence of certain types of criminal activities varies among the two major gangs.

Currently, MS-13 is the largest gang in terms of territorial control in Honduras. Although Mara Salvatrucha and Barrio 18 have similar organizational structures, in which leadership is exercised by older gang members who ascend through the structure, MS-13 and the 18th Street gang have important differences. According to most people interviewed for this research, Mara Salvatrucha has a more disciplined, well-structured, and professional organization than the Barrio 18 gang. These observations are consistent with the findings of other studies in Honduras (Andino Mencía, 2016; Dudley et al., 2016). They are also consistent with reports about the Salvadoran gangs, which found that the MS-13 gang is the largest and most structured gang organization in that country (Cruz, Rosen, Vorobyeva, & Amaya, 2017; Martínez & Martínez, 2019). Yet, and in contrast to El Salvador, Honduran organizations do not have a national leadership followed by all groups, and regional gang leaders have more operational autonomy in the neighborhoods or regions in which they operate. As we will see in the results of this study, the organizational structure has important implications for gang members who wish to leave or disengage from gang membership.

According to interviews conducted for this research, the MS-13 gang in Honduras not only has a more structured organization but also tends to operate in a more methodical fashion. MS-13 maintains its territorial control by establishing services in the communities it controls and offering protection to the citizens of those communities. MS-13 gang members have professionals at their services, such as accountants and lawyers. They also own many private businesses, which they use to launder money through drug trafficking. They have the capability to offer employment to members of the community, which generates more positive attitudes from the population in the communities they control. Importantly, MS-13 is more invested in drug trafficking, which has become the main source of revenue for the gang. While MS-13 gang members also use extortion to obtain rents, they primarily use extortion to secure rents from the transportation sector and avoid harassing citizens in the communities they control. As an organization, the MS-13 gang is not poor, but only the leaders seem to reap the benefits of the gang's economic activities. Most gang members, especially those in the lowest ranks, continue to live in poverty, even if they have more money than before they were recruited.

The Barrio 18 gang not only is less organized than MS-13 but is also more violent. Some people interviewed for this research referred to them as more "brutal." Barrio 18 gang members rely more on extortion as a source of income. Police officers who specialize in gangs suggested that due to their brutality, this gang has been more heavily hit by the police. Informally, however, some experts contended that the police have been more lenient toward the MS-13 gang, because this gang has more capacity to bribe officials. Some police officers claimed that MS-13 gang members have infiltrated the police force, implying this is one of the reasons that police avoid confronting this gang as much as possible. A larger number of Barrio 18 gang members are serving time in prison than MS-13 gang members.

1.4 PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON GANG DISENGAGEMENT

For the purposes of this research, we understand a street gang to be any street-oriented group composed mostly of young people, with a strong attachment to a group identity which includes unabated involvement in criminal activities (Bruneau, 2014; Cruz, 2014). This definition incorporates the key elements of most conceptualizations of street gangs in the criminal justice literature (Esbensen, Winfree, Jr, He, & Taylor, 2001; Klein & Maxson, 2006).

Following the literature on gangs in the United States, we conceptualize disengagement from gangs as the declining probability of gang membership. Individuals who belong to gangs start participating less in their activities, they separate from the core group, and in many cases, they abandon their gang identity (Carson, Peterson, & Esbensen, 2013; Tonks & Stephenson, 2018). The study on why and how gang members leave a gang is a relatively new field in the criminal justice literature (Decker & Lauritsen, 2002; Pyrooz & Decker, 2011). Most of the research which explores desistance from crime and gang disengagement was conducted in the United States and Europe (Tonks & Stephenson, 2018). Studies generally coalesce around the idea that juvenile offenders, including gang members, go through life-course stages in their relationship to gangs, which we can summarize as follows. First, a young person joins a gang when maturational changes during puberty and adolescence push the individual to search for identity with other peers (Fleisher & Krienert, 2004; Pyrooz, 2014). Second, the individual participates in gang activities for a while, including illegal and criminal activities (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993; Klein & Maxson, 2006). Third, a gang member disengages from the organization when, again, the individual experiences maturational changes which interact with external events. These events and exchanges prompt new identities and social relationships which steer the individual away from the gang (Carson et al., 2013). Age, thus, is an important factor when studying involvement in gangs and gang disengagement (Klein & Maxson, 2006; Pyrooz & Decker, 2011).

According to the life-course perspective on gangs, gang membership is usually transitory, and most youths remain in a gang for a brief period of time (Pyrooz, Decker, & Webb, 2010). However, scholars working in other regions note that youth in developing countries tend to spend more time in gangs (Hagedorn, 2008). They also maintain that, in many countries, street gangs institutionalize and morph into other forms of criminal groups (Dowdney, 2005; Hazen, 2010). In Central America, it is well known in popular culture that once a person enters a gang, it is for life (Bruneau, Dammert, & Skinner, 2011). These studies illustrate that gang members often have trouble exiting the gang and reintegrating into the broader community given the power that gangs have over the communities they control.

In 2016, FIU researchers conducted a gang disengagement study in El Salvador (Cruz et al., 2017). This Central American country shares several public security challenges with Honduras, including the high prevalence of the same street gangs, MS-13 and Barrio 18. The Salvadoran project sought to understand the factors which lead to gang disengagement. Among other things, the study found that Salvadoran gang members willing to abandon the organizations must grapple with the outsized power of the gang, and that disengagement usually entails a process of negotiation with the gang which includes conversion to Christian evangelicalism. To some extent, these findings run contrary to the life-course factors emphasized by the American-based literature, and to the notion that gang membership is a fleeting period in the life of a youth (Cruz & Rosen, 2020).

The study in El Salvador also showed that the challenges for youth willing to abandon gang life can be amplified when the gang organization makes active efforts to keep the gang member from leaving. Therefore, in studying the process of gang disengagement, it is important to examine the structural and environmental conditions which prevent gang members from leaving the gang, even after they

have matured and have the will to do so (Rosen & Cruz, 2020). These challenges include the lack of a support system outside the gang, unwillingness of the community to accept a former gang member as a legitimate community member, or legitimate opportunities and healthy community supports being located at a great distance (for example, in a different country). The study created a forum for dialogue on the conditions which create and sustain effective programs, policies, and practices to encourage disengagement among gang members. It also prompted a regional discussion on how to remove or reduce barriers to desistance, including addressing the family and community contexts.

Reducing gang involvement and helping individuals successfully transition to legitimate economic, social, and situational opportunities are central mechanisms for reducing violence and improving the health and well-being of Central America, and the Latin American and the Caribbean region overall. We know from research of criminal dynamics in general, and from the recent gang desistance literature, that leaving a criminal lifestyle can be difficult when individuals do not have access to legitimate opportunities, may need additional skills or education to take advantage of legitimate opportunities, or may have personal (e.g., mental health, substance use) or interpersonal challenges (e.g., delinquent peers or family members) which frustrate their efforts.

1.5 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Gang disengagement is not an event but a process (Pyrooz et al., 2010). Among gang members, the process starts with personal doubts about membership; continues with attempts to view oneself as part of a different community, separated from the gang clique; and ends with the individual refusing to continue participating in gang activities and, sometimes, renouncing the gang identity (Decker, Pyrooz, & Moule, 2014). Frequently, this process is not straightforward. Individuals who have separated from the gang may return to the group and become even more engaged in the gang and in criminal activities. Sometimes, they walk away from the gang and never go back (Decker & Pyrooz, 2011).

In this research, we focus on the variables that are widely recognized as the factors which are critical to gang disengagement. Because this is not a longitudinal study, in which we would follow the paths of gang members from the moment of membership through the steps of disengagement, we can only pinpoint the factors which gang members and former gang members indicate as critical in their experience and decision to leave the gang. In other words, this is a cross-sectional study which uses a specific point in the process of gang disengagement to identify the intervening variables. We do this by utilizing surveys with individuals who have a history of gang membership and by conducting in-depth interviews with former gang members and experts. Therefore, the information collected refers to the personal experiences of the people who have belonged to gangs in Honduras. This information provides an unparalleled view of the gang phenomenon in Honduras; few studies in the region are based on information provided directly by gang members. However, it also constrains the analytical scope of the endeavor. For instance, although we can see structural conditions operating in the personal decisions to join and exit a gang, we cannot analyze their differential effects based only on personal statements. In any case, the surveys afford the unprecedented ability to find statistically significant relationships among the potential explanatory variables at the personal level. The in-depth interviews, which drew on personal narratives from former gang members, enable us to understand how those variables manifest in the process of disengagement.

Gang disengagement is the result of the interaction of several factors which operate simultaneously at different levels and in diverse forms. In examining these factors throughout this report, we use two separate but complementary analytical approaches: Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and Decker and Van Winkle's push–pull framework (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996).

The ecological systems theory offers a useful framework for analyzing the personal, social, and structural factors which operate in an individual's process of gang disengagement. This framework has been widely used to understand risk factors related to violent behavior (Krug et al., 2002). According to this perspective, the person—that is, the gang member—is viewed as nested within levels of the social ecology, including family, community, society, and culture (Cardeli et al., 2019). The transactions between factors at these levels determine how the person interacts with the environment. They provide clues about how and why a gang member would leave the gang and what may make certain individuals more likely than others to disengage from gangs. For example, two gang members might have the same individual characteristics (age, education, and income); they might have lived similar experiences and had similar relationships with peers; and they might be part of the same social environment, in the same city and country. Yet only one of the two gang members might end up exiting the gang, because the immediate community in which the "deserter" lives exposed him/her to interactions with religious groups, who transformed his identity. Thus, this approach is helpful in understanding the nature and the scope of the influence of each factor (Cruz, 2007).

Factors associated with the process of leaving the gang can be classified as "pushes" and "pulls." Following a framework originally proposed by Scott Decker and Barrik Van Winkle (1996) to explain why individuals join a gang, explanatory variables can be divided into "push factors" and "pull factors." With respect to entering the gang, push factors are those external conditions which lead the individual into the gang, such as family issues or the need for protection from other groups. In contrast, pull factors are conditions which make the gang attractive to a young person, such as friends who are gang members or access to resources provided by the gang.

With respect to gang disengagement, push factors are elements which make the gang life less attractive to gang members. Push factors can include the individual growing tired of the gang lifestyle and desiring to avoid violence, which is a part of gang life (Decker, 1996; Decker & Van Winkle, 1996). For instance, gang members have a level of tolerance for experiencing and participating in violence (Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Pyrooz et al., 2010). On the other hand, certain pull factors can lead gang members to leave a gang: employment opportunities, family and children, and new reference groups, such as the church (Decker & Lauritsen, 2002; Tonks & Stephenson, 2018).

In this report, we utilize these frameworks to help us understand the complexity of gang life in Honduras. We present key findings in five sections. Following the research questions, we present an overview of the profile of the respondents with a history of gang membership. Next, we present the structure and organization of street gangs in Honduras based on information collected by the survey and in-depth interviews with subject-matter experts. Subsequently, we discuss the reasons for and the characteristics of the process of joining a gang in Honduras. Then we delve into the core theme of this research: the reasons for and the process of gang disengagement. In the final section, we discuss the roles of institutions in the process of gang disengagement and rehabilitation.

Exploiting our mixed-methods approach, in each subsection we first draw from the quantitative survey to provide a general picture of the structure, activities, and reasons for the gang phenomenon in Honduras. Using tests of statistical significance, we identify factors and conditions which explain differences between key groups in the sample. Unless otherwise indicated, we discuss only the differences and associations which returned a statistically significant relationship ($p < 0.05$). Then we interpret and complement those findings with narratives from in-depth interviews. Given the broad scope of this research and the abundance of information, we are not able to present all the findings. However, we present a comprehensive view of the characteristics of the gang phenomenon in Honduras that will be instrumental to any programmatic and policy-oriented effort to reduce youth violence in Honduras in particular and Central America in general.

2.0 UNDERSTANDING THE PROFILE OF THE GANG MEMBER

We start the presentation of the results by describing the characteristics of our survey respondents. In our sample, 55 percent of survey respondents were active gang members at the time of the interview, while the rest were former gang members. Given that our survey sample was not selected following a probabilistic method, we cannot claim that our interviewees represent the totality of the population with a history of gang membership. However, a deeper review of the characteristics of our sample will enable us to identify the type of population who are more vulnerable to gang membership in Honduras and will help situate the reader in the socio-economic characteristics of this population.

In sum, our data show low levels of education and income, with most gang members unable to finish secondary education. However, these levels of education and income are still above the average for the Honduran population, which indicates that, at least, most of our sample is not coming from the lowest levels of society. In fact, the majority of people in our sample come from the largest cities in Honduras, where they joined the gangs. Only 1.1 percent said they had joined the gang in another country. The majority of respondents (more than 70 percent) have never received any professional training which would enable them to obtain a job easily. Thus, when asked the type of employment they would like to have, 37.4 percent said they would prefer to have their own business. In terms of family composition, one in every three respondents under the age of 18 lived in a complete household (with two parents); the rest lived with a single parent, other relatives, or alone. Although 45 percent of respondents were married or in a stable relationship, more than half had children, and 72 percent had their first child before the age of 21. The data also show that criminal history started at a young age: Four in every five respondents committed their first offense before turning 18.

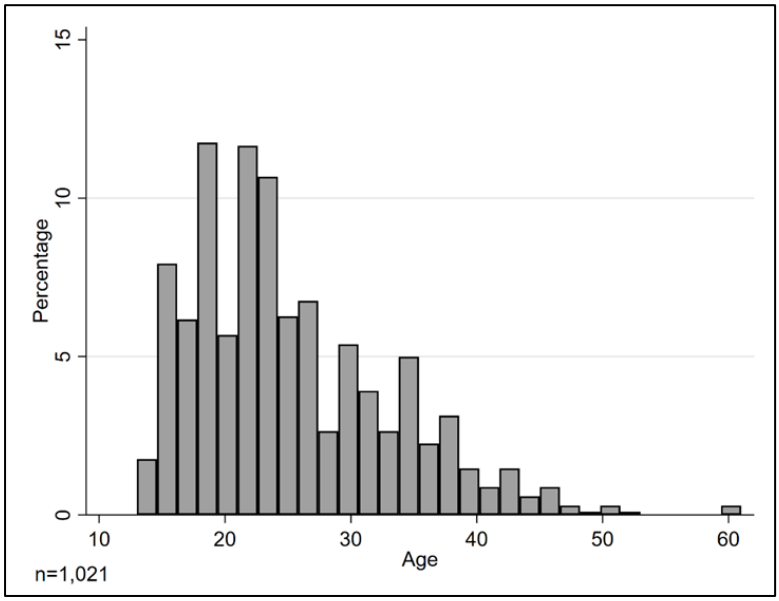
In the sections which follow, we present detailed characteristics of our study sample, including gender and age, education and income, family and children, and history of criminal activity.

2.1 GENDER AND AGE

Whether active or former gang members, 94 percent of survey respondents (960) were men. Only 6 percent were females (61). Although the number of women is lower than we expected based on reports of female gang membership, this number allows for basic comparisons which, nevertheless, must be undertaken with caution. In any case, it is important to acknowledge that gang membership is predominantly male.

Most of our interviewees (65 percent) were under 26 years old when surveyed. However, an important share of the sample population (15 percent) was above 40 years (Exhibit 4). The most frequent ages in our sample were 19, 21, and 22. On average, and according to the data, female participants were younger than male participants, with mean ages of 18.2 and 25.6, respectively. Although these figures indicate a generally young population in our sample, it is important to consider that nearly 22 percent were individuals older than 30.

Exhibit 4. Age Distribution Among Respondents



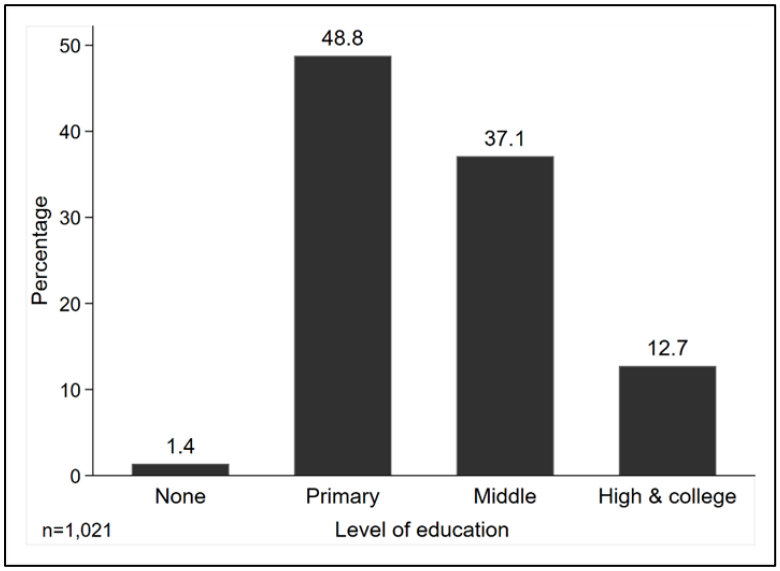
2.2 EDUCATION, INCOME, AND EMPLOYMENT

While a complete educational cycle lasts 15 years in Honduras (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2019),[2] the average number of years of schooling among respondents was 9.6 years—beyond a year more than the average schooling for the Honduran population in 2016 (7.9 years) (Fundación para la Educación Ricardo Ernesto Maduro Andreu [FEREMA], 2017). Survey data indicate that the vast majority of respondents (90.3 percent) had not completed high school, 1.4 percent of the respondents had never attended school, and half (49 percent) stopped attending school right before continuing into middle school (Exhibit 5). The average gang member dropped out during the first year of middle school, at 12 to 13 years old. These results suggest that several gang members dropped out of school right around the year in which they became involved in the gang. Although some prisons offer basic schooling to inmates, 73 percent of the participants were not enrolled in classes at the time of the survey.

The most common reasons for school dropout were the lack of desire to study (31 percent), the lack of resources/money for studying (29 percent), and the need to work (19 percent). Because a large share of our sample were inmates, 7 percent of the respondents mentioned that they dropped out of school because they were transferred to a different prison facility. Notably, only less than 1 percent mentioned the threat of gangs as the primary reason for dropping out of school. There was no statistically significant relationship between the age at which they joined the gang and the number of years of education they received. However, as we will see later, being out of school and out of work may increase the vulnerability of some youths to gang membership, because they have few other alternatives, either for entertainment or for income generation.

[2] The educational cycle in Honduras includes primary school, consisting of the *Pre-Básica* (three to six years old), *Básica* (six to 15 years old), and high school (15 to 17 or 18 years old).

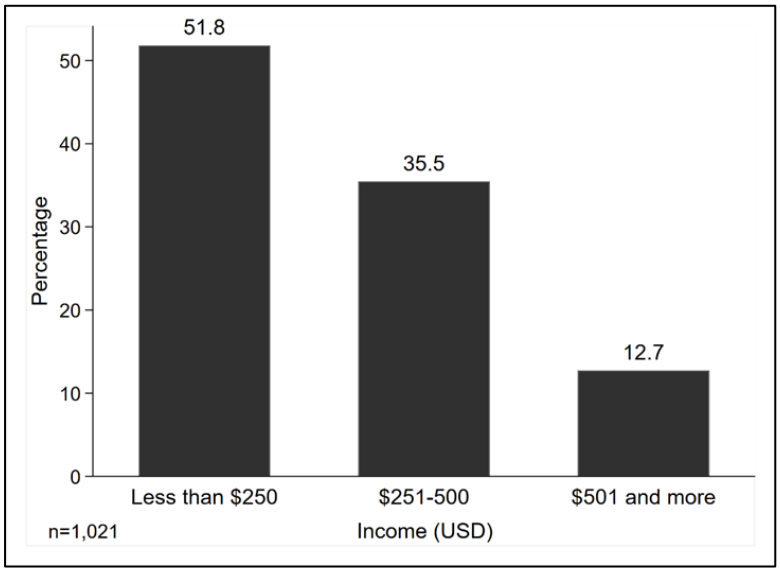
Exhibit 5. Level of Education Among Gang Members



In our sample of people with a history of gang membership, more than half of the respondents had a household income of less than 250 USD a month, and nearly 13 percent had a family income above 500 USD (Exhibit 6). These results, however, situate our sample above the average monthly family income in Honduras. According to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2019), the average monthly income in an urban household was approximately 202 USD. In other words, according to these results, the average household of a gang member had a higher income than the average Honduran family. The reasons for this finding are not clear, but they might reflect the fact that most gang members come from urban areas, where the average income is significantly higher than the national average.

In fact, nearly 80 percent of the individuals in our sample said they joined a gang in a metropolitan area with more than 200,000 inhabitants, 16.6 percent joined in a city with a population of more than 50,000, and the rest joined a gang in either a small city or town (2.9 percent) or in another country (1.1 percent).

Exhibit 6. Monthly Family Income of a Gang Member

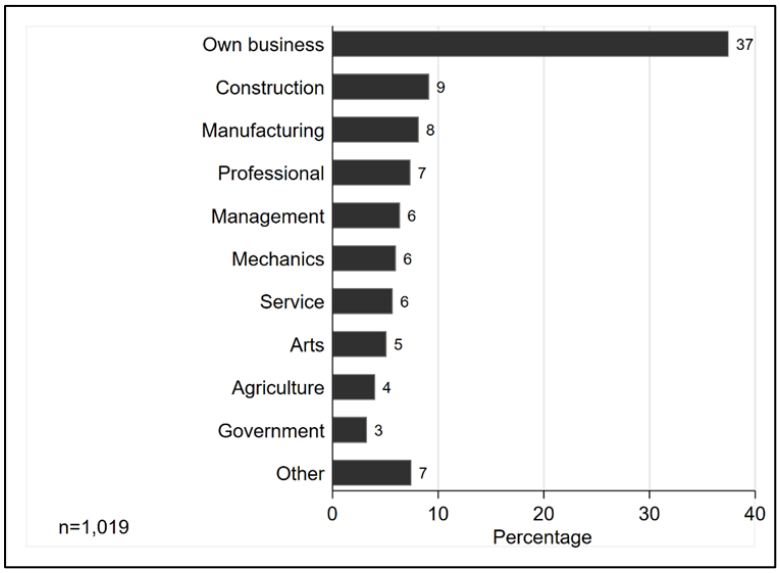


Although informal jobs are very common in Honduras, only 9 percent of respondents said they had informal employment; 16.1 percent said they had a formal job. Overall, almost 77 percent of respondents did not have any employment at the time of the interview, which for many of them took place in prisons or detention centers. Naturally, those interviewed outside of a prison facility were more likely to have any kind of job: 44.8 percent of respondents interviewed outside detention facilities had a job, whether formal or informal. There is no significant relationship between being employed and the gender of the respondent.

More than half of respondents (51.8 percent) who had formal employment (*n* = 164) were self-employed, and 35 percent worked for a salary at a private-sector company. At the same time, 45.7 percent of those who were formally employed said they worked only 2 days or less per week, while an important share (19.5 percent) indicated that they worked more than 56 hours per week. Most importantly, there is no significant relationship between being educated and having a formal job, which highlights the lack of incentives for youth to graduate from school. The high proportion of unemployment among former gang members (67.3 percent) shows the difficulties of obtaining employment after one has left the gang.

It is important to note that for the purposes of this report, the majority of individuals in our survey sample (73.4 percent) never received professional training which would enable them to obtain a job. Of those who did receive training (*n* = 272), 59.6 percent were trained in manual labor (e.g., construction work, factory assembly, auto repair), 25.7 percent were trained in a service industry (e.g., sales, fast food service), and 10.3 percent studied management. When asked where they would like to work if given an opportunity, most respondents (37.4 percent) said they preferred to have their own business. Additional job preferences are described in Exhibit 7.

Exhibit 7. Work Preferences Among Respondents



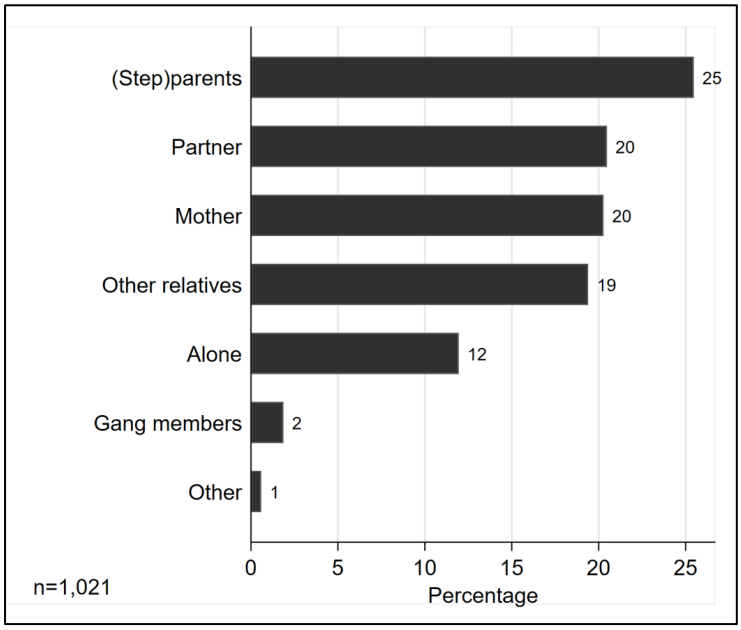
2.3 FAMILY AND CHILDREN

To understand the immediate environment of a gang member, we asked survey participants about people with whom they shared living space at the time of the survey. If surveyed inside a prison facility, the question referred to the household composition prior to the respondents' detention.

One-fourth of the surveyed gang members (25 percent) shared a household with two parents or step-parents, 20 percent lived with a partner, 20 percent lived with a single mother, and 19 percent

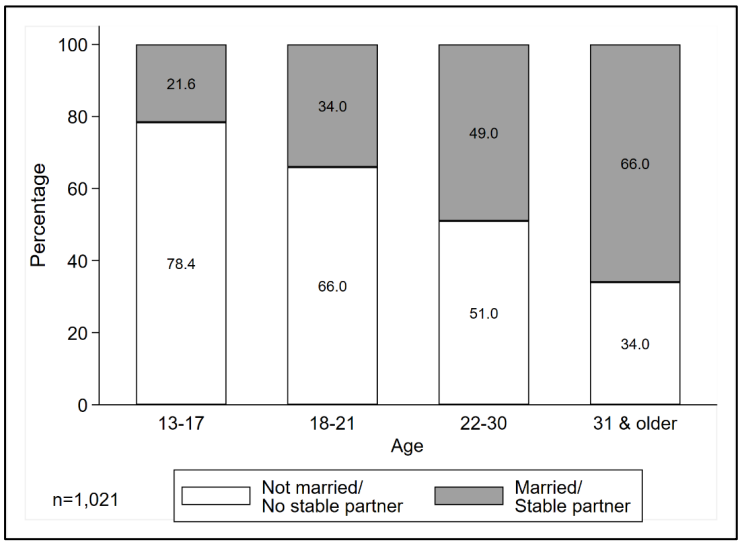
lived with other relatives (Exhibit 8). While younger respondents (age 21 and younger) were more likely to live with both (step-)parents, only one-third of youth under age 18 (31.5 percent, *n* = 162) lived in a complete household. The rest (69 percent) lived with a single mother, other relatives, or other people. As youth grew older (22 and older), they were more likely to share a household with their partner. Notably, only 19 respondents (2 percent) lived with other gang members (14 male and 5 female respondents), nine of whom were between 13 and 17 years old.

Exhibit 8. Household Composition Among Respondents



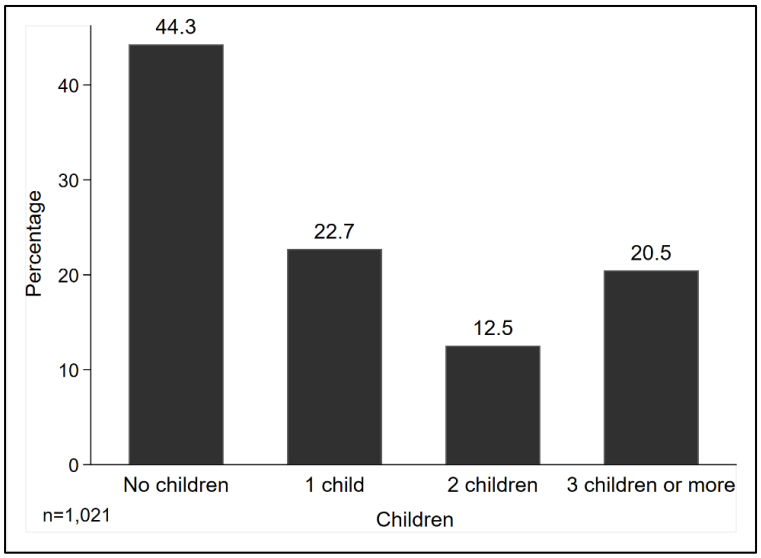
As for their relationships, 45 percent (*n* = 461) of respondents indicated they were married or in a stable relationship at the time of the survey. On average, stable relationships among respondents lasted 4.2 years. A statistical analysis shows that age is an important factor in determining whether a participant is in a stable partnership. Older gang members were more likely to have a stable partner (Exhibit 9).

Exhibit 9. Relationship Status Among Respondents, by Age Category



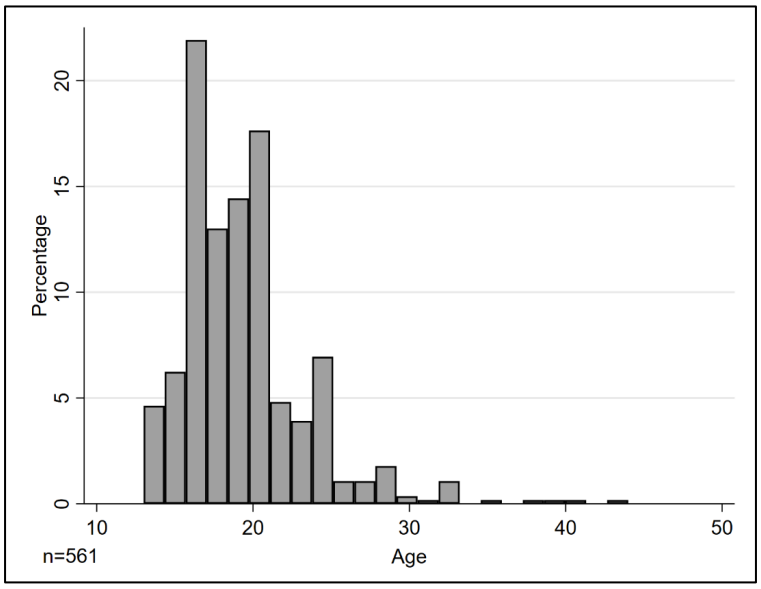
More than half of the survey respondents (56 percent) indicated that they have children. Most (22.7 percent) have one child, but a significant portion (20.5 percent) have three or more children (Exhibit 10). Out of 561 respondents who are parents, 223 (40 percent) have children with someone other than their current partner or the most recent stable partner. As expected, older respondents tend to have more children.

Exhibit 10. Number of Children Among Gang Members



In our sample, most surveyed gang members (72 percent) had their first child before age 21 (Exhibit 11). According to a national survey, the mean age at which Honduran women had their first child is approximately 20 (Secretaría de Salud [Honduras], 2013). Our survey results show that the average age of having the first child was lower for gang members: 16.7 for females and 19.5 for males. However, given the limited sample size, we cannot infer that women had children at a younger age. Half of the respondents (51.3 percent) who have children became parents between the ages of 17 and 20, a significant portion (21 percent) had their first child between ages 13 and 16, and only 2 percent became parents after age 31. Overall, two-thirds of the surveyed gang members became parents during adolescence (before 20 years old).

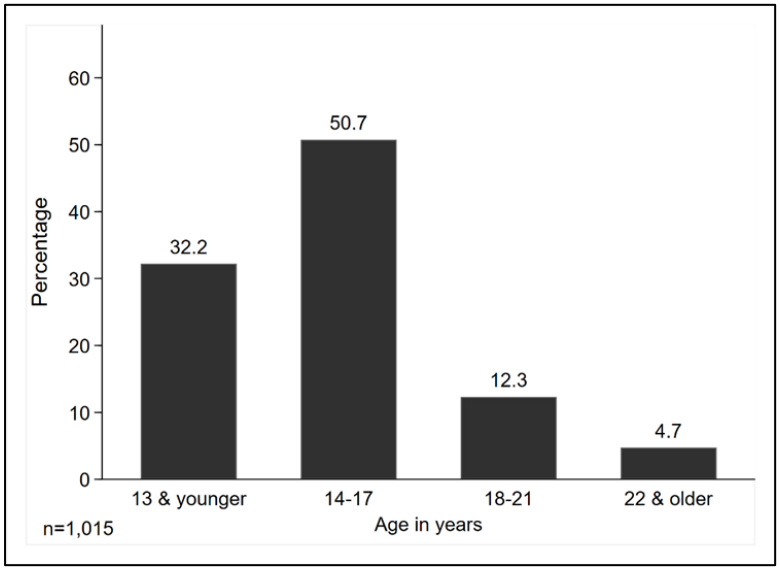
Exhibit 11. Age of Having First Child



2.4 HISTORY OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY, VIOLENCE, AND DRUG USE

As we outlined in our operational definition of street gangs in Honduras, involvement in criminal activities is central to gang membership. The majority of survey participants (83 percent) committed their first offense before they were 18 years old (Exhibit 12). The age of the first crime and that of the first arrest are highly correlated. Fifty-six percent of respondents said they were arrested for the first time before reaching 18 years of age, thus filling a cohort of juvenile offenders. Of 841 participants with an arrest history, almost half (46 percent) indicated they had been detained at a juvenile detention center. Of those, most were detained for extortion (31 percent), followed by drug-related crimes (18 percent) and murder (13 percent). Prisons have long become an inherent part of a gang member's life. Almost half of respondents (47 percent) said they had been arrested more than once. On average, and according to the survey, a gang member spent 3 years in prison.

Exhibit 12. Age of First Offense



In our survey sample, 23.2 percent of respondents reported being injured as a result of an assault in the last year. Of those (*n* = 237), nearly half (48.7 percent) were attacked by another gang member. Other armed actors, including police, the military, social cleansing groups, and private security guards, were responsible for 39 percent of attacks. Members of smaller gangs were less likely to be victimized (11 percent), while 18th Street gang members accounted for a higher portion of attacks which resulted in injury (33 percent), followed by MS-13 members (20 percent).

According to the survey, one-third of the respondents (33 percent) lost someone close to them because of violence. Of those (*n* = 336), in 45 percent of the cases, the victim was a family member. The rest of the victims were a friend from a gang or a friend from outside a gang (28 percent in both cases).

Four out of every 10 persons with a history of gang membership said that the Honduran security forces (the police and the military) posed the main threat of violence to them, while three of 10 pointed to rival gangs. The rest of the respondents mentioned that the same gang, other actors, or no one posed the threat of violence to them. Notably, there were differences in the perceived threats, depending on the circumstances of the respondent. Active gang members viewed the police and the military as threats more frequently than former gang members (Exhibit 13), whereas individuals who abandoned the gang tended to identify the same gang members nearly three times more frequently (11.8 percent) than active gang members (4.1 percent).

Exhibit 13. Main Threats for Persons With History of Gang Membership (n = 1,021)

	Who is a main threat for you?				
	No One	Security Forces	Rival Gang	Same Gang	Others
All	15.6%	40.5%	33.5%	7.6%	2.8%
Former gang members	15.7%	34.8%	34.6%	11.8%	4.0%
Active gang members	15.4%	45.3%	32.7%	4.1%	2.5%

When asked about substance consumption, almost 90 percent of respondents said they had used some mind-altering substance, including alcohol. For 71 percent, the first substance used was marihuana; about 77 percent of respondents tried it for the first time before turning 16 years old. Over the life course, about 75 percent of respondents said they had used marihuana at least once, followed by alcohol (70 percent), cocaine (35 percent), and crack cocaine (13 percent). Of those interviewed inside a prison facility, at least 137 persons (almost 18 percent) said they had used a substance in the past month while in detention. Among these, most had used marihuana (78 percent), followed by alcohol (27 percent) and cocaine (15 percent).

When compared by gender, female and male respondents did not report differences in the use of alcohol, marihuana, or crack cocaine. Women seem to have used those substances in the same proportion as men. However, according to the survey, females reported more frequent use of cocaine (57.4 percent) than males (34 percent). Also, females seem to have used more prescription-regulated drugs (23 percent) than males (11.4 percent).

2.5. HISTORY OF MIGRATION

The survey with active and former gang members also explored the respondents' history of migration. The prevalence of gang identities that originated in the United States prompted the assumption that many gang members in Honduras came from the United States (Arana, 2005). The results of the survey show otherwise. Most people interviewed in the survey (86.2 percent) said that they have never been in the United States; only 13.8 percent indicated that they have at some point. Of those who reported having been in the United States (*n* = 141), the great majority of them (81.5 percent) were deported.

We asked the respondents to indicate the year in which they returned to Honduras, either voluntarily or involuntarily through deportation. The responses indicate that most of them returned after 2010: 41.1 percent returned to Honduras between the early 1990s and 2010, whereas 58.9 percent returned in the last decade.

The results of the study do not provide evidence that most Honduran gang members come from the United States. In fact, when asked where they first joined a gang, only 1.2 percent of all interviewees said that they had joined the gang somewhere in the United States. Most people became gang members in the main urban metropolis in Honduras.

3.0 GANG STRUCTURE AND GANG VIOLENCE

The two main Honduran gangs, MS-13 and Barrio 18, have a clearly defined structure and organization, with specific roles and norms which regulate the activities and behavior of their members. Although gangs in Honduras do not seem to have a national leadership who would be recognized by all the groups, they have regional structures which are controlled from prisons. They organize their neighborhood cliques in *sectores* (sectors), which are overseen by regional leaders inside and outside prison. The MS-13 gang seems to be the largest and most organized of the gangs, and they tend to specialize to a larger extent in local drug trafficking and assassinations for hire. They tend to operate with more consideration for the community in which they are based, and they are more effective in penetrating criminal justice institutions for their own advantage. In contrast, the Barrio 18 gang seems to be more focused on extorting their own communities, and they tend to use violence more frequently to enforce their threats.

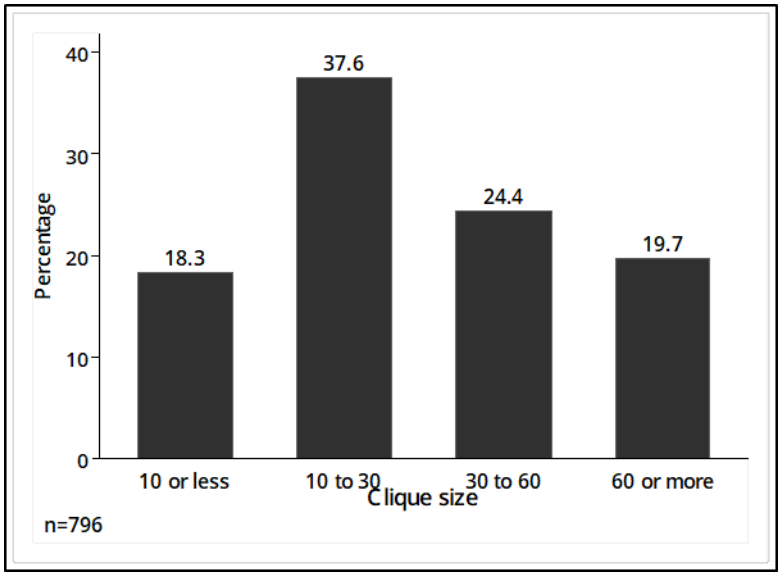
In this section, we present information on gang structure and gang violence in Honduras. We first explore the structure and organization of street gangs based on information from the in-depth interviews and surveys. We focus on the two main gangs, MS-13 and Pandilla 18. Next, we examine gender differences, underscoring a note of caution given the small number of women in our sample. Finally, we present results on the type of criminal activities in which gangs mostly engage.

3.1 STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF STREET GANGS IN HONDURAS

The information collected from the in-depth interviews indicates that the two major street gangs in Honduras have complex structures, with different positions and roles within the groups. Those roles are regulated by a system of norms and rules common to each organization and shared by the diverse subgroups with the same gang identity. In contrast to what FIU found in El Salvador, gangs in Honduras do not have a centralized national leadership who are recognized by all the *programas, canchas*, and cliques. Rather, both MS-13 and Barrio 18 are composed of regionally fragmented structures which operate in an autonomous fashion. Neither MS-13 nor Barrio 18 acknowledges a single national leadership council or individual leader in Honduras.

The two main gangs in Honduras are composed of a collection of neighborhood groups, called *cliques*, with a close link to the territory in which they operate and orchestrate their criminal activities. These cliques are the basic gang unit and are made up of several members. On average, and according to information provided by survey respondents, cliques are composed of 36 male members, but they vary by size. Some cliques may have fewer than 10 members, while others may have as many as 500. According to the survey, most respondents (62 percent) belonged to cliques of between 10 and 60 members (Exhibit 14).

Exhibit 14. Number of Members per Gang Cell (Clique)



Nearly 7 percent of respondents said they belonged to cliques with 100 or more members. The survey results do not indicate important differences in clique sizes between the MS-13 and Barrio 18 gangs. However, cliques from other gangs (Los Chirizos, El Combo que no se deja, etc.) tend to be larger on average, with 45.8 male members per clique. Females also integrate into some cliques, but their numbers are significantly lower than for males. According to the survey, the average number of females in a gang clique is seven. However, 37 percent of respondents reported having no females in their gang group, and 47.8 percent said their clique had between one and 10 females.

Each clique comprises regular members and collaborators or informants. Regular members make up the core and muscle of the gang. They are in charge of carrying out most of the criminal and revenue-generating activities, such as extortions and drug dealing. Depending on the gang organization, they take different titles: *soldier*, *paisa, paisa firme, gatillero*, or *traqueto*. Collaborators or informants are not considered official members of the gang; they have not undergone an initiation rite, and they function as aides to the regular members. Their activities include communications, transportation of drugs and weapons, and surveillance, flagging the presence of strangers and potential rivals in the territory. Collaborators take different titles, which also may reflect a hierarchy within the group of collaborators: *bandera, mula, aspirante, puntero*, and *colaborador* (Exhibit 15).

Exhibit 15. Levels and Titles in the Honduran Gangs

Levels	Leadership	Soldier/Member	Collaborator/ Informant
Titles	Toro	Gatillero	Bandera
	Homie	Soldado	Mula
	Jefe de Clica	Paisa Firme	Puntero
	Ranflero	Paisa	Aspirante
	Sargento	Traqueto	Colaborador

Neighborhood cliques are grouped in *sectores*, which are the largest grouping level in the gang's organization. Sectores are composed of several cliques which form a regional cluster, which usually involves a city or a region. Thus, as organizations, gangs in Honduras operate regionally. Each

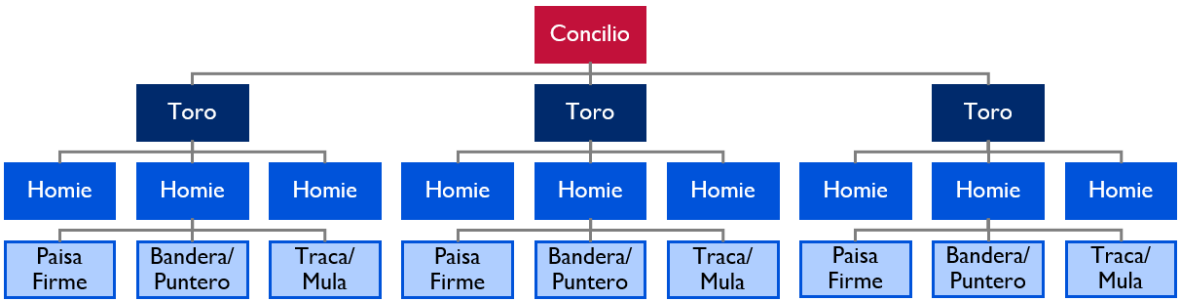
region or sector has a top leader, who usually is imprisoned and operates from any of the penitentiaries in the country. Those leaders are called *Palabreros* in the MS-13 organization and *Toros* in Barrio 18. They work in tandem with other leaders, who are outside prison, called *Sargentos* or *Homies*. These individuals oversee the activities of the cliques under their command on behalf of the imprisoned leader and themselves. One practice that both gangs observe and have in common is seniority. As explained by a former gang member who now leads rehabilitation programs in Honduras, *"Seniority and loyalty to the gang is not only how [you] earn respect within the organization, but it is also how an individual can climb amongst the ranks of the organization."*

In the following sections, we describe information from our initial in-depth interviews on the structures of the two main gangs in Honduras to provide a better understanding of their differences.

18th Street Gang

The 18th Street gang has a more fragmented organization than MS-13. At the apex of their organization, Barrio 18 has the *Concilio*, or Council, which is made up of the *Toros* (Bulls), who are the imprisoned leaders of different cliques within the gang. The *Concilio* usually takes place within the prison, as most of their leaders remain incarcerated. This *Concilio* does not seem to operate permanently like the leadership councils in El Salvador, but it is called upon only when leaders need to check on the activities of their cliques and avoid conflicts between them. Each *Toro* is responsible for different cliques around the country, of which they are fully in control and over which they can autonomously decide on activities. Every *Toro* has a group of *Homies* at his service. These homies serve as his soldiers outside the prison. To become a homie, an individual goes through a process known as *brinco* (jump). Each clique usually has a homie who serves as the internal leader and a series of homies who are experts in different criminal activities. Beneath the homies is a series of collaborators inside each clique who are not official members of the gang but, rather, are sympathizers and potential recruits. At this level, individuals can be categorized as *Paisa Firmes*, who advocate for the gang; *Banderas* (flagposts) or *Punteros*, who are the eyes and ears of the gang inside each neighborhood and who have the task monitoring who comes in and out; and *Tracas* or *Mulas* (mules), who are in charge of transporting drugs and running errands (Exhibit 16).

Exhibit 16. Barrio 18 Structure



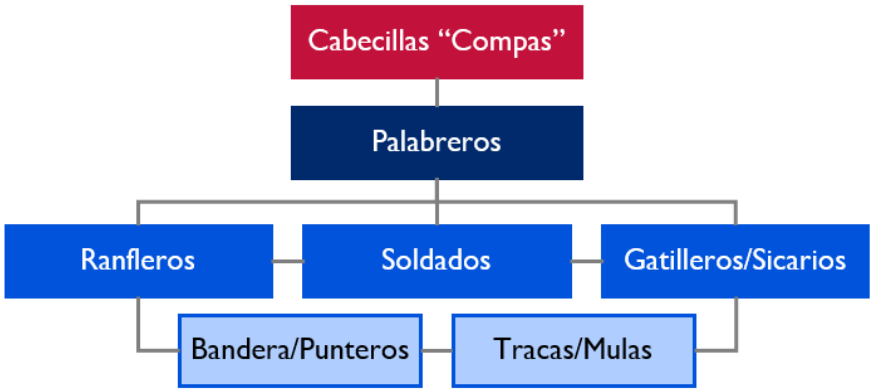
Source: In-depth interviews.

Mara Salvatrucha

In contrast to Barrio 18, the MS-13 gang maintains a unified structure which has proved capable of penetrating institutions (Exhibit 17). At the top of their organization are the *Compas*, senior members who act as the "brains" of the organization. *Compas* delegate their authority to *Palabreros*, who are in charge of making sure that the orders are being followed inside each clique. *Palabreros* are usually senior members of the gang who have earned trust and loyalty with higher members of the organization. Under the *Palabrero* is a series of ranks that share the same hierarchal level but specialize in different activity. For example, a *Ranflero* oversees the coordination of drug-related operations throughout the country. *Soldados*, or soldiers, are in charge of the day-to-day operations

of the gang, such as charging extortion or providing support to other members. *Gatilleros/Sicarios*, or hitmen, are highly trained individuals who kill in favor of the gang. This distinct division of labor, with specific roles assigned to each position, seems unique to the Honduran MS-13 structure. *Banderas* (flagposts) or *Punteros* are the eyes and ears of the gang inside each neighborhood and have the task of monitoring who comes in and out. Finally, *Tracas* or *Mulas* (mules) are in charge of transporting drugs and running errands. Recently, the MS-13 gang developed its structure to include a series of lawyers, accountants, and doctors who serve in the interest of the gangs. As described by a community leader, they are the *"mareros de universidad"* (college gang members): *"They belong to the gang, but we will never see them in the neighborhoods or smoking with the other gang members. They are in their life, in their status, but they belong to the gang."*

Exhibit 17. MS-13 Structure

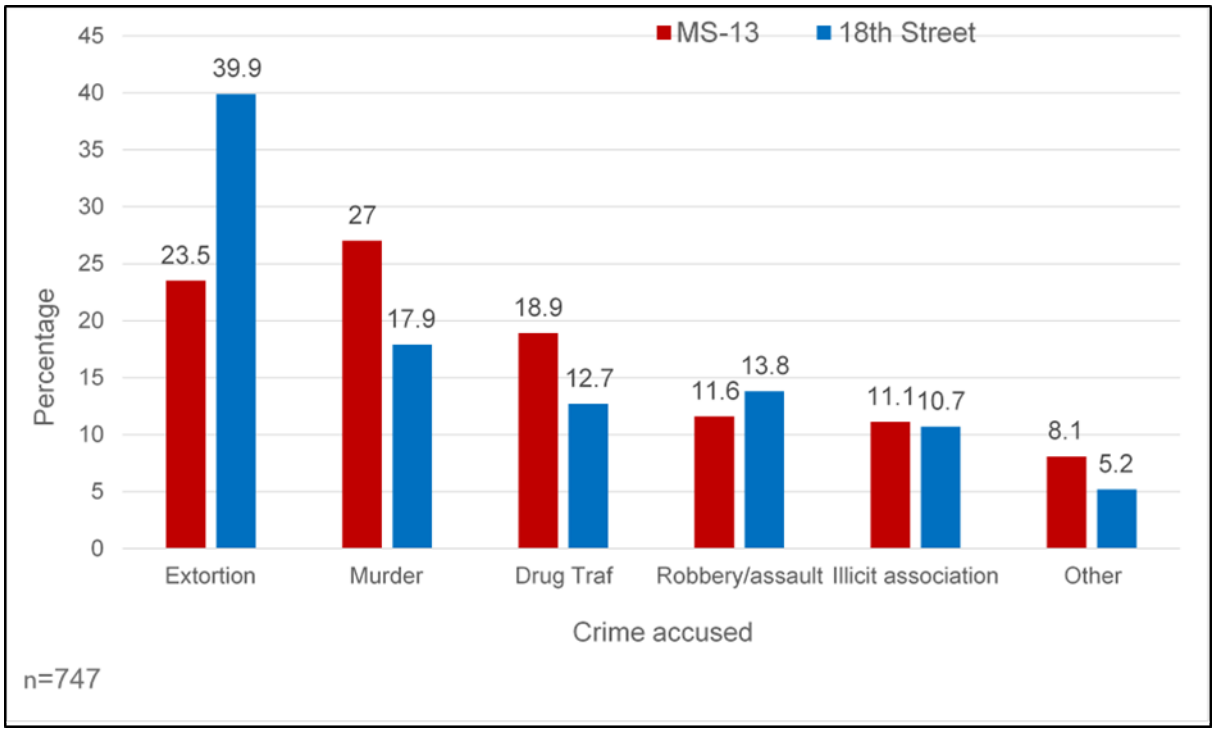


Source: In-depth interviews.

3.2 GANG ACTIVITY

Gang activities revolve around the concept of territorial control. All gangs seek to exert control inside the communities in which they operate in order to extract resources and revenues. Both the MS-13 and 18th Street gangs use violence and participate in similar criminal activities (Fuerza Nacional Anti-Maras y Pandillas, 2019): local drug trafficking, extortion, and assassination for hire, among others. However, most testimonies provided during the in-depth interviews coincide with the notion that MS-13 gang members concentrate their criminal activities around the control of drug markets, while Barrio 18 gang members focus more on extortion activities which directly affect the communities in which they operate. To some extent, this concentration of criminal activity is corroborated by the survey results. According to the results of the survey, most of the respondents (74.1 percent) had been formally charged with a crime. Of those who were indicted, Barrio 18 gang members tended to be charged more frequently for extortion (40 percent) than MS-13 gang members (23.5 percent). In contrast, MS-13 gang members have been charged more frequently for murder and drug trafficking than Barrio 18 associates (Exhibit 18).

Exhibit 18. Formal Accusations Against Gang Members, by Main Gang Organization



These tendencies highlight differences in the ways in which each gang operates and its relationship with other actors. In the in-depth interviews, former MS-13 gang members explained that their organization focuses on petty drug trafficking and maintains a good relationship with the people within their neighborhoods. As one former MS-13 gang member explained, Mara Salvatrucha will do everything in their power to keep the police from entering their territories. When a community member has a problem inside MS-13 gang territory, people go to the gang leaders before contacting authorities to solve the problem. These findings are consistent with past research which indicates that MS-13 gang members stopped extorting inside their neighborhoods to leverage support with the people who live in those communities. Regardless, MS-13 gang members are violent and constantly engaging in criminal behavior.

In contrast, the Barrio 18 gang is viewed as even more ruthless. They impose extortions, which they call "war taxes" (*impuestos de guerra*) against the residents of the communities which they control. Former 18th Street gang members said that the gang does not care whom they extort. They will extort and threaten any members of the community regardless of their economic situation. Victims range from the person selling candies on the corner of the street to formal businesses which operate inside the neighborhood. In addition, the 18th Street gang runs local drug-dealing points inside their territories, but according to different sources, their operations remain less organized and more fragmented than those of the MS-13 gang.

3.3 GENDER DIFFERENCES

As previously stated, only two former gang members in our qualitative sample were women; therefore, our results with regard to gender also consider the opinions of male respondents and experts who do not have firsthand experience as a female gang member. As such, these results are emerging and indicative, and they merit further exploration.

The research team interviewed government officials, pastors, and leaders of organizations which work with former gang members. These interviewees said that while women used to play secondary roles in gangs, mostly as partners of gang members, there is no longer a significant gender difference in terms of gang affiliation and participation in gangs. Most former gang members in our sample shared the view that there are few differences between men and women with respect to their participation in gangs; many explicitly said they do not see any difference in terms of gender, noting that women can become more lethal than men because people tend to assume that women are not violent. One former Barrio 18 gang member from San Pedro Sula said, *"Now gangs use women as hitmen (sicarias) because most people believe they are harmless, but when you give arms to women, they are lethal"* (Interview 26, former gang member).

Although men and women allegedly have similar roles in the gangs, most women are sexually abused once they are in a gang. This happens sometimes as part of their initiation ritual, wherein all members of the clique rape the woman before she can be admitted. Often women are abused only because members of the gang want to have sex with them. As one former Barrio 18 gang member from San Pedro Sula said, *"If several members of the gang want to have sex with a woman, so long as she is not committed in a relationship to someone in the clique, she cannot refuse"* (Interview 18, former gang member).

Moreover, female gang members are often used for tasks traditionally associated with women's roles, such as cooking for the gang members, attending to those who are injured and visiting them at the hospital, and doing errands, including sometimes transporting drugs from one place to another. Former female gang members whom we interviewed also said that women are used as sex objects to seduce or distract police officers during an operation.

Whether or not female gang members end up doing other jobs typically associated with men, data indicate that it is likely that the relationship between males and females in the gang is unequal and is consistent with the patriarchal or "macho" culture already prevalent in Honduras. Even former gang members who believed there were no differences between men and women in the gangs expressed the belief that women are "more passive" than men or that in the end, women are not the "head of the household and always obey the man."

4.0 JOINING THE GANG

The average age at which individuals joined the gang was 15.7, and most respondents (82 percent) joined the gang before turning 18. Only one-third of respondents joined the gang through a rite of initiation; the rest merely started participating in the activities of the group. Missions, which in other countries serve as rites of initiation, are reserved for ascending ranks within the organization.

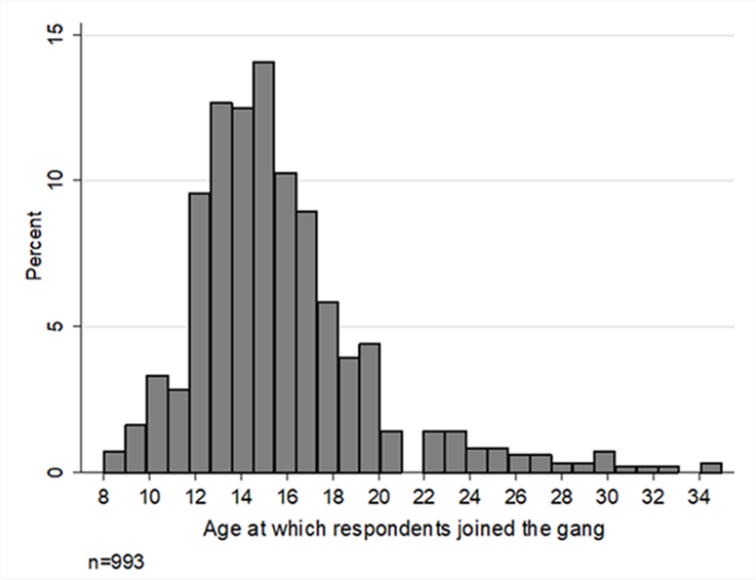
Most survey respondents provided reasons for joining the gang which reflected the allure of the gang: They did so to be with peers and to be part of the organization. However, in-depth interviews revealed that beyond those reasons, youths were coming from problematic families, inattentive communities, and institutions which do not provide development opportunities to minors. In any case, gangs seem to represent a viable alternative to satisfying the emotional needs of individuals in their adolescent years. Gang leaders take advantage of this vulnerability and quickly push their members to criminal schemes and violence.

In this section, we present data on the process of joining a gang and the reasons which youth join street gangs in Honduras. We used survey data and qualitative data to identify the factors which drive young people into street gangs. We first describe the process of becoming part of a gang and the variables associated with this process; then we discuss the perspectives of gang members, former gang members, and subject-matter experts on why individuals join gangs in Honduras.

4.1 THE PROCESS OF JOINING

The process of joining a gang can start at a young age in Honduras. According to the survey, approximately 5.6 percent of the respondents joined the gang when they were age 10 or younger. The average age at which individuals joined the gang was 15.7, with a standard deviation of four years. Thus, most of the study respondents joined a gang between 12 and 19 years old (Exhibit 19). Still, nearly 13 percent of the respondents became affiliated with a gang after turning 19.

Exhibit 19. Age When Joining a Gang in Honduras



There are, however, interesting differences in the reported age at which a person joined a gang based on the current age of the respondent. For example, older respondents tended to report joining the gang later than younger respondents. Respondents 30 years of age or older said they joined the gang when they were 18, on average. In contrast, respondents between 13 and 17 said

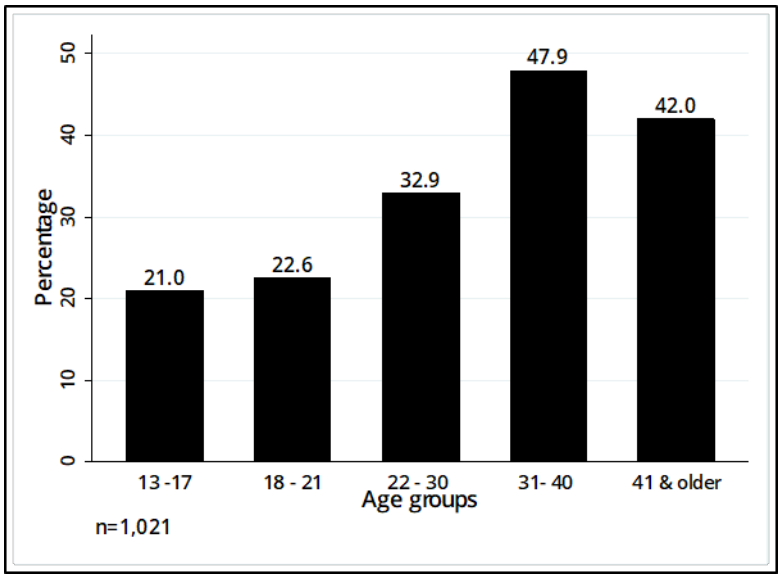
they had joined when they were 13. These age differences certainly can be an artifact of the age of the respondent, but they also can reflect the process by which youngsters joined the gang at an early age in recent years. Some experts indicated that, in some neighborhoods, gangs are making an effort to recruit younger members.

According to the survey results, the age at which individuals joined a gang does not seem to be influenced by the organization they joined. MS-13 and 18th Street gang members joined their gangs at approximately at the same. However, the survey data show that respondents who left home before the age of 15 reported joining the gang at an earlier age (15 years) than people who did not leave home before turning 15 (16.4 years). This finding suggests that several respondents walked away from their family's home to join the gang (more details on this finding are provided below).

For most survey respondents, the process of joining the gang seems to have occurred relatively quickly. Nearly 80 percent of the respondents said they joined the gang the same year they started hanging out with the members of the gang. However, it took nearly 13 percent of respondents between one and two years to join the gang, while it took 7 percent of the respondents more than two years. In only 2.5 percent of the cases, the process of joining took more than 5 years.

Notably, the survey data show that most of the respondents did not undergo a process of initiation when joining the gang. In several countries, youths join a gang only after enduring an initiation rite (Hazen & Rodgers, 2014) and in El Salvador, the "jump in" rite (*brincada* in Spanish) is an inescapable event (Cruz et al., 2017). In Honduras, only 31.8 percent of respondents with a history of gang affiliation said they joined through a process of initiation. Among female gang members, this percentage is even lower: 9.8 percent of the female respondents said they had to go through an initiation rite. In addition, the data indicate that rites of initiation were more common among the older respondents than among the younger ones. For instance, nearly half of the respondents between 31 and 40 years old said they underwent an initiation rite when they joined the gang. This percentage decreases to 32.9 percent among respondents between 22 and 30 years old and declines to 25 percent in the groups under 22 years old (Exhibit 20). These results suggest that rites of gang initiation are practiced less often than in the past.

Exhibit 20. Percentage of Respondents Who Underwent an Initiation Rite, by Current Age



The ritual of joining the gang was also more frequent in the MS-13 and 18th Street gangs than in the smaller groups. Approximately one-third of the members of Mara Salvatrucha (34.2 percent) and Barrio 18 (32.9 percent) in Honduras said they joined the gang through an initiation event. In contrast, 17.1 percent of respondents who had belonged to other gang groups (Los Chirizos, El Combo que no se deja, etc.) went through a ritual to join the gang. The former suggests that although rites of initiation are not very common in Honduras, the largest and more powerful groups practice them much more frequently than the smaller gangs.

The most common rite of "jumping into" the gang is for member initiates to take a beating from their own peers and future fellows in the gang. Among respondents who said they "jumped into" the gang, 60.3 percent underwent a rite of initiation in which they endured a beating for several seconds. According to Mara Salvatrucha gang members, the beatings lasted 13 seconds; Barrio 18 gang members said the beatings lasted 18 seconds. In reality, however, the beatings lasted much longer. The survey also revealed that nearly 27 percent of the individuals who went through a formal process of initiation had to complete a "mission." Those missions frequently entailed killing a person—or a few people—designated by the gang. In some instances, those missions involved the participation of more structured criminal schemes, such as setting up an extortion ring in a predetermined community. A comparison between gang organizations shows that although members of the MS-13 gang tend to endure more beatings as a form of initiation than Barrio 18 members, there is no statistically significant differences between the groups. The modes of joining the gang were very similar between the two largest gangs.

4.2 REASONS FOR JOINING THE GANG

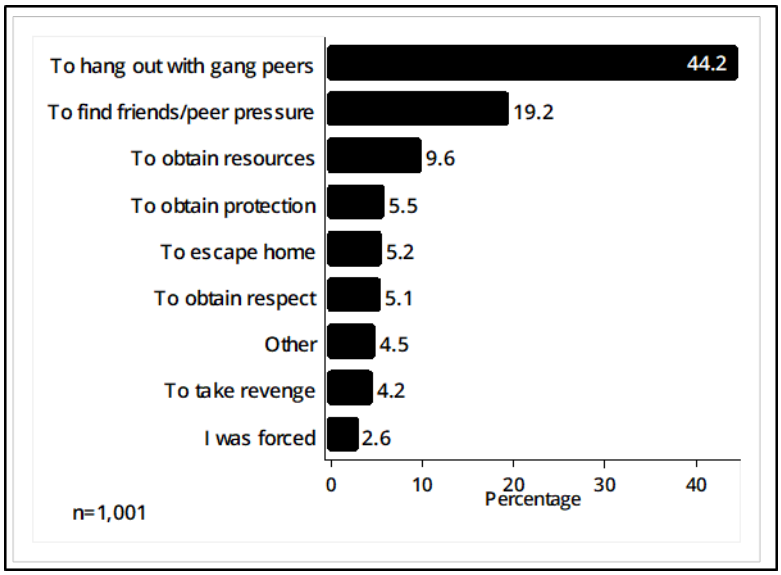
In the survey and in-depth interviews, respondents—persons who have been in a gang at some point in their lives—provided several reasons that young people join street gangs. Following the push-and-pull framework, the survey results pointed to a dominant pull factor: the desire to hang out with peers. However, in-depth interviews suggested that the reasons youth join gangs are inter-related. The drivers which led youth to join gangs started in the family, with lack of parental support, negligence, or abuse, which created a need for belonging and identity. These dynamics were exacerbated by the lack of social and governmental systems to support families and youth in contexts of widespread social inequality and poverty. One expert described the situation as follows:

> *"Just like the first years of maras and gangs, the economic situation, the disintegration of the family is still a primary cause, but today there is something that makes this much stronger, which is the level of corruption, the social inequality that exists in our society … Our young people do not have access to education, they do not have access to a job, they look for ways and alternatives to be able to come out of it, but the economic condition does not allow them to do so. The conditions of poverty … provides them, as I said at the beginning, with false security."* (Interview 8, community member)

As shown in Exhibit 21, 44.2 percent of the respondents said they joined the gang in order to be with their peers (i.e., to hang out with the gang). In contrast, 19.2 percent of the interviewees mentioned that they joined the gang to find friends or because a friend pressured them to be in the gang. Although both responses refer to the pull of friends and peers, the first answer refers directly to the gang, while the second one refers to the need to find or remain close to friends who happened to be in the gang. In any case, both answers underscore the pull which peers in the gang exert over teenagers and young people. Furthermore, nearly 10 percent of the whole sample said they joined the gang seeking resources (money, jobs, etc.). This answer also highlights the "pull" side of the process of joining the gang. However, other responses referred to the "push"

dimension: to obtain protection (5.5 percent), to escape home (5.2 percent), or to take revenge against another person (4.2 percent). Although nearly 15 percent of respondents referred to these push factors, it is clear from the general results that, in joining the gang, respondents felt more attracted to the gang than pushed into it from their personal conditions.[3]

Exhibit 21. Reasons for Joining the Gang



Despite the perceptions of some experts who point to criminal motivations for joining a gang, these findings suggest that most individuals join gangs in Honduras for "innocent" reasons, not because of criminal intent—at least during the initial stages. When prompted in the survey, respondents did not refer to psychological predisposition as a result of experiencing traumatic events in the home, or even to substance abuse, but said they joined the gang because they were attracted by the possibility of having fun with their peers, the solidarity, and the sense of belonging to a group. In the absence of competing activities, such as school (many of the respondents already had dropped out), employment (many were unemployed due to lack of opportunities) and recreational spaces, many of the respondents said they felt attracted to these groups. According to the in-depth interviews, this attraction to the gang was facilitated by the lack of a support system at home. This finding, thus, has important programmatic implications for anti-gang interventions.

Gender Differences

A comparison of these results by gender reveals some noteworthy differences in the distribution of the answers regarding the reasons for joining the gang. Female gang members tended to answer more frequently than males that they joined the gang to hang out with friends (females, 48.3 percent; males, 43.9 percent) and to escape from home (8.6 percent females, 5 percent males). In contrast, males responded more often than females that they joined the gang to find friends (males, 19.7 percent; females, 10.3 percent). Males also repeatedly referred to the desire to obtain resources more (10.1 percent) than females (1.7 percent). Although the low number of female respondents makes it necessary to add a word of caution about these comparisons, this low number suggests that the reasons young women join the gang might not always be the same as those of men.

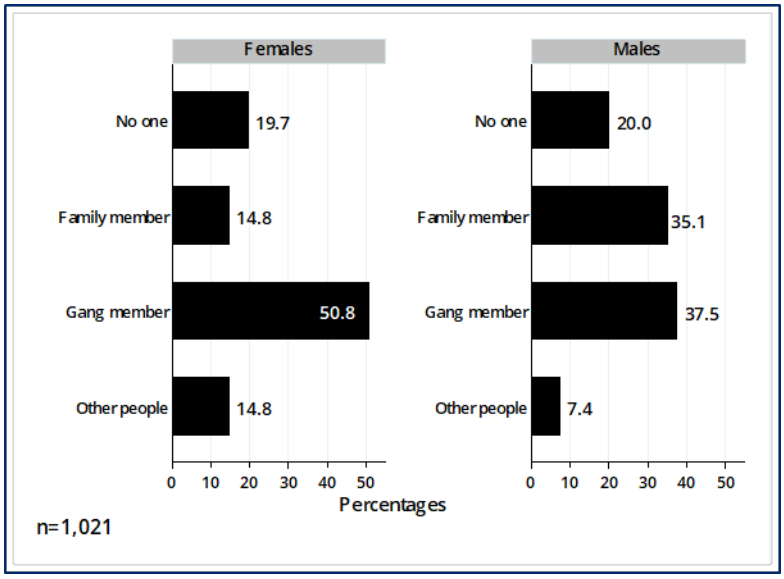
[3] A general comparison of these results with the findings of the Salvadoran study conducted in 2016 reveals a similar distribution of reasons for joining the gang. According to that study, hanging out with the gang and seeking friendship among peers in the gang were also the two top reasons for joining the gang in El Salvador (Cruz & Rosen, 2017).

Peer Influence

The survey points to the influence of peers in the process of becoming a gang member. The survey asked the respondents about the person closest to them at the moment of joining the gang[4]: 38.3 percent said that another gang member was the closest person to them, 33.9 percent mentioned a family member as the closest person, and 20 percent of respondents said they had nobody close to them when joined the gang. Only 7.8 percent of respondents referred to other people outside the gang and outside the family group. In other words, the most important peers for gang "wannabes" are their gang friends and members of their own families. A former Barrio 18 gang member from San Pedro Sula who left the gang when he was 19 explained, *"At the time, the appeal was that the kids in the neighborhood were in a new style, providing protection from one partner to another"* (Interview 19, former gang member).

When analyzed by gender, survey results indicate that female respondents valued their relationship with a gang member even more than males: 50.8 percent of women said the closest person in their life when they jumped into the gang was a gang member, while only 14.8 percent pointed to a family member as the closest person (Exhibit 22). For 37.5 percent of males, the closest person in their life when they joined the gang was a peer, but for many of them, family members were still the closest people.

Exhibit 22. Closest Person When Joining the Gang, by Gender



The fact that several respondents pointed to a family member as the closest person when joining the gang might seem surprising considering that the literature on gangs usually characterizes the process of affiliation as the result of family estrangement. However, the survey data also revealed that 19 percent of the study respondents reported having a family relative in a gang organization. That is, one in every five members interviewed had a relative in the gang as well. We found that among respondents who had relatives in the gang, 45.1 percent said their closest person when joining the gang was a family member. In other words, in several cases, the closest person to a budding gang member is a family relative who also happens to be a gang associate.

In-depth interviews with experts situated the results of the survey in the larger context of the maturational process. Respondents recognized the unmet developmental needs of young people to belong, to feel safe, and to be heard and an inadequate sense of consequences which pushed them to

[4] The question was, "Who was the closest person to you when you joined the gang?"

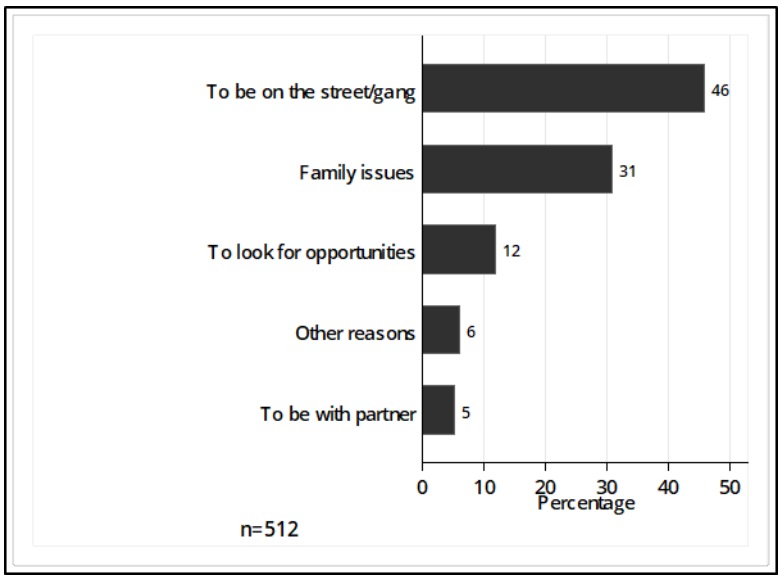
join the gang. Several respondents, including former gang members, shared an individual need for belonging and being valued, which they found in the gang. One community member shared the following observation:

> *"Let's remember that they are only reflecting the truncated needs as they are older. They are like that part of wanting to get attention, to have that sense of belonging to something and unfortunately without measuring the consequences in the future. They just want to feel that they are protected, that they belong to something or someone, that they feel safe and that they have that value that was not given to them in the place where they expected. They are young people who are crying out."* (Interview 30, subject-matter expert from La Ceiba)

The Role of Family

In the survey, approximately half (50.1 percent) of respondents said they left their home before turning 15 years old. Females reported leaving home in higher percentages (62.3 percent) than males (49.4 percent). However, as Exhibit 23 shows, most of the individuals who reported leaving their family household at a young age pointed to peers. Of the 512 respondents who said they abandoned their homes before turning 15, 46 percent said that they did so to be on the streets or to join the gang; 31 percent mentioned family issues (abuse, abandonment, parental separation, etc.); and 12 percent said they left home to seek employment or education opportunities. These findings contrast with those of the El Salvador study (Cruz et al., 2017), in which family issues appeared more frequently as reasons for leaving the home.

Exhibit 23. Reasons for Leaving Home Before Age 15



Although most of the survey respondents did not cite family issues as a main driver in their decision to leave home and join the gang, family issues emerged repeatedly in the in-depth interviews. One former gang member explained:

> *"Sometimes we don't have a family, someone to talk to. Sometimes we have a family, but we are like a painting on the wall; parents do not pay attention to us, we don't have brothers or sisters, we don't even pay attention to ourselves."* (Interview 11, former gang member from San Pedro Sula)

In-depth interview respondents suggested a number of reasons that families might affect youth's decision to join gangs, the predominant reason being that families were not able to meet the social

and emotional needs of the child. One female former gang member described how the gang replaces the family:

> *"The problem comes from families . . . the children at home, because the gang member starts from there, from the families that fight, from the dad and the mom arguing, the kid listens and gets traumatized. Then somebody else comes and starts brainwashing the kid."* (Interview 6, former MS-13 gang member from San Pedro Sula)

On the other hand, missing parents who migrated overseas or parents who were victims of gang violence often left children to be cared for by the grandparents or other relatives, or children became homeless. Respondents also suggested domestic violence or family conflict at home could leave children vulnerable to joining gangs. One subject-matter expert said:

> *"In the beginning, they are abandoned children, they are children who are neglected by their parents who have no assigned roles within the family . . . . For the same reason that most of them are from deteriorated homes, suddenly they find a friend who is a member of the gang and he begins to appreciate them . . . he invites them to a good restaurant for a tasty meal, he asks them for a favor to take a little package to a friend who lives in such a place, who will tell him where it is, who will pay him very well."* (Interview 3, subject-matter expert from Tegucigalpa)

As in the survey, where one in every five respondents mentioned that they had relatives in the gang, some former gang members interviewed also shared that some were born into families of gang members and were adopted into the gang life at an early age. A former Barrio 18 gang member from San Pedro Sula said, *"There are young people who do not have anything to eat because maybe their father died or their mother died for the same, they were also in a gang, as it is from generation to generation"* (Interview 26, former gang member).

Although most people interviewed in the survey seemed to prioritize the attraction (pull) exerted by gang life, we cannot dismiss the importance of the family in the process. For the individuals who end up joining the gang, the pull of the group seems to cancel out the manifestation of push factors prompted by family problems. However, those factors are there, even if gang members do not recognize them as motives and they contribute to the process.

Failure of Community Supports

Though less prevalent in the survey, in-depth-interviews indicated that respondents joined gangs because of a lack of opportunities and of means to fulfill basic needs. Several respondents explained that youth are driven to gangs for financial reasons, including their family's inability to provide for them or their own inability to find a job. One community member said:

> *"Poverty and need mean that young people enter the gang as the only thing they have at hand in their place, the only thing that provides them with three times of food, the only thing that promises them to climb up and be able to have money, cars, women; that's what they have at hand. If our young people had another kind of opportunity or more opportunities inside, they could decide between this or another; they wouldn't have one thing, practically that they are almost obliged to enter."* (Interview 25, community member)

With respect to poverty, some respondents referred to lack of educational and developmental opportunities in the communities in which youth lived. A subject-matter expert said:

> *"Only 28 out of every 100 adolescents will find a school classroom, so more than 70—in this case, 72 adolescents out of every 100—will not find a place in a school classroom. Once they finish their*

> *ninth-grade education at age 15, they are left with no chance of getting in. This has led to less knowledge and tools to get around. On the other hand, not only that, but the environment does not offer them employment opportunities, only exploitation. This has generated [the idea] that to earn a living they do not study and have to contribute to the family, so they feel that the roads are closed."* (Interview 27, subject-matter expert from Tegucigalpa)

One expert said gangs give young people a sense of "false security" in conditions in which inequality is rampant. The gangs have "become visible more than anything else in the young population, which is the one that suffers most from inequality." Consistent with the observations and insights which experts and community leaders shared, many of the former gang members whom we interviewed said they joined the gang because of "necessity." Some of those former gang members said they joined the gang so they could care for sick family members or for their children. Joining the gang offered them "sustenance" and access to "easy money," as one community member explained:

> *"They discover abilities, they discover potentials, and so much is the security they give them that they assign them a position, assign them a role, assign them an activity. For any human being, whether he is in a mara or a gang, or whatever structure he is in, the human being feels good when he is assigned an activity, because he feels capable, because he feels part of something and that he can do something, as opposed to being told, 'You are good for nothing' … When he hears other people identify in him those skills that he has, of course, he's going to feel safe in that group."* (Interview 8, community member)

5.0 GANG DISENGAGEMENT

As stated in the previous section, leaving the gang is a process. For an individual, it usually takes some time and several attempts to separate from the organization and disengage from criminal activities. In this section, we explore the conditions which lead Honduran gang members to abandon gangs. We focus on the intentions to leave the gang, which generally are a strong indicator of disenchantment toward the gang and start a course which may result in separation from the gang.

First, we establish that 72 percent of our active respondents were willing to disengage, either by calming down or leaving the gang altogether. This is an important finding, for it shows that not only is it possible to leave the gang but also that many gang members are already entertaining the idea of doing so. However, in comparison with the results of the El Salvador study, the percentage of individuals who say they have intentions to leave the gang is lower (in El Salvador, it was nearly 80 percent).

Second, we present a logistic regression with active members that identifies the variables that prompt intentions to leave the gang. In the model, we included the age of the respondent, the gang organization, the position within the gang, the number of children the respondent has, whether he (or she) has had traumatic experiences in the gang, religious affiliation, the number of years in the gang, and the nature of the social interactions the person had (whether gang related or not). The findings show four main factors associated with a gang member's intentions of calming down or leaving the gang: type of gang organization, number of years in the gang, religious affiliation, and type of social interactions.

With respect to the type of gang organization, individuals in smaller gangs are more eager to abandon the organization than those in the largest gangs, especially MS-13. With respect to the number of years in the gang, the data show that intentions to disengage are stronger during the first two years of gang membership, after which they subside as the gang member reaps the benefits of gang activity. However, intentions increase again as time passes and the gang members realize that the gang reduces their opportunities for personal development. Finally, the results of our analyses show that disengagement depends on the social interactions to which an individual is exposed. People who interact more frequently with groups outside of the gang tend to express more frequent intentions of leaving than those for whom the gang is their only reference group.

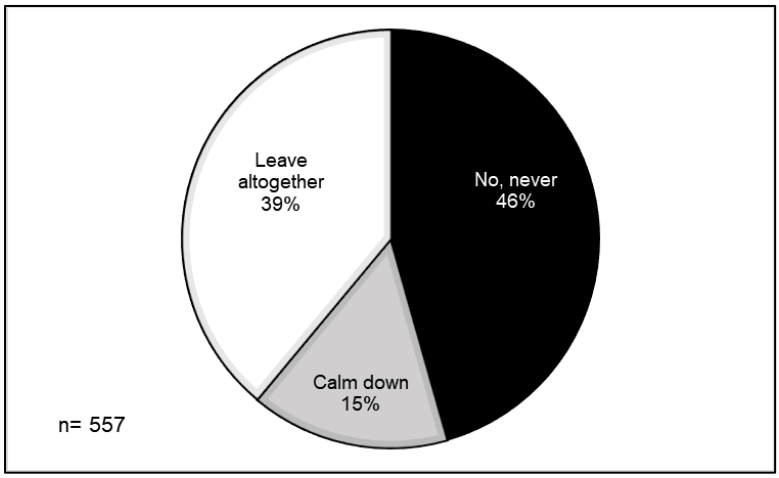
5.1 INTENTIONS TO LEAVE

We asked all survey respondents whether they had ever considered "calming down" (that is, giving up violent gang activity) or leaving the gang. Of the interviewees (active and former gang members: n = 1,021), 28 percent said they never considered leaving the gang. However, 20.6 percent said that they had considered calming down, whereas 51.4 percent said they had thought about leaving the gang altogether. On this point, it is important to note that several gang members drew a distinction between "calming down" and "leaving the gang altogether." *Calming down* refers to stopping participation in criminal activities linked to the gang, while *leaving* refers to the abandonment not only of gang-related activities but also one's identity as a gang member. There has been some discussion about the practical implications of this semantic difference in El Salvador (Cruz & Rosen, 2020; Rosen & Cruz, 2018). However, as with the Salvadoran case, we found no practical difference between calming down and leaving the gang. In both cases, respondents were referring to their significant intention to break with gang life.

In Exhibit 24, we present the results of intentions to leave the gang only among active gang members (n = 557). It is interesting to note that 46 percent of active gang members said they would never leave the gang, whereas the rest responded either that they would like to calm down (15 percent)

or leave altogether (39 percent). A comparison of these results with the findings of the Salvadoran study reveals that Honduran active gang members expressed less intention to exit the gang than their Salvadoran peers. In El Salvador, 61 percent of active gang members expressed intentions to leave the gang (Cruz & Rosen, 2020). Attending to the discussion in the previous paragraph, we interpret calming down and leaving as manifestations of gang disengagement intentions.

Exhibit 24. Intentions of Active Gang Members to Leave the Gang



5.2 THE KEY FACTORS

The following survey data analyses focus only on the 557 respondents who were active in the gang at the time of the interview to identify the factors associated with intentions to leave the gang. We conducted a series of logistic regressions on intentions to leave the gang. In estimating the factors associated with intentions to leave the gang, we considered most factors indicated by the academic literature in the United States, such as age, time in the gang, having a family, previous traumatic experiences, religious affiliation, role within the gang, and the person with whom the active gang member spent most of his/her time (a gang-related person or a non-gang person). We present the results of the final model in Exhibit 25.

Exhibit 25. Factors Associated With Intentions of Disengagement Among Active Gang Members[+]

Variables[++]	Coefficient	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval
Age	0.006	0.19	-0.03 – 0.04
Number of children	-0.03	0.06	-0.15 – 0.01
Adverse childhood experiences	-0.002	0.01	-0.01 – 0.01
Religion: Catholic or other	0.14	0.35	-0.55 – 0.82
Religion: Evangelical	0.63**	0.22	-0.19 – 1.07
Had a traumatic event in last year	0.08	0.21	-0.34 – 0.49
Number of years in the gang	-0.05**	0.02	-0.08 – -0.01
Interaction with gang members	-0.92***	0.23	-1.37 – -0.47
Gang (MS-13 reference)			
18th Street gang	0.24	0.22	-0.19 – 0.67
Other gangs	2.12***	0.51	1.12 – 3.12

Variables++	Coefficient	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval
Position in the gang (leadership reference)			
Soldier	0.15	0.28	-0.39 – 0.69
Collaborator/Informant	0.45	0.32	-0.17 – 1.07
Other	-0.16	0.47	-1.07 – 0.76
Constant	0.15	0.51	-0.85 – 1.15
N	468		
Pseudo R2	0.1057		
Log likelihood	-285.40		

*$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$; ***$p \leq .001$.
+ Although the total number of surveyed active gang members is 557, the model includes only 392 observations due to the missing values.
++ Given the small sample of active female gang members (n = 38), gender variable is not included in the model.

Gang Membership

There is a statistically significant relationship between the intention to disengage and the gang organization to which the respondent belonged. Members of smaller gangs (*combos*) have a much greater intention of leaving the gang compared to members of the two larger gangs. According to the results, on average, members of small gangs have a 90 percent probability of intending to leave the gang. This probability is 32 percentage points higher than that for members of Barrio 18 and 38 percentage points higher for members of MS-13. In fact, 18th Street gang members expressed more intentions to leave than their rivals from the MS-13 gang, although the differences between the two main gangs are not statistically significant (Exhibit 26). In any case, these results suggest that intentions to leave the gang are more prevalent in the smaller gangs than in the large, organized gangs in Honduras.

Exhibit 26. Intentions to Leave the Gang, According to Gang Organization (n = 557)

Gang Organization	Have you ever thought about leaving the gang?	
	No	Yes
MS-13	53.1	46.9
18th Street	41.9	58.1
Other gangs	10.4	89.6

For smaller gangs, asking the leader for permission to leave the gang seems to be a more viable option than for the two major gangs. This may be explained by the size of the leadership structure; that is, in larger gangs, control is tighter because the higher ranks include a larger number of senior members, thus making it harder for someone to obtain permission to leave the gang.

Years Active in Gang

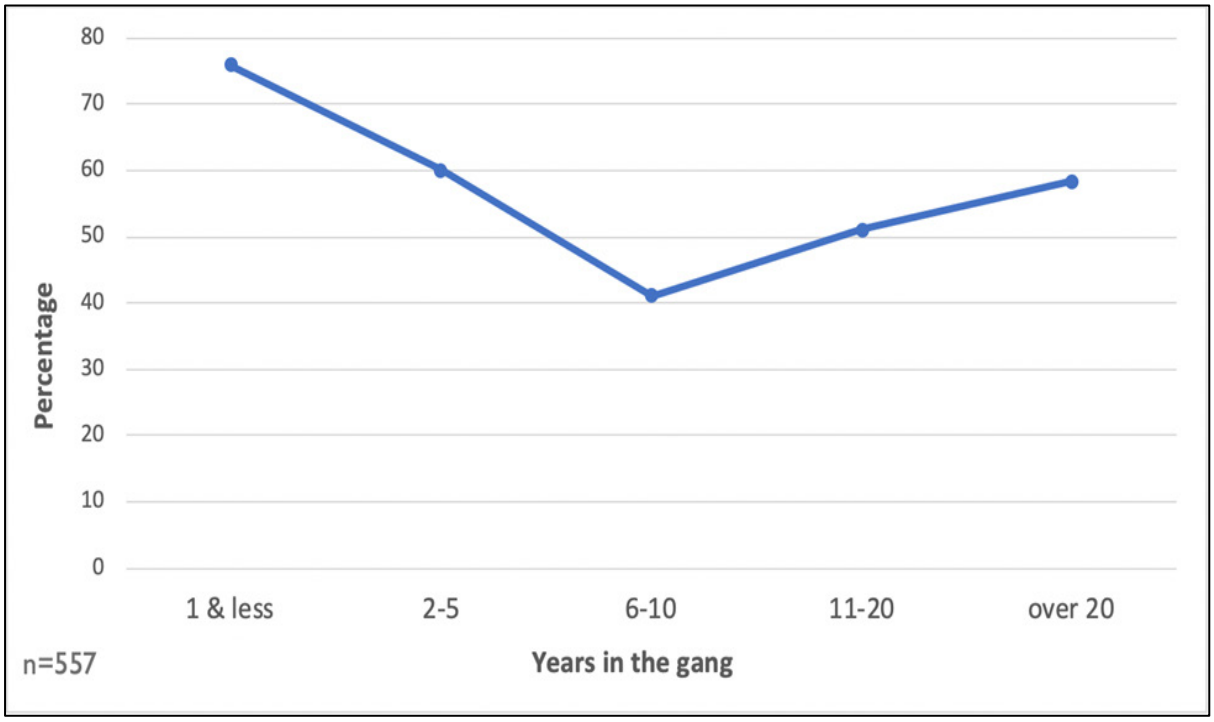
The number of years which one spent as an active member in the gang also plays a role in one's decision to leave. However, the direction of this relationship is not linear, which introduces an interesting nuance. Among the group of gang members who have been with the gang for one year, intentions to leave were frequent (nearly 80 percent). Those intentions generally decreased as time

passed. After six years in the gang, fewer gang members expressed intentions to leave (40 percent). After that, intentions among the active gang members started growing again (Exhibit 27). In other words, those who had just joined the gang were more likely to consider leaving. We can also see these trends in the predicted probabilities from the regression model. According to the results, a gang member with less than two years of membership has an 80.5 percent probability of having intentions to leave the gang; this probability declines to 46.7 percent among those who have between seven and 10 years of membership, and rises to more than 52 percent in gang members with 11 or more years of membership.

A more detailed analysis of the group that is active in the gang for one year or less, and who had the intention to leave (*n* = 36), shows that most of them (61 percent) were gang collaborators, or informants, rather than full-fledged members. After a prolonged period in the gang, an individual once again begins to think about leaving, but the intention does not reach the initial levels.

In contrast to the FIU team's findings in El Salvador, where intentions to leave the gang linearly increased with years of membership, in Honduras, the U-shaped curve of intentions to leave the gang suggests that the early months and years of gang life are probably full of doubts about membership. These uncertainties seem to subside as time passes and experiences in the gang become more gratifying. However, those doubts about gang life—probably prompted by maturational changes—re-emerge later in life to push people outside the gang.

Exhibit 27. Intentions to Leave the Gang, According to Years in the Gang



Religious Affiliation

Belonging to an evangelical church contributes to one's intention to disengage from the gang in Honduras. Among active members affiliated with an evangelical church, almost 63 percent would be willing to leave the gang, compared to 51 percent of Catholics and 46 percent of nonreligious individuals (Exhibit 28). The data from this study corroborate the findings from different studies in Honduras, which also pointed to the importance of religion in the process of leaving the gang (Brenneman, 2011; Wolseth, 2008).

The in-depth interviews provide some clues about the reasons that evangelical churches seem to be more successful in attracting members from the gang. However, before we discuss these reasons, it is important to note that evangelicals seem to be more active in recruiting followers in the communities and spaces where gangs prevail (Offutt, 2019). While working in the field, our research team observed the frequency and intensity in which these churches do outreach in places frequented by gangs. For instance, evangelical churches regularly conduct services among the inmate population within Honduran prison facilities. A gang member may join the church while being imprisoned and attend its services. In fact, among those surveyed in prison (*n* = 771), the majority (53 percent) declare themselves Evangelical Christians, while those outside the prison are more likely to have no religious affiliation (48 percent). Similarly, former gang members are more likely to be Evangelical Christians (55 percent) than active gang members (47 percent) (Exhibit 28). Evangelical Christians also attend a religious service more frequently (11 times per month on average) than Catholics and other groups (seven times per month on average). However, according to survey results, the intention to leave the gang does not depend on the frequency of church attendance.

Exhibit 28. Intentions to Leave the Gang, According to Religious Affiliation (n = 557)

Gang Organization	Have you ever thought about leaving the gang?	
	No	Yes
Religion		
No religion	54.0	46.0
Catholic and other	49.1	50.9
Evangelical	37.3	62.7

In any case, evangelical churches seem to be more successful than other denominations in connecting with the spiritual needs of the gang population. In the in-depth interviews, half of the respondents referred to a connection to God as the most powerful change mechanism which enabled gang members to disengage. Respondents said the connection changed their view of life as well as their behaviors. Specifically, four former gang members explained that their connections with God helped them disengage. These four respondents said they reached out to a pastor in the church or responded to a friend's invitation to go to church.

Pastors and experts indicated that gangs would track former members as they integrated into a community of faith to ensure they did so "with sincerity"; the gang respected one's decision to leave for religious reasons, but potentially would retaliate against those whom they determined were not following a religious lifestyle.

Surprisingly, in the qualitative interviews, only two respondents described their connections with nonreligious community organizations which were part of their path to desistance in the final year before they retired from the gang or calmed down. Although both respondents explained that a church pastor had supported them, they also referred to the JHA-JA organization and the staff who had come to the neighborhood to provide "rehabilitation" and "tattoo removal." One of the respondents also referred to another organization, Funrema, whose staff gave workshops on silkscreen printing.

Social Interactions

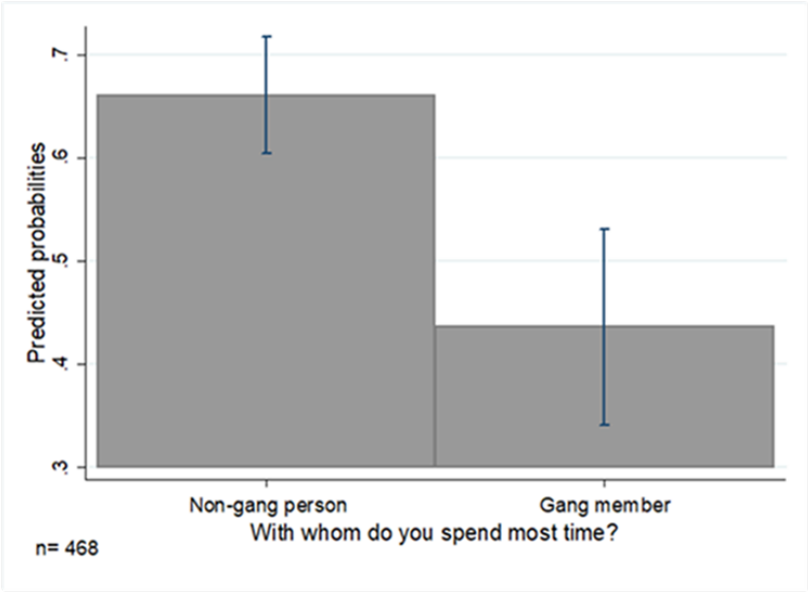
The final factor—and perhaps the most important one in the intentions to leave the gang, according to the survey results—is relationships with others, which has a significant influence on the intent to disengage. Statistical analysis of active gang members who answered the question about whom they spent the most time with before they were detained (n = 521) showed that those who spend the most time with a gang are less likely to consider leaving (Exhibit 29). In contrast, those who spend the most time with non-gang people (family, non-gang friends or even alone) are more likely to think about leaving the gang. These findings are consistent with results from studies elsewhere (Decker et al., 2014; Pyrooz et al., 2010). They highlight the importance to gang members of alternative social interactions. Relationships with people not connected to the gang—pastors, family members, partners, and friends—operate as a pull factor that attracts the individual to lifestyle alternatives to gang membership.

Exhibit 29. Intentions to Leave the Gang, by Predominant Social Interactions

Social Interaction	Have you ever thought about leaving the gang? (n = 521)	
	No	Yes
Non-gang	36.9	63.1
Gang	60.4	39.6

We can also view the importance of social interactions by plotting the predicted probabilities resulting from the regression analyses. As Exhibit 30 shows, an active gang member who interacts more frequently with a non-gang-related person has a 66 percent probability of manifesting intentions to leave the gang, holding all other variables at their means. In contrast, an active gang member whose social interactions occur mainly with gang members has a 43 percent probability of wanting to leave the gang.

Exhibit 30. Adjusted Predicted Probability of Intentions to Leave the Gang, by Predominant Social Interactions (With 95 Percent Confidence Intervals)



Qualitative data provide a rationale for this phenomenon. Data from several in-depth interviews indicate that relationships with the immediate or extended family, intimate partners, and neighbors as well as professionals (e.g., psychologist, police officer, prison director) provided social and emotional support to help the former gang member disengage. Several former gang members talked about connections to other individuals who gave them the emotional support they needed to leave the gang. Some of them referred to family members, mothers, and siblings who continued their support despite their involvement in the gang. Two respondents mentioned significant others who helped them change their lifestyle and calm down. One former MS-13 gang member from San Pedro Sula who spent eight years in prison referred to the prison directors who believed in her strengths, but she described her mother as her biggest supporter:

> *"My mom influenced me a lot because I left two little girls here on the street when I was arrested, and she picked up one of my girls. The other one was taken by her father's family and they separated them, and there was a big problem there. Psychologically, my mommy was washing my face. I thought about my daughters, that this would not leave me anything good, and my mommy influenced me a lot so that I would leave. I retired inside the prison, not here on the street."* (Interview 6, former MS-13 gang member from San Pedro Sula)

Respondents also described how some young individuals matured and entered a different phase in their lives which led to a path to desistance. About one-third of the respondents referred to intimate relationships with someone and becoming a parent as a factor which led them to "see life in a different way and that they do not want their children to go through the same thing as them," because "no matter how violent a gang member may be, he never wants his children to go through the same thing."

5.3 OTHER INFLUENCES IN THE DECISION TO LEAVE THE GANG

The factors outlined above—the gang organization, number of years in the gang, religious affiliation, and social interactions—are the key factors which, according to the survey data, explain why some gang members decide to leave the gang and others not. This does not mean that other events, factors, or conditions preclude people from entertaining intentions to leave, but that those remain more critical when we simultaneously control for the potential effects of many different factors.

For instance, scholars have insisted that traumatic experiences play a role in pushing people out of the gang (Berger, Abu-Raiya, Heineberg, & Zimbardo, 2017). Such traumatic experiences are more likely when the individual spends more time with the gang than with his/her non-gang relatives. Losing a friend or surviving an assault make a difference in the process of disengagement. But these experiences are more likely to occur when the person does not have another reference group. That is why belonging to a specific gang is critical. It also explains why evangelical churches are critical in the disengagement process. These interactions filter the experiences which ultimately push (in the case of the gang organization) or pull (in the case of the churches) the individual out of the gang.

Many of our interview respondents referred to an accumulation of traumatic experiences which led them to decide they wanted to leave the gang. For example, one former Barrio 18 gang member from San Pedro Sula described an experience which influenced his decision to leave:

> *"At first, it was fun to be there with the young people, but then they gave us certain [tasks], and that didn't seem like much to me because it already involved hurting others. In that either they went to take him out of the house because he did something bad, he did something that was not*

planned. . . . They went to get him out of the house and killed him. That made me reflect that that was going to be my future if I was still there in the gang." (Interview 18, former gang member)

While an accumulation of events led some gang members to change their perceptions about membership, several former gang members described a single, traumatic event which led them to take an action to desist. For example, one person referred to a "massacre" during which friends were killed in one night. Another individual described getting shot, and another mentioned an encounter with the police. Former gang members described not only their own fear of being killed but also their fear of loved ones suffering:

> *"I once saw a relative of theirs who was also a member die. . . . Many times I saw how they killed them, disappeared them. . . . When I saw so much, I decided to leave, and so we left—two of us left—and the others were killed."* (Interview 11, former gang member from San Pedro Sula)

Finally, because many gang members are recruited at very young ages, several community-level respondents indicated that gang members' perspectives change as they mature, leading them to consider a life outside the gang.

Data from qualitative interviews also indicate that those who occupy the lowest positions within the gang hierarchy are more likely to think about leaving the gang and that it may be easier for them to do so. This phenomenon might be related to years of gang membership, as explained earlier. Newcomers occupy low positions within the gang. Half of the interview respondents explained that the path to disengagement is related to a person's rank in the gang and that it influences a person's ability to try to leave the gang. Respondents said it is easier for a lower ranking gang member to get permission to leave the gang or to disengage from gang activities; respondents said lower ranking members are less likely to pose a threat to the gang or reveal information to rival gangs or the police. In contrast, the path to disengagement is difficult for someone who ranks higher in the gang. One *community member from San Pedro Sula* described the dynamics:

> *"If they don't have many people on them, if they haven't caused tears on many people, which could be harmful to maras, there's a way out. If that person has many, they can't. It's very hard for them to leave. If a person is, for example, a sympathizer, someone who maybe likes the gang and hangs around it but doesn't really join it, someone who is just a mule, who moves the drugs around or helps by looking out, they can get out as many times as they want. But for a gatillero to get out, there is some thinking to be done about that, because they already know too much about the situation. It's not recommended, because then they could point things out for others. They have to have a very good argument to be allowed to get out."* (Interview 1, community member)

5.4 DIFFERENCES BY GENDER

In this section, we analyze some of the differences in the process of gang disengagement by gender. Although the number of female gang members who participated in the survey was low, we believe it is important to separate some key parts of the analyses by gender to underline the particular processes experienced by women in the gang. A comparison of means shows that women tend to be active in the gang for shorter periods of time (mean = 4.1 years) compared to male gang members (mean = 7.4). When asked whether there are differences in the way men and women leave the gang, qualitative interview respondents said that women are more likely to be able to leave the gang when they become mothers. One community member from San Pedro Sula said, *"In the case of women, it's mostly when they get pregnant and they see themselves as mothers; they see that life is not as they paint it"* (Interview 2, community member).

This view was echoed by a female respondent who was a gang leader in her clique. She spent several years in prison. She said that her role as a mother was one of the reasons which led her to disengage from the gang, although other experiences, both in and outside of prison, also influenced her decision. Other gang members reiterated that a woman's role as a mother could help her negotiate a way out. On the other hand, as with men, women's ability to leave the gang seems to depend on their rank. One respondent said, *"The woman's role is more passive than the man's role"; "she might not get very involved."* In contrast, a former gang member explained that *"it may cost [a] woman even more"* to leave the gang if a gang member is *"obsessed"* with the woman and will not let her be with another man.

As with men, women who ascend to positions of leadership in the gang have a more difficult time disengaging from the gang than those who are not leaders. Having more authority and decision-making capacity in the gang gives them greater access to information, which top gang leaders regard as one of the most valuable assets. Deserters are threatened with murder, and anyone who wants to leave the gang needs to obtain special permission from the top leadership. In a case described in a qualitative interview, a female former gang leader said she had to obtain a special permit to leave the gang. She explained that she was granted the permit because she was pregnant, and she said she was committed to God; however, the gang leader made it clear to her that *"if it is true that you are attached to God, you have to keep your devotion, because the minute you detach yourself, I will give the order to kill you."*

5.5 MECHANISMS OF LEAVING

Many individuals who have decided to leave the gang take the next step: They leave. We asked all the survey respondents what they have to do to leave the gang. Although 37 percent of them said that it is impossible to leave (Exhibit 31), the rest described mechanisms for exiting the gang. There are several ways to separate from the gang. The most frequent revolves around a church or faith-based rehabilitation program; 28 percent of the respondents mentioned this type of mechanism. Others said it is necessary to speak to the leader (19.4 percent) to request an exit, and nearly 12 percent said that individuals can just walk away from the gang. Less than 3 percent mentioned the need to accomplish a mission, which is usually understood as killing somebody.

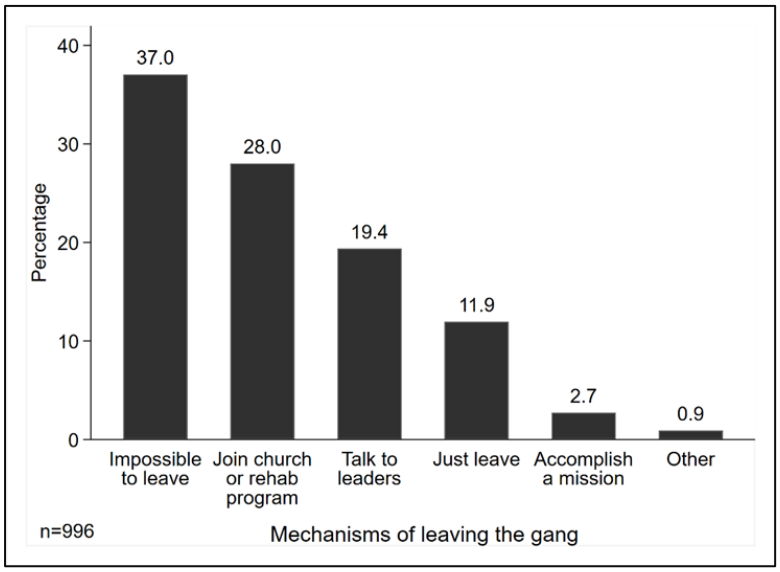
When the research team compared these results by gang organization, we found that in the mechanisms for leaving, there are no significant differences between the two main gangs, except for one important point: Members of the 18th Street gang answered more frequently (42.6 percent) than MS-13 (35 percent) that it is impossible to leave. This is consistent with other findings in this study which indicate that the Barrio 18 gang is more severe in its control of members. A subject-matter expert provided the following explanation:

> *"MS[-13] has always been more open to that. What happens is that, in these times, they have more work, they accumulate more money, and they have a way of supporting the kids, even with pay, with a salary. In the case of the 18th [Street gang], the thing is that not everyone is given that permission because they are more closed in their membership. It is difficult for anyone who become an active member of the 18th [Street gang] to leave."* (Interview 10, subject-matter expert from Tegucigalpa)

In terms of gender, the survey data did not reveal any significant difference between males and females. However, when compared by age groups, the data indicate that young gang members responded more frequently (30.2 percent) that they have to speak with the leaders in order to disengage from the gang than members between 31 and 40 years old (9 percent). This may signal

the fact that young gang members are more accountable to older gang members, who usually occupy leadership positions.

Exhibit 31. Mechanisms of Leaving the Gang



5.6 CHALLENGES TO LEAVING

According to the survey results, nearly 33 percent of former gang members said they or their families had been threatened by the gang. During the in-depth interviews, former gang members explained that the immediate challenge they faced as they tried to leave the gang was death. Across respondents who were formerly in a gang and among community leaders, 20 of the 36 respondents said that former gang members perpetually fear being killed by a rival gang or their own former gang, in cases in which gang members perceive that a person who disengaged from the gang leaked information. One former gang member from San Pedro Sula said, *"The biggest thing is death, waiting for it to happen. I've been retired for 17 years, and I don't think I'm safe from that"* (Interview 12, former gang member).

Relatedly, respondents said another consequence of desisting is having to leave the community or country in an attempt to escape the threat of being killed. One community member from La Ceiba said, *"You could say that it is advisable for them to start a life in a different place, a different environment"* (Interview 30, community member).

One respondent mentioned that former gang members risk encountering challenges with the law if police become aware that a person was formerly in a gang. The gang member must negotiate a lot of risks and decide whether or not they are willing to go through the risks, because *"even if you withdraw from the organization you belonged to, there are always risks from the opposing organizations and also from the police, even if you are already retired."*

Despite the difficulties associated with leaving a gang, many people are successful in leaving the gang in Honduras. In fact, nearly half of our survey sample were no longer active in the gang and see themselves as former gang members. In addition, most respondents (62 percent) know someone who has done so. In El Salvador, a larger share of the interview respondents, 82 percent, knew somebody who left (Cruz et al., 2017), and these results confirm that people can effectively leave the gang in Honduras. These numbers suggest that in general, cases of disengagement are relatively frequent. In addition, the survey data indicate that female gang members (83 percent) more frequently report knowing somebody who left the gang than males (60.6 percent).

6.0 REINTEGRATION CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

As noted throughout this report, the process of gang disengagement is not straightforward. Gang members who want to separate from the gang and those who have done so face several challenges, which we discuss in this section.

The survey results provide a view of the ways in which gang members interpret those challenges. According to the results (Exhibit 32), the most frequently cited challenges among those with a history of gang membership is lack of opportunities (38 percent). Lack of employment opportunities constitute the core of this answer (32 percent), but 6 percent cited a lack of educational opportunities. Both lack of employment and lack of education point to areas for development in the Honduran society.

The second most frequently cited challenge is insecurity: 12.6 percent of the survey respondents described the threats posed by the violence from gangs and the general climate of insecurity that prevails in the country. In addition, nearly 11 percent of the respondents described police abuse and state repression as the main challenges. This particular challenge is of deeper concern to active gang members (13.6 percent) than to former gang members (7.7 percent). Other challenges include discrimination (10.6 percent), poverty (9.4 percent), and lack of family support (7.5 percent). Almost 9 percent of the survey respondents said that they did not face any challenge.

Exhibit 32. Main Challenges Faced by Gang Members (n = 1,021)

Main Challenges	All	Former Gang Members	Active Gang Members
None	8.8%	8.7%	8.8%
Lack of opportunities	38.1%	39.8%	36.6%
Insecurity	12.6%	13.6%	11.8%
Government and police abuse	10.9%	7.7%	13.6%
Discrimination by society	10.6%	9.0%	11.8%
Poverty	9.4%	10.5%	8.4%
Lack of family support	7.5%	8.5%	6.6%
Other challenges	2.2%	2.2%	2.1%

The research team asked survey respondents about appropriate institutions to which they can turn for support in facing these challenges. Most of the 1,021 respondents (69.2 percent) said that churches or faith-based organizations are the right institutions to carry out rehabilitation programs in Honduras, while 149 respondents (14.6 percent) pointed to nongovernmental organizations. The former means that most people believe that rehabilitation should be in the hands or nongovernmental entities. The rest of the responses were split between the police and the army (5.6 percent), other civilian government institutions (2.3 percent), and other organizations or persons (3 percent). Only 54 respondents (5.3 percent) said that no organization can help rehabilitate gang members.

These findings about challenges and institutions of support during the process of reintegration align with the observations and insights shared by most of the interviewees in the qualitative component of the study. On the basis of all those findings, we classified the reintegration efforts into four broad categories: (1) social and relational supports, (2) government and social policies, (3) community

services, and (4) economic opportunities. In the rest of this section, we present data from the qualitative research on the four broad categories of reintegration challenges and supports, including what former gang members would ask of society to help them reintegrate and how the government and other social support organizations could support them in reintegrating.

6.1 SOCIAL AND RELATIONAL SUPPORTS

Respondents described social and relational challenges to reintegration as primarily a lack of social acceptance within communities and the high likelihood of discrimination. One respondent, a former gang member, described experiencing marginalization after desisting: *"There is a moment when you feel alone. There is a moment when you would like to go back. You are also tempted because when you meet them, they invite you back"* (Interview 22, former Corona Cuatro gang member from San Pedro Sula).

Social and relational support was also by far the most frequently discussed need for increasing the likelihood of successful reintegration in qualitative interviews. Many respondents indicated that attention at home is the foundational need that many young people who join gangs may lack; for example, one former gang member said:

> *"I think that is something from home, something in the form of attention, because now I understand that it is not only the mistreatment but also the attention to your children, the way you spend your time, if you are a friend or really you are just a father."* (Interview 22, former Corona Cuatro gang member from San Pedro Sula)

Data also indicate that relationships with people outside of the gang structure helped support former gang members in their path to desistance.

6.2 GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL POLICIES

Former gang members expressed a grave lack of trust in the capacity and willingness of the government to implement policies that work to prevent young people from joining gangs. In response to a question about what the government can do to address the problem, one former gang member said:

> *"It never has and it never will; it is something that is not only here in our country. In the end it is a war, if you don't look for a dialogue possibly, but nobody is going to do anything."* (Interview 22, former Corona Cuatro gang member from San Pedro Sula)

Respondents also said they had challenges with police, whom they did not trust.

All respondents described needs and gaps in government and social policies that related to the lack of economic, educational, and social supports described herein; specifically, however, respondents indicated that social policies should be tailored toward the needs of former gang members and those who are at risk of joining a gang. For example, one community member from San Pedro Sula said, *"The government can create public policies oriented towards education for these people specifically, so that they can develop academically and thus also have opportunities for employment, work, or service to society itself"* (Interview 23, community member). One 22-year-old former Barrio 18 gang member who joined at age 13 and left at age 18 mentioned the role of the state:

> *"If the state intervened and gave all the benefits to the young people, I think this part of the gangs would not have much impact. The organizations are no longer looking for adults, but, rather, they*

> *are looking from a young age to form the gang, the marero, the banderín, the paisa, and little by little to go climbing. I don't believe that with blood, or killing people, or increasing military budgets, or in the aforementioned death squads, which do exist, there can be a solution."* (Interview 26, former Barrio 18 gang member from San Pedro Sula)

Respondents emphasized the importance of instituting preventative policies, as opposed to responsive policies. One community respondent said:

> *"I believe that one of the things they should do is invest in violence prevention, prevention not only for those who are already active members but also for those who have already retired, and for the new generations who are about to be part of these structures or not."* (Interview 8, community member)

Another expert suggested that policies be designed to attack root causes:

> *"Attack the causes, the extreme poverty, the corruption, the lack of commitment to the youth in this country. The schools are not strengthened; the public schools do not have projects for young people to have fun, to read, to believe. There are no programs where young people exploit their abilities."* (Interview 31, subject-matter expert)

Finally, some respondents suggested strengthening K–12 education for preventing young people from joining gangs in the future. One subject-matter expert from San Pedro Sula said, *"If we don't work on the educational level, we're going to have problems during those 20 years, and if we don't continue to do prevention from the schools . . . we are going to have problems later on"* (Interview 17, subject-matter expert). A former gang member also emphasized this idea:

> *"The truth is that [the government] has to do many things, both to follow up in the schools, because now, as I reiterate, the organizations are no longer looking for adults, but, rather, they are looking from a young age to form the gang."* (Interview 26, former Barrio 18 member from San Pedro Sula)

6.3 COMMUNITY SERVICES

Community services to support reintegration should, according to former gang members and community respondents, focus on developing awareness of stigmatization against former gang members as well as creating community. A pastor described how stigmatization can affect other efforts to reintegrate—for example, in the workforce:

> *"Although efforts have been made at the government level to raise awareness among entrepreneurs to accept these types of people when they want to regenerate or leave the structure to have a normal life. However, it is still a serious obstacle to labor insertion, the insertion to the common social life."* (Interview 23, community member from San Pedro Sula)

Around half of respondents said the church should have a primary role in providing such services. Though interviews indicated that many former gang members have engaged with the church in their path to desistance, participants further suggested that churches—which they perceived as trusted institutions regardless of denomination—could partner with the government or civil society to provide community services.

Multiple respondents pointed to the importance of relying on institutions which are credible from the perspective of the community (e.g., JHA-JA). One respondent explained that established

organizations which already have worked to build trust in the community should lead the process of reintegration:

> *"Those that are experts in the subject, those that really know about and have a history of intervention in the subject, those that have this commitment. . . . San Pedro Sula, for example, has about five or six organizations that have really contributed to the topic. . . . It is these organizations that must lead these processes, as well as the State institutions."* (Interview 32, subject-matter expert from San Pedro Sula)

A few respondents also mentioned the importance of starting with building community at the neighborhood level through community leaders, starting when children are still young.

6.4 ECONOMIC SUPPORTS

Economic challenges to reintegration were related to stigmatization in the process of finding a job, the presence of a police record, and the low pay for the low-skilled jobs for which former gang members are qualified. Many respondents noted that any tattoos indicating a person was formerly in a gang would make it difficult to obtain a job. One respondent said:

> *"When you leave the gang, you have to face all kinds of challenges: how to survive economically, how to rent an apartment or a house, be aware of the neighbors who are on the sides, a myriad of challenges that leads you to get on a public bus company. You go there with your eyes peeled to see if so-and-so did not ride and looked at you a lot."* (Interview 6, former MS-13 gang member from San Pedro Sula)

Another respondent noted that economic challenges are a reason that some former gang members may try to leave the country.

Respondents spoke of the need to provide vocational education supports to former gang members in terms of trainings which support integration into the workforce. One community leader from San Pedro Sula said, *"The government would have to implement policies, provide greater coverage in the sense of location, more support both at the level of professions, access to nonformal education—that is, workshops, trades, barbershop, electricity"* (Interview 7, community leader). An expert respondent also connected the lack of labor skills with a weak initial education: *"They really need training because there are even many who can't read or write. Starting also from the families, strengthening the families"* (Interview 35, subject-matter expert).

Respondents said that providing job training or other services which can help people gain employment is a primary way in which government and society can help young people in their path to desistance. One former gang member from San Pedro Sula said, *"I just think that what they want is support too, but what they want most I think is a job"* (Interview 13, former gang member), while a former gang member from La Ceiba said that being able to earn an income is *"the main thing that attracts me from not being in gangs"* (Interview 5, former gang member). Employment seemed to create a feeling of worth among ex-gang members, which may then make it less likely that they would go back to the gang. An expert respondent from La Ceiba similarly pointed to the need for *"decent salaries that dignify a person"* (Interview 30, subject-matter expert).

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

We conclude this report with the words of one of our respondents:

> *"Thank you for listening to us, for giving us the space for our opinions, for talking, for dialoguing, but the truth is that many times not even that gives us a chance to talk, because people can no longer be trusted. Sometimes it is nice to remember that, and at the same time it is ugly, because it brings back sad memories."*

This research project has attempted to understand the conditions and factors surrounding gangs in Honduras from the perspectives of the people who have belonged to gangs. Being one of the few studies among former and active gang members in Honduras, this research represents a significant contribution to our understanding of the gang landscape in one of the most violent countries in the Western Hemisphere. It draws important conclusions about the structure and modus operandi of street gangs, the reasons behind gang involvement among youth, the factors which facilitate gang disengagement, and the challenges which former gang members face.

In addition, the alignment of this research design with that of the previous study on gangs in El Salvador provides a solid ground for comparison and expands our knowledge of street gangs in the countries of the Northern Triangle.

As in other countries of the region, most gang members in Honduras belong to the MS-13 gang or the 18th Street gang, and fewer belong to the so-called *combos*, smaller gangs. The two dominant gangs represent a complex structure, composed of different levels of membership and territorial control. Contrary to their colleagues in El Salvador, MS-13 and 18th Street in Honduras do not have a unified national leadership and are rather fragmented, with cliques coordinated at the regional level in an autonomous fashion.

Similar to the findings in El Salvador, however, the Honduran MS-13 gang is better organized than its main rival, the Barrio 18 gang. Both gangs obtain their income from activities such as local drug peddling, extortion, and killing for hire. The MS-13 gang is reportedly involved in drug trade at a larger scale, while extortion is the main source of revenue for the 18th Street gang. As a result, the 18th Street gang charges "war tax" from the smallest businesses within the communities it controls and is generally considered more ruthless than the MS-13 gang.

Youth become involved with gangs for a variety of reasons spanning relational, community, and structural levels. The main drivers of gang involvement have remained unchanged over the past three decades. While domestic violence or family conflict often push unprivileged youth onto streets, gangs provide an attractive alternative by offering care and camaraderie—and also material resources. Although the process of gang engagement ultimately results from an interplay of push-and-pull factors, the survey results show that pull factors prevail in the decision to join the gang. For most prospective gang members, the process starts with the desire to hang out with their peers and to feel part of a group. Material resources, such as money, employment, drugs, and other perks, play a lesser role in the decision to join the gang, but these become important once the individual ascends in the ranks of the organization. Thus, the criminal intent is not the primary reason to join the gang; the search for a sense of belonging is. A worrisome sign of the "success" of gangs' recruitment strategy is that kids have been lured into gangs at an earlier age in recent years. The Honduras criminal code also creates incentives for the gang leaders to recruit underage members because they are not punished by the law in the same way as adults.

While in the gang, most individuals realize that gang life does not always provide the benefits they hoped for; it is fraught with constant threats of being injured, killed, or losing someone close. As a result, many consider disengaging from gang activities. Leaving the gang is possible, but it is an extremely arduous process characterized by a lengthy struggle against one's own fears and external challenges. As in El Salvador, the most common mechanism for gang disengagement in Honduras is joining a religious community while also requesting permission from the gang leaders.

The primary conditions for the intention to leave the gang in Honduras are situated at several levels of one's social ecology. At the individual level, the time spent in the gang affects one's decision to leave. Gang members and collaborators at the earliest stage of gang involvement seem to have doubts about their membership and think more frequently of leaving the gang. Likewise, those who were active members for over six years are likely to consider leaving. At the relational level, interaction with people not connected to the gang exposes gang members to alternative lifestyles and prompts thoughts of disengaging. In addition, members of smaller gangs (*combos*) are among those who are more likely to consider leaving. At the community level, belonging to a religious organization—especially to an evangelical church—facilitates gang disengagement by providing a supportive and protective environment to the gang member. Drivers of gang disengagement found elsewhere, such as age, marriage, having children, securing employment, and experiencing traumatic events, appear to be secondary in Honduras.

There are no straightforward answers regarding gender differences within the Honduran gangs. Although most female gang members play supportive roles, some do climb the gang's hierarchy to become "soldiers" and perform killings for hire. As with male gang members, women's ability to leave the gang seems to depend on their degree of involvement. The greater the engagement in criminal activities, the harder it is to leave. While having children may provide an avenue for gang disengagement, it also implies a need to find an alternative source of income to provide for the family. It is important to remember that the desire to leave the gang is not enough for a gang member to take a decisive step.

A range of societal factors prevents many gang members from disengagement, even when they have reached the maturational age and are willing to disengage from a gang. Major challenges include the lack of economic opportunities, the threat of being harassed by security forces, the threat of being killed by a rival gang once left without protection, and the stigmatization of former gang members by community residents. Former gang members often lack the basic professional and social skills necessary to reintegrate into society. In addition, the discrimination by potential employers results in the inability to find legitimate employment, thus discouraging many from abandoning their criminal activities. This array of inter-related challenges makes many reconsider their decision to leave the gang, even if they have entertained the idea for several years.

The inability of former gang members to fulfill their basic economic and security needs undermines crime prevention and rehabilitation efforts by negating any positive impact these might produce. Effective interventions aimed at tackling criminal violence in Honduras require a large-scale, comprehensive approach which addresses the root causes of gang involvement.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents our recommendations related to the main findings of this study. Recommendations are organized according to the type of intervention (prevention, rehabilitation, reinsertion) and the level of intervention (primary, secondary, tertiary) in Exhibit 33. The following text provides a summary of the key takeaways from the exhibit.

Overall, our study indicates that programs should prioritize prevention through school and community-based interventions targeting young children before they reach the age of recruitment into gangs at the primary level. The goal should be to make it less likely that youth will join gangs at all, while simultaneously encouraging them to stay in school and subsequently to find employment. However, with respect to gang disengagement, we recommend prioritizing the population recently recruited by the gang and those who are incarcerated. These recommendations—italicized below—are likely to have the most success in helping former gang members leave gangs, stay out of them, and integrate into society in a productive way.

We want to emphasize, however, that preventing, mitigating, and combating crime and violence effectively requires multiple efforts as well as commitment from the government, civil society, and the international donor community. In the Honduran context, the government's participation is particularly crucial. No single intervention implemented in one sector alone (e.g., education) will reduce violence and crime in Honduran communities. Violence exists and moves in between home, schools, peers, and the community at large. Moreover, any intervention proven to be effective in other settings should be adapted to the specific context in which it will be implemented. In designing interventions, it is important not only to analyze the specific risk and protection factors affecting a particular community, but also to articulate clearly and realistically the specific results the activity seeks to accomplish and to explain why this is the case; that is, it requires the articulation of a good theory of change. Government agencies should be able to play this coordinating role, and they should mobilize resources to integrate the multiple initiatives from other actors.

Finally, prevention, rehabilitation, and integration are all important to effectively address the problem of crime and youth violence. In Honduras, like in most of Central America, the government has prioritized suppression as a strategy to combat crime and violence. While suppression does play an important role, it has not proved to be effective when it is not accompanied by a more comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of crime and violence. More importantly, as many interviewees for this project noted, the police often collude with the same criminal organizations they seek to suppress. Without addressing the larger problems of government corruption, lack of transparency, and collusion with criminal organizations, rather than contributing to the solution of the problem, suppression efforts are likely to reinforce the problems of crime and violence in the country. To be more effective, USAID should address the problems of corruption and collusion throughout its programmatic interventions.

Exhibit 33. Related Findings, Intervention Focus, and Recommendations, by Level

Related Findings	Preventive Interventions	Recommendations by Level
1. Youth are recruited to gangs at an early age, most often before they turn 15. 2. Ninety percent of survey respondents never finished high school.	• Prevention efforts should focus on children, not only adolescents, since we know gangs recruit underage youth. Youth outreach centers, funded by USAID and prevalent in Honduras, target older youth. While they provide indispensable services, they may not effectively prevent vulnerable youth from joining gangs, since those who attend may not be vulnerable to recruitment.	**Primary: Community level** • Establish outreach centers that target younger children ages seven to 15. **Primary: School based** • Offer after-school services for youth and children ages seven to 15 to help retain children in school. • Directly address the risks related to gang membership with youth and children as part of programs. Emerging research indicates that direct communication about social issues can help change attitudes and behaviors.
3. Most youth who join gangs seek friendships, camaraderie, or activity; they are not joining gangs for criminal reasons or with criminal intent. More than 60 percent of respondents said they joined a gang to "hang out" and/or "to be with or find friends."	• Prevention programs should include activities that provide positive social circles, camaraderie, and a sense of mission or purpose. • Programs should also aim to provide role models that youth do not find in their communities. • Youth outreach centers should ask youth themselves about the types of activities they are seeking or need the most.	**Primary: Community level** • Organize youth groups with a sense of a common purpose, offer positive role models, and engage youth in positive relationships, e.g., through organized sports or boys' and girls' clubs. • Provide youth with spaces and opportunities to meet and engage with positive role models, such as soccer players or celebrities who came from disadvantaged communities and have made an impact elsewhere. • Consider vocational education programs for youth who drop out of school or who show promise or interest in a trade-related field.
4. Youth are recruited in the streets, even if they do not live in the street. Many come from broken families that exhibit high levels of violence or that do not protect or adequately supervise children, leading youth to be out of school and in the streets.	• Prevention programs should identify and target at-risk children and youth who are exposed to violence and neglect in the home. Youth who do not have safe homes are more likely to seek friendships in the streets, where they are exposed to gangs.	**Secondary: Family based** • Identify youth who are at risk of violence due to family disintegration and provide parental and family programs to promote protection and communication. • Consider piloting shelters or safe places for children who are at risk of abuse. • Identify children in schools who are at risk of dropping out and assist them with mentorship programs.

Related Findings	Rehabilitative Interventions	Recommendations by Level
5. During the first years after joining a gang, most gang members have an intention to leave. After several years, that intention declines and does not manifest itself again until much later, once the person is an adult.	• Gang members who are detained either in prisons or in juvenile facilities can be helped to disengage from the gangs provided they are offered adequate support.	**Tertiary: Individual level** • Work with the government to design a rehabilitation program for gang members who have recently been recruited to gangs. Prioritize first-time juvenile detainees, who would be more amenable to these programs than people with high levels of recidivism. • In addition to enhancing vocational skills and giving gang members the opportunity to complete high school, programs should include psychological support and information on sources of community support to help individuals once they leave the facilities. Ideally, facilities should provide a mentor for ongoing support, as support from a mentor figure was critical for many people who disengaged. • Provide psychological support as former gang members aim to reintegrate into society. Consider piloting a cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) intervention that follows international protocols. CBT has proved to be effective in reducing impulsive and aggressive behavior in young offenders.
6. It is possible to disengage from gangs, but not without some support. Without an external source of support, either from the family, the church, or a social organization, it is extremely difficult for a person to disengage from a gang. 7. Gang members who are incarcerated in prisons or juvenile detention facilities do not receive adequate	• Gang members who leave prison or who have never been imprisoned but want to disengage from gangs require external sources of support to be able to translate intentions to disengage into actionable behavior. • Incarceration without rehabilitation has proved to be ineffective in reducing violence.	**Tertiary: Individual level** • Support established organizations who work with former gang members to offer psychological assistance and a network of support to help disengaged gang members resist returning to the gangs. Former gang members need to trust the organizations offering help; therefore, connections with established organizations are crucial. • Conduct a needs and risk assessment to identify appropriate treatments, for example, CBT therapies for individuals who show impulsive behavior or lack of self-control, or other types of psychological therapies.

rehabilitation services. This represents an important, missed opportunity to help those gang members who have only a few years of experience in the gangs. 8. Former gang members and community leaders do not trust the government to address the problem of gangs in Honduras outside of the law enforcement approach.		• Organize networks of social support through clubs that engage former offenders in positive activities, such as groups of men to discuss what being a man means (following the guidelines of the Becoming a Man [BAM] program in Chicago). • For women, a support group can also be created to allow women to bond and forge trusted relationships.

Related Findings	Reintegration-Oriented Interventions	Recommendations by Level
9. Gang members who disengage are stigmatized by and subjected to discrimination by community members, even when they want to be productive members of society. 10. Having a tattoo is associated with gang membership and makes opportunities for reinsertion difficult.	• Gang members who disengage from gangs not only need to be rehabilitated; they also need to be reintegrated into society. In addition to enhancing the individual skills of former gang members and assisting them in recovering psychologically and spiritually, individuals need support to return to society, make a living, and prevent their children from joining gangs. • It is crucial to change the narrative about youth violence throughout Honduras and to raise awareness of issues of stigma and discrimination in poor communities.	**Secondary and Tertiary: Individual level** • Support the private sector in generating internship programs for former gang members. • Pilot a small grants program for small businesses in areas not serviced by the community. • Support the National Prevention Program to provide tattoo removal services. **Tertiary: Community level** • Introduce a communications campaign to combat stigmatization and discrimination. • Consider a violence prevention training program with community and business leaders, as well as media. • Design and pilot a restorative justice intervention, enabling victims and perpetrators to come together, seek forgiveness, and allow perpetrators to repair the damage inflicted in the community.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. METHODOLOGY

Preliminary Interviews

Data collection began with preliminary interviews with key local subject-matter experts to gather information to inform sample design, refine the research questions, define different types of gang involvement to aid recruitment, and adapt our instruments for use with youth who had current or former involvement with gangs. The American Institutes for Research (AIR), Florida International University (FIU), and Democracy International (DI) team consulted with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the mission in Honduras to identify key local experts from diverse backgrounds with an in-depth understanding of gang activity. At this stage, we interviewed 13 experts including police, politicians, social scientists, and members of civil society organizations working on the issue. We also interviewed religious leaders, members of youth organizations, and community activists who were formerly involved in a gang.

Interviews were intended to (1) gather information prior to data collection to adapt the survey instrument and (2) generate in-depth understanding of the reasons that youth join gangs, and their experiences both in the gang and as they try to leave and reintegrate into the society. Preliminary, in-depth interviews conducted with subject-matter experts were used to adapt the El Salvador survey items to the Honduran context and add items that asked about gang disengagement and reintegration.

Quantitative Approach

The survey with active and former gang members constituted the core of the quantitative approach in our research. This strategy followed a design similar to that implemented in the gang study in El Salvador (Cruz & Rosen, 2017). As detailed in Appendix B: Ethical Considerations, the FIU institutional review board reviewed and approved the protocols for recruitment and data collection tools. Considering security concerns of the subjects and the research team, we decided to implement the surveys in controlled environments. The research team focused on subjects housed in detention centers or sheltered in rehabilitation programs using a multistage selection process that used purposive sampling to select the detention centers, convenience sampling to select the organizations that work with former gang members, and random sampling to select the respondents within each facility.

First, the sample design was based on available information from institutional leaders about the distribution of gang members in adult penitentiaries, juvenile detention centers, and rehabilitation programs sponsored by the churches, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the government. In December 2018, institutional leaders indicated there were 2,058 persons with a history of gang membership imprisoned in adult penitentiary facilities and 422 under the juvenile detention system. In addition, nearly 900 minors with a history of gang membership were under parole by the Honduran juvenile system. We selected the centers that housed gang members and requested authorization from the appropriate authorities to work in these facilities. In parallel, we contacted NGOs and faith-based programs that work with youth at risk in Honduras to access former gang members to participate in the survey.

Second, in each center, the field research team, composed of a group of 12 Honduras-based interviewers trained by the FIU research team, met with the institution's director to request access to the inmates (or participants, in the case of rehabilitation programs) with a record of street gang membership. The research team randomly selected subjects based on the roster of known gang members provided by each center. The leaders of the research team explained the goals of the study to each potential participant and answered any questions before and after the survey. The survey was

conducted by trained interviewers, who recorded respondents' answers on paper. The research team used a variant of the self-nomination technique to confirm who was—or had been—a gang member.

The research team conducted 1,021 valid surveys with active, aspiring, and former gang members in detention centers and rehabilitation programs. We administered the survey in three juvenile detention centers (Centro Sagrado Corazon de Maria, Renaciendo, and El Carmen), three adult penitentiaries (Penitenciaría Nacional de Támara, El Pozo I, and El Pozo II), two centers of juvenile parole (Medidas alternativas in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula), several faith-based centers or churches in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro, and one rehabilitation center (Proyecto Victoria). The team of interviewers administered all interviews in the same prison in one day to ensure the safety of all participants.

The questionnaire (130 questions and more than 200 variables) collected sociodemographic information and measured organizational structures, command and control within and across gang cliques (the neighborhood-level gang group), processes of affiliation, activities, and role in communities. Further, we added questions related specifically to gang disengagement to understand how members are able to leave gangs in Honduras and what role other programs and organizations play in assisting and supporting disengagement and other gang-related violence activity. Most questions were tested in Cruz and colleagues' (2018) Salvadoran study, though we ran a pilot test with nine people in Honduras to pilot the questionnaire. Each survey lasted approximately 30 minutes. We did not provide monetary incentives or rewards to the interviewees for participating in the survey. The FIU research team led the survey fieldwork activities in Honduras between September and December 2019.

Sample Characteristics

Ninety-four percent (n = 960) of the 1,021 valid survey respondents were male, while only 61 (6 percent) were females. At the time of the interview, respondents were 25 years old, on average. Nearly 80 percent of the respondents had joined or associated with a gang in a metropolitan area (Tegucigalpa or San Pedro), 16 percent had joined in cities between 50,000 and 200,000 inhabitants, and the rest had joined a gang either in another country (1.1 percent) or in a small town in Honduras (2.9 percent). At the time of the interviews in late 2019, 54.9 percent of respondents were active in their respective gangs, while 45.1 percent said they were no longer in the gang. Almost half of the survey respondents had held regular positions within the gang (49 percent), one-quarter were collaborators (25 percent), fewer were leaders (18 percent), and a small percentage had other roles in the gang (8 percent).

Analyses

The research team collected survey information using paper questionnaires and registered the answer to each question using pencils. We included codes for each answer in the questionnaire to facilitate data processing. This enabled quick inputting and information processing. We generated a database and checked for data entry errors and quality. The rate of no response for the whole survey was very low, at 0.32%. Most people responded to all questions.

We used Stata 15 and 14.2 to analyze the survey data. We ran a multivariate logistic regression analysis to identity the variables associated with intentions to leave the gang. This approach allowed us to estimate the relevance of each factor while holding the effects of the other variables constant. We generated descriptive statistics and regression analyses to examine four main themes: (1) the characteristics of the respondents, (2) the current structure and organization of gangs, (3) the reasons that youth join gangs, and (4) the factors associated with intentions to leave the gang.

Regarding the survey results and unless we state otherwise, we report only data that returned statistically significant differences and associations using diverse significance tests.

Qualitative Approach

We conducted semistructured, in-depth, qualitative interviews with community stakeholders, subject-matter experts, and former gang members. The interview protocol included questions about knowledge of gang structure and organization, why youth join gangs, mechanisms that lead members to leave the gang, and supports needed to help former gang members reintegrate into society. Interviews with respondents who were previously involved in a gang included an additional section about their social networks in the 12 months leading up to their desistance from the gang. These questions aimed to elicit a more in-depth understanding of the decision-making processes that enable youth to desist from gangs.

We conducted qualitative interviews with 38 respondents in the metropolitan area of Tegucigalpa, and in the departments of Atlántida and Cortés, between October 2019 and January 2020. In addition to Tegucigalpa, the departments of Cortés and Atlántida register the highest number of gangs in the country (Dudley et al., 2016). The interviewers used a snowball sampling technique to identify and contact a diverse group of respondents, including former gang members, religious leaders, psychologists, youth workers, and a business owner.

Data Management

FIU and AIR contracted with two experienced, local data collectors to conduct interviews. Our U.S.-based team trained data collectors on the study goals and content, informed-consent guidelines and procedures, data collection tools, good interviewing practices, and safety and security measures for interviewing in communities. These trainings also prepared interviewers for security measures, such as to ensure the safety of the respondents and interviewers.

The qualitative team monitored data collection using a tracking sheet that interviewers used to track metadata (i.e., length of interview, location, respondent type, and gender of respondent). The interviewers digitally recorded all interviews for which we received permission from the respondent to record. An external agency transcribed and translated the interview recordings from Spanish to English. The research team consulted the audio recordings as needed to verify content.

Analysis

Drawing on the research literature and research questions, AIR developed a codebook to guide data organization and the process of data reduction across three coders. Our codebook followed the structure of the interview protocol, including overarching categories for gang structure and organization, information about the process of joining gangs, mechanisms for leaving the gang, and supports to help reintegrate former gang members into society. We used the ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) to develop subcodes to further organize data under each overarching category.

Researchers inputted the codebook into the NVivo 12 qualitative software program to organize and subsequently analyze the qualitative data. At the start of the coding process, three researchers each coded three of the same transcripts independently and cross-examined one another's coding to ensure inter-rater reliability and to reach consensus on the coding scheme. Coders met weekly to ensure consistency, review progress, discuss emerging themes, and adjust the coding scheme as needed, using an inductive approach to capture the content of interest. The coding team reviewed coded content and revised coding as needed.

After coding the raw data into the study's thematic categories, the qualitative team analyzed the interview data by characterizing the prevalence of responses, examining differences among respondent types, and identifying key findings related to the research questions. We synthesized key findings within each thematic area to answer study questions and provide supplemental information to survey findings and enhance our understanding and allow for triangulation.

APPENDIX B. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

For the implementation of the survey and in-depth interviews, the research team went through three rounds of full board review with Florida International University's (FIU's) institutional review board (IRB) to ensure that all provisions of human subject protection were followed during the project. Because this project was a collaboration among several organizations, the American Institutes for Research (AIR), FIU, and Democracy International (DI) agreed that the FIU IRB would serve as the IRB of record for AIR and DI. Thus, all participant organizations and research team members submitted their protocols and certificates to the FIU IRB.

Given the sensitive nature of the topic, the security and confidentiality of the respondents and data collectors was an essential component of our study. The research team created a robust security plan prior to data collection. Once the research team obtained approval from FIU's IRB to proceed with data collection, we followed the processes outlined below for each respondent.

Consent

We informed all adult participants that the information they shared is confidential. We also informed them that their participation is voluntary and that they could end their participation at any time or skip any questions they did not wish to answer. We discussed the potential risks and benefits associated with participation in the study. This information ensured that participants had sufficient knowledge about the study to make informed decisions regarding participation. For security purposes, we did not ask for a written signature but asked for verbal consent from each participant after reading the consent form aloud and ensuring that the participant understood the content.

In the case of participants who were minors at the time of the interview, we obtained verbal consent from each minor interviewed, along with two additional, written assents from adults on behalf of each juvenile participant: one from his/her legal guardian (parent or court-designated guardian), acknowledging the consent for the minor, and one from an independent advocate who certified that the minor freely consented to the interview. To protect the identity of the minors, the FIU research team kept the assent forms and letters in a safe location separated from the questionnaires and data protocols.

Assurances of Confidentiality

AIR handled all data in accordance with the procedures and protocols approved by the FIU IRB. Standard practices include digital recording, transcription, and translation where necessary; complete anonymization of data; and protection of confidentiality.

The study protected confidentiality through the use of several methods. We did not identify any individuals by name in this report, and we did not share specific, identifying information about any individual with anyone outside the research team. The team analyzed data collectively so that information from any one participant remained anonymous.

Data Protection

ANED, the local firm in charge of conducting survey interviews, stored the data in a safe location in a locked office in Tegucigalpa. The information from the surveys was entered into an encrypted file and transferred electronically to the United States via FIU Extranet portal, which was accessible only to the members of the FIU research team. A digital copy of the questionnaires is stored under encryption in FIU servers. The original hard copies of the questionnaires were destroyed in Honduras immediately after the transfer to FIU. The physical consent forms for Verbal Child Assent

signed by the child's advocates and guardians are stored at FIU offices in case the IRB decides to audit in the future.

To protect qualitative data, the team stored all audio-recorded interviews and transcripts on AIR's secure, Internet-based collaboration and document management platform. Only authorized AIR, FIU, and DI research team members had access to the data stored on this platform. Our research team follows USAID policies for data sharing and will archive survey data collected.

APPENDIX C. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Código de Instrumento: [ ]

ENCUESTA SOBRE JUVENTUD EN CONFLICTO CON LA LEY EN HONDURAS. *Buenos días\Buenas tardes, mi nombre es (MOSTRAR IDENTIFICACIÓN INSTITUCIONAL) y trabajo para ANED. Estamos realizando un estudio muy importante para ayudar a los jóvenes en riesgo o en conflicto con la ley, y le solicito que por favor me preste unos minutos para hacerle unas preguntas.* ***Los resultados del estudio servirán para la construcción de proyectos orientados a ayudar a jóvenes a encontrar oportunidades de rehabilitación y reinserción****. No hay respuestas buenas o malas, sólo opiniones acerca de sus experiencias. Le prometemos que lo que Ud. nos conteste será confidencial y no se compartirá con la policía ni con las autoridades de este centro. Solo los encargados del estudio podrán ver los resultados de la encuesta que serán anónimos y agrupados a base de las respuestas de todas las personas que entrevistemos. Esta encuesta es voluntaria, usted puede decidir que no quiere participar. Y si decide participar, puede terminar esta entrevista en cualquier momento y sus respuestas no se usarán en el estudio. ¿Acepta participar? ¿Tiene alguna pregunta antes de comenzar?*

Nº	Pregunta	Respuesta		Saltar a pre-gunta	Código de respuesta	
	Tipo de población:	En rehabilitación	***1***			
		En prisión	***2***			
		Fuera de prisión	***3***			
	I: Información general					
1	***¿Sos miembro o has sido miembro o simpatizante de una pandilla o mara?***	Nunca he estado en una pandilla/mara	***0***	**terminar la encuesta**		
		Miembro/simpatizante actualmente	***1***			
		Fui miembro/simpatizante	***2***			
2	***Sexo***	Masculino	***1***			
		Femenino	***0***			
3	***Edad***	***años***				
4	***¿Estás actualmente inscrito/a en la escuela?***	Sí	***1***	**7**		
		No	***0***			
5	***¿Cuánto tiempo (en meses) llevás fuera de la escuela o sin estar inscrito/a en un programa de educación?*** *[Si responde en años, multiplique por doce]*	***mese***				
6	***¿Por qué motivo estás fuera de la escuela o sin estar inscrito/a en un programa de educación?***	Me expulsaron de la escuela/no me dejan inscribirme	***1***			
		No quiero estudiar	***2***			
		Tenía que trabajar	***3***			
		No tengo recursos/dinero para estudiar	***4***			
		Por traslado de centro	***5***			
		Otras razones (especifique):	***7***			
7	***¿Cuál es tu último grado completado en la escuela?*** *[Anote el último grado completado]*					
8	***¿En la actualidad, tenés un trabajo formal?***	Sí	***1***			
		No	***0***	**11**		
9	***¿A qué te dedicás?*** *[Escuchar la respuesta y marcar una sola respuesta]*	Asalariado(a) del gobierno o empresa estatal	***1***			
		Asalariado(a) en el sector privado	***2***			
		Patrono(a) o socio(a) de empresa	***3***			

Nº	Pregunta	Respuesta		Saltar a pre-gunta	Código de respuesta	
		Trabajador(a) por cuenta propia	***4***			
		Trabajador(a) no remunerado(a) o sin pago	***5***			
		Otro (especifique):	***7***			
10	***¿Cuántas horas trabajás por semana?***	***horas***				
11	***¿Tenés un trabajo informal?***	Sí	***1***			
		No	***0***			
12	***¿Cuál es el ingreso por mes en la casa donde vivís/vivías?***	Menos de LPS. 6,140	***1***			
		Entre LPS. 6,141 y LPS. 12,300	***2***			
		Entre LPS. 12,301 y LPS. 24,600	***3***			
		Entre LPS. 24,601 y LPS. 73,700	***4***			
		Más de LPS. 73,700	***5***			
13	***¿En qué país naciste?***	El Salvador	***1***			
		Estados Unidos	***2***			
		Guatemala	***3***			
		Honduras	***4***			
		México	***5***			
		Otro país (especifique):	***7***			
14	***¿En qué país creciste?***	El Salvador	***1***			
		Estados Unidos	***2***			
		Guatemala	***3***			
		Honduras	***4***			
		México	***5***			
		Otro país (especifique):	***7***			
15	***¿Cuál es tu religión?***	No tengo una religión	***0***	**18**		
		Católico practicante	***1***			
		Católico no practicante	***2***			
		Protestante	***3***			
		Cristiano evangélico	***4***			
		Otra (especifique):	***7***			
16	***¿A qué edad empezaste a seguir esta religión?***	***años***				
17	***¿Cuántas veces has asistido a un servicio religioso o a una actividad de la iglesia en el último mes?***	***veces***				
18	***¿Alguna vez te fuiste de tu casa antes de los 15 años?***	Sí	***1***			
		No	***0***	**20**		
19	***¿Cuál fue el principal motivo por el que te fuiste de tu casa antes de cumplir los 15 años?*** *[NO leer opciones y marcar solo una respuesta]*	Para buscar trabajo	***1***			
		Abandono o separación de los padres	***2***			
		Lo echaron de la casa	***3***			
		Muerte del(los) padre(s)	***4***			
		Alcoholismo o drogadicción del(los) padre(s)	***5***			
		Violencia en la familia	***6***			
		Abuso sexual	***7***			
		Ganas de andar en la calle, estar con amigos	***8***			
		Por la pandilla/mara/combo	***9***			
		Por andar con la pareja	***10***			
		Otro (especifique):	***77***			

Nº	Pregunta	Respuesta		Saltar a pre-gunta	Código de respuesta	
20	***¿Con quién vivís en la actualidad?*** *[Si está en prisión preguntar:* ***¿Con quién vivías justo antes de ser detenido/a?****]*	Con nadie, vivo solo/a	***0***			
		Madre y padre/Madrasta y padrastro	***1***			
		Sólo con mi madre	***2***			
		Sólo con mi padre	***3***			
		Abuelos y/o tíos/as	***4***			
		Esposa/o; novia/o; pareja	***5***			
		Hijos, nietos	***6***			
		Otros familiares	***7***			
		Otros miembros de la pandilla	***8***			
		Otras personas (especifique):	***77***			
21	***¿Quiénes son las personas con las que más tiempo pasabas antes de ser detenido?*** *[NO leer opciones]*	Con nadie	***0***			
		Familia	***1***			
		Pastor	***2***			
		Amigos miembros de la pandilla	***3***			
		Amigos no miembros de la pandilla	***4***			
		Líder de la pandilla	***5***			
		Otras personas (especifique):	***7***			
22	***¿Con quién hablás de asuntos importantes?*** *[No leer opciones]*	Con nadie	***0***			
		Familia	***1***			
		Pastor	***2***			
		Amigos miembros de la pandilla	***3***			
		Amigos no miembros de la pandilla	***4***			
		Líder de la pandilla	***5***			
		Otras personas (especifique):	***7***			
23	***¿Quién de tu familia es miembro de mara/pandilla/combo?***	Nadie	***0***			
		Padre/madre	***1***			
		Hermano(s)	***2***			
		Primos	***3***			
		Tíos	***4***			
		Abuelos	***5***			
		Otros familiares (especifique):	***7***			
24	***¿Estás casado/a o en una relación estable?***	Sí	***1***			
		No	***0***			
25	***¿Cuánto tiempo (en meses) has estado con tu pareja actual o estuviste con tu última pareja estable?*** *[Si responde en años, multiplique por doce]*	***meses***				
26	***¿Cuántos hijos tenés?***	***hijos***				
		no tiene hijos		**29**		
27	***¿Qué edad tenías vos cuando nació tu primer hijo?***	***años***				
28	***¿Cuántos hijos has tenido con tu actual pareja o tuviste con tu última pareja estable?***	***hijo(s)***				

Nº	Pregunta	Respuesta		Saltar a pre-gunta	Código de respuesta	
¿Con qué frecuencia tenías las siguientes experiencias antes de cumplir 18 años de edad? *[si está en el centro de menores, preguntar:* ***¿Con qué frecuencia has tenido las siguientes experiencias antes de ser detenido?****]*						
29	***¿Con qué frecuencia te sentías seguro en el barrio donde vivías? ¿Siempre, la mayoría de tiempo, a veces, nunca?***	Siempre	***4***			
		La mayoría del tiempo	***3***			
		A veces	***2***			
		Nunca	***1***			
30	***¿Con qué frecuencia oíste o viste que alguien era golpeado, herido o asesinado? ¿Muchas veces, algunas veces, una vez, nunca?***	Muchas veces	***4***			
		Algunas veces	***3***			
		Una vez	***2***			
		Nunca	***1***			
31	***¿Con qué frecuencia te pegaban en tu casa hasta dejarte las marcas u otro daño físico en el cuerpo? ¿Muchas veces, algunas veces, una vez, nunca?***	Muchas veces	***4***			
		Algunas veces	***3***			
		Una vez	***2***			
		Nunca	***1***			
32	***¿Con qué frecuencia sentías que vos eras importante para tu familia? ¿Siempre, la mayoría de tiempo, a veces, nunca?***	Siempre	***4***			
		La mayoría del tiempo	***3***			
		A veces	***2***			
		Nunca	***1***			
33	***¿Cuál es tu relación con la pandilla/mara?*** *[LEER opciones]*	Miembro activo	***1***			
		Calmado	***2***			
		Ya no estoy en la pandilla	***3***			
		Aspirante/simpatizante	***4***			
		Otra (especifique):	***7***			
34	***¿De qué pandilla/mara formás (o formabas) parte?***	MS-13				
		Barrio 18				
		Los Chirizos				
		El Combo que no se deja				
		Otro (especifique):				
35	***¿Cuál es (o fue) tu (último) rango en la pandilla/mara?*** *[NO leer opciones]*	Paisa	***1***			
		Paisa firme	***2***			
		Bandera	***3***			
		Mula	***4***			
		Ranflero	***5***			
		Gatillero	***6***			
		Soldado	***7***			
		Sargento	***8***			
		Jefe de clica	***9***			
		Homie	***10***			
		Palabrero	***11***			
		Toro	***12***			
		Puntero	***13***			
		Otro (especifique):	***77***			
36	***¿Qué misión(es) tuviste que hacer para ascender a tu posición actual o la última?*** *[NO leer opciones]*	Nada	***0***			
		Extorsionar	***1***			
		Solo matar a alguien	***2***			
		Descuartizar/decapitar/matar con saña a alguien	***3***			
		Hablar con el líder	***4***			
		Violar a alguien	***5***			
		Otro (especifique):	***7***			

Nº	Pregunta	Respuesta		Saltar a pre-gunta	Código de respuesta	
37	***¿Tenés tatuajes?***	Sí	***1***			
		No	***0***	**42**		
38	***¿A qué edad te hiciste tu primer tatuaje?***	***años***				
39	***¿Por qué razón te hiciste un tatuaje?*** *[NO leer opciones]*	Porque me gustan	***0***			
		Para identificarme con la pandilla	***1***			
		Porque la pandilla me dijo que tenía que hacerlo	***2***			
		Otras razones (especifique):	***7***			
40	***¿Alguna vez has considerado quitártelo?***	Sí	***1***			
		No	***0***	**42**		
41	***¿Cuál es la razón principal por la cual has considerado quitártelo?*** *[NO leer opciones y marcar una sola respuesta]*	Acoso por parte de la policía	***1***			
		Acoso por parte de otras pandillas/maras	***2***			
		Impide conseguir trabajo	***3***			
		Impide entrar a la escuela	***4***			
		Razones religiosas/no es bien visto en la iglesia	***5***			
		Otro (especifique):	***7***			
II: Ahora te voy a preguntar sobre vos y la pandilla/mara/combo						
42	***¿En qué colonia y ciudad te metiste a la pandilla/mara?*** *[Apuntar colonia y ciudad]*					
43	***¿En cuántas colonias has vivido en tu vida?***					
44	***¿Qué edad tenías cuando te metiste a la pandilla/mara?***	***años***				
45	***¿Has pasado por un proceso de brinco/iniciación?***	Sí	***1***			
		No	***0***	**47**		
46	***¿En qué consistía el proceso de brinco/iniciación?***	No hubo ningún rito	***0***			
		Solo cumplir misión(es)	***1***			
		Pasar por una paliza	***2***			
		Tener relaciones sexuales con otros miembros de la pandilla/mara	***3***			
		Otro (especifique):	***7***			
47	***¿A qué edad comenzaste a vacilar/andar con la pandilla/mara?***	***años***				
48	***¿Cuántos años has estado (o estuviste) en la pandilla/mara como miembro activo?***	***años***				
49	***Aproximadamente, ¿cuántos hombres hay (o había) en tu clica?***					
50	***Aproximadamente, ¿cuántas mujeres hay (o había) en tu clica?***					
51	***¿Cuál es (o era) la edad del miembro mayor en tu clica?***	***años***				
52	***¿Cuántas personas de tu pandilla son realmente cercanas a vos?***	***personas***				
53	***¿Tu pandilla/mara tiene (tenía) reuniones periódicas?***	Sí	***1***			
		No	***0***	**5** **5**		
54	***¿Es (era) obligatorio para ti asistir a las reuniones?***	Sí	***1***			
		No	***0***			

Nº	Pregunta	Respuesta		Saltar a pre-gunta	Código de respuesta	
55	***¿Cuántas personas de tu clica se consideran líderes?***	***personas***				
56	***¿Alguna vez has ido o estado en los Estados Unidos?***	Sí	***1***			
		No, nunca	***0***	**59**		
57	***¿En qué año retornaste a Honduras?***					
58	***¿Fuiste deportado/a de los Estados Unidos?***	Sí	***1***			
		No	***0***			
59	***¿En qué país(es) viven otros miembros de la pandilla/mara con quienes tengas contacto?*** *[si es una combinación, ponerla en "Otro país"]*	En ninguno	***0***			
		El Salvador	***1***			
		Estados Unidos	***2***			
		Guatemala	***3***			
		Italia	***4***			
		México	***5***			
		Otro país (especifique):	***7***			
60	***¿Por qué razón te metiste a la pandilla/mara?*** *[Escuchar y marcar la respuesta más cercana. No leer opciones]*	Me forzaron a meterme en la pandilla	***0***			
		Presión, mis amigos me dijeron	***1***			
		Salía con ellos y me gustaba el vacil	***2***			
		Para obtener protección en el vecindario	***3***			
		Para obtener amistades/ hermandad	***4***			
		Porque quería huir de casa	***5***			
		Por venganza, para desquitarme	***6***			
		Para ganar respeto y prestigio	***7***			
		Por ser pareja de un/a pandillero/a	***8***			
		Para tener empleo y recursos	***9***			
		Otra (especifique):	***77***			
61	***¿Quién era la persona más cercana a vos cuando te metiste?***	Nadie	***0***			
		Miembro de familia	***1***			
		Pastor	***2***			
		Amigo miembro de la pandilla	***3***			
		Amigo no miembro de la pandilla	***4***			
		Líder de la pandilla	***5***			
		Otras personas (especifique):	***7***			
62	***En tu opinión, ¿cuál es (o fue) el mayor beneficio de formar parte de la pandilla/mara?*** *[Marcar una sola respuesta]*	Amistades, tener amigos	***0***			
		Lealtad, tener personas que son (o fueron) leales a mí	***1***			
		Dinero, tener acceso a recursos y dinero en efectivo	***2***			
		Poder, mandar a otros	***3***			
		Respeto, tener a gente que me respete por lo que soy	***4***			
		Libertad, hacer lo que me dé la gana	***5***			
		Protección, seguridad frente a amenazas	***6***			

Nº	Pregunta	Respuesta							Saltar a pre-gunta	Código de respuesta	
		No hay beneficios						***7***			
		Otro (especifique):						***77***			
	Ahora te voy a leer algunas cosas que otros dicen que han ganado con estar en la pandilla/mara. Decime por favor si vos pensás que has ganado (o ganaste) esas cosas también:						No	Sí			
63	***¿Has ganado (o ganaste) libertad, autonomía con respecto a tus padres?***						*0*	*1*			
64	***¿Has ganado (o ganaste) oportunidades educativas y de aprendizaje?***						*0*	*1*			
65	***¿Has ganado (o ganaste) amigos de verdad?***						*0*	*1*			
66	***¿Has ganado (o ganaste) dinero, cosas materiales?***						*0*	*1*			
67	***¿Has ganado (o ganaste) sentido de unidad con otras personas como vos?***						*0*	*1*			
68	***¿Has ganado (o ganaste) tranquilidad, paz mental?***						*0*	*1*			
69	***¿Has ganado (o ganaste) respeto de la comunidad y de la sociedad?***						*0*	*1*			
70	***¿Has ganado (o ganaste) protección contra amenazas (otras pandillas/maras, Policía, etc.)?***						*0*	*1*			
71	***¿Has ganado (o ganaste) oportunidades de empleo (la pandilla/mara consigue posiciones en algunas empresas)?***						*0*	*1*			
72	***¿Has ganado (o ganaste) confianza en vos mismo?***						*0*	*1*			
73	***¿Has ganado (o ganaste) un lugar donde vivir?***						*0*	*1*			
74	***¿Has ganado (o ganaste) el acceso a las armas o drogas para tu propio uso?***						*0*	*1*			
75	***¿Has ganado (o ganaste) el acceso a las mujeres/hombres?***						*0*	*1*			
	Muchos jóvenes hacen ciertas actividades dentro de su pandilla/mara. ¿Con qué frecuencia las hacés (o hacías) vos? *[Leer opciones para cada pregunta]*	***Todos los días***	***3-5 veces x semana***	***1-2 veces x semana***	***2-3 veces x mes***	***Una vez al mes***	***Una vez cada 2 o 3 meses***	***Nunca***			
76	***Vacilar con los compañeros de pandilla/mara***	(6)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)			
77	***Pelear contra otras pandillas/maras***	(6)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)			
78	***Usar un arma o la fuerza para obtener lo que pertenece a otra persona***	(6)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)			
79	***Consumir drogas***	(6)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)			
80	***Vender drogas***	(6)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)			
81	***Usar un arma para herir a otra persona no miembro de pandilla/mara***	(6)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)			
82	***Cobrar renta/impuesto de guerra/extorsión***	(6)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)			
83	***¿Cuánto recogés (recogías) de renta por semana?*** *[insertar 4 dígitos. Si no recogía renta, insertar "0000"]*						***lempiras***				
84	***De las siguientes cosas, ¿cuáles son mal vistas por tu clica?*** *[Leer cada pregunta y marcar respuesta]*						**No**	**Sí**			
	Golpear a una persona no miembro de ninguna pandilla/ mara						(0)	(1)			
	Asesinar a una persona no miembro de ninguna pandilla/ mara						(0)	(1)			
	Golpear a un miembro de iglesia o líder religioso						(0)	(1)			
	Robar de un vecino de tu barrio						(0)	(1)			
	Violar a una mujer						(0)	(1)			
	Hacer daño a un/a niño/a						(0)	(1)			
	Consumir drogas						(0)	(1)			
III: Historia personal. Ahora voy a preguntarte sobre tu historia personal.											

Nº	Pregunta	Respuesta		Saltar a pre-gunta	Código de respuesta	
85	***¿Qué edad tenías cuando hiciste algo ilegal por primera vez?***	***años***				
86	***¿Cuántas veces has sido detenido/a o te ha agarrado preso/a la Policía?*** *[Incluyendo esta vez, si está en detención]*	***veces***				
		Nunca fue arrestado		**91**		
87	***¿Qué edad tenías cuando fuiste arrestado por primera vez en tu vida?***	***años***				
88	***¿Cuánto tiempo llevás detenido/a en esta ocasión?*** *[si contesta en años multiplique por 12]*	***meses***				
		No está detenido/a	***0***			
89	***¿Has estado detenido/a en un centro de detención de menores?***	Sí	***1***			
		No	***0***	**91**		
90	***¿Por qué motivo estuviste en un centro de detención de menores la última vez?*** *[NO leer opciones y marcar solo una respuesta]*	Ninguna razón específica	***0***			
		Asalto	***1***			
		Pelea callejera	***2***			
		Asesinato, homicidio	***3***			
		Robo	***4***			
		Posesión/tráfico de drogas	***5***			
		Extorsión	***6***			
		Asociaciones ilícitas	***7***			
		Violación	***8***			
		Robo de carro	***9***			
		Vandalismo	***10***			
		Otro (especifique):	***77***			
91	***¿Alguna vez has sido acusado/a formalmente de un delito?***	Sí	***1***			
		No	***0***	**93**		
92	***¿De qué delito te han acusado formalmente?*** *[Si han sido varias veces, preguntar por la última acusación]*	Ninguna razón específica	***0***			
		Asalto	***1***			
		Pelea callejera	***2***			
		Asesinato, homicidio	***3***			
		Robo a mano armada	***4***			
		Posesión/tráfico de drogas	***5***			
		Extorsión	***6***			
		Asociaciones ilícitas	***7***			
		Violación	***8***			
		Otro (especifique):	***77***			
93	***¿Tenías un arma de fuego antes de ser detenido?***	Sí	***1***			
		No	***0***	**95**		
94	***¿Cómo conseguiste el arma?***	La compré	***1***			
		La robé	***2***			
		Me la dio alguien no miembro de pandilla/mara	***3***			
		Me la dieron en la pandilla/mara	***4***			
		Otro (especifique):	***7***			
95	***¿Has sido herido/a como consecuencia de un ataque o agresión en el último año?***	Sí	***1***			
		No	***0***	**97**		

Nº	Pregunta	Respuesta		Saltar a pre-gunta	Código de respuesta	
96	***¿Quién fue la persona que te atacó o hirió la última vez?*** *[NO leer opciones y marcar solo una respuesta]*	No sé quién lo hizo	***0***			
		Miembro de la familia	***1***			
		Oficial de policía/militar	***2***			
		Miembro de seguridad privada	***3***			
		Grupo limpieza social/exterminio	***4***			
		Persona cualquiera	***5***			
		Miembro de la misma pandilla/mara	***6***			
		Miembro de una pandilla/mara contraria	***7***			
		Otra (especifique):	***77***			
97	***¿Alguien cercano a vos ha sido asesinado en el último año?***	Sí	***1***			
		No	***0***	**99**		
98	***¿Quién fue asesinado?***	Miembro de la familia	***0***			
		Un amigo no miembro de la pandilla/mara	***1***			
		Un miembro de la pandilla/mara	***2***			
99	***¿Quién representa la mayor amenaza para una persona como vos?***	Policía	***1***			
		Militares	***2***			
		Pandillas/maras contrarias	***3***			
		Tu propia pandilla/mara	***4***			
		No hay amenazas/nadie	***0***			
		Otro (especifique):	***7***			
100	***Muchos jóvenes como vos usan alcohol y sustancias, como drogas, para pasarla bien o divertirse. ¿Has usado alguna vez algo de lo siguiente:*** *[Marque todo lo que se aplique]*		***Sí***	***No***		
	Alcohol		*1*	*0*		
	Medicinas (drogas) recetadas		*1*	*0*		
	Marihuana/Cannabis		*1*	*0*		
	Cocaína		*1*	*0*		
	Heroína		*1*	*0*		
	Crack/Piedra		*1*	*0*		
	Metanfetaminas		*1*	*0*		
	Inhalantes (solvente, pega, etc.)		*1*	*0*		
	Otra (especifique):		*1*	*0*		
101	***¿Cuántos años tenías cuando usaste cualquiera de esas sustancias por primera vez?***		***años***			
102	***¿Cuál fue la primera droga que usaste?*** *[marcar solo una opción]*	Medicinas (drogas) recetadas	***1***			
		Marihuana/Cannabis	***2***			
		Cocaína	***3***			
		Heroína	***4***			
		Crack/Piedra	***5***			
		Metanfetaminas	***6***			
		Otra (especifique):	***7***			

Nº	Pregunta	Respuesta			Saltar a pre-gunta	Código de respuesta	
103	***¿Qué sustancia(s) has usado en los últimos 30 días?*** *[Marque todo lo que se aplique]*		***Sí***	***No***			
	Alcohol		*1*	*0*			
	Medicinas (drogas) recetadas		*1*	*0*			
	Marihuana/Cannabis		*1*	*0*			
	Cocaína		*1*	*0*			
	Heroína		*1*	*0*			
	Crack/Piedra		*1*	*0*			
	Metanfetaminas		*1*	*0*			
	Inhalantes (solvente, pega, etc.)		*1*	*0*			
	Otra (especifique):		*1*	*0*			
104	***¿Alguna vez has recibido alguna capacitación profesional/formal para un puesto de trabajo?***	Sí		***1***			
		No		***0***	**106**		
105	***¿En qué tipo de habilidades recibiste entrenamiento?*** *[NO leer opciones y marcar solo una opción]*	Labor manual (fábrica, construcción, taller de autos, etc.)		***1***			
		Industria de servicios (ventas, cajero, restaurante de comida rápida, etc.)		***2***			
		Administración de empresas		***3***			
		Otro (especifique):		***7***			
106	***¿En qué área/campo te gustaría trabajar si se te diera la oportunidad?*** *[NO leer opciones y marcar una sola respuesta]*	No quiero trabajar		***0***			
		Administración de negocios para una empresa		***1***			
		Tener mi propio negocio		***2***			
		Educación, trabajar en escuelas, educando a gente		***3***			
		Trabajar para el Gobierno		***4***			
		En una agencia policial		***5***			
		En seguridad privada		***6***			
		En una fábrica de manufactura (maquila, etc.)		***7***			
		En agricultura		***8***			
		Ser un profesional (abogado, médico, etc.) o profesional independiente		***9***			
		Artes (música, pintura, actuación, escritura)		***10***			
		En construcción		***11***			
		En deportes		***12***			
		En servicios (cocinero, hoteles, conductor, etc.)		***13***			
		En servicios sociales		***14***			
		En religión, iglesia		***15***			
		Otro (especifique):		***77***			

Nº	Pregunta	Respuesta		Saltar a pre-gunta	Código de respuesta	
IV: Opiniones. Finalmente, te voy a preguntar tu opinión sobre distintos temas.						
107	***En general, ¿qué tan satisfecho/a estás con tu vida hasta ahora? ¿Dirías que estás muy satisfecho/a, satisfecho/a, insatisfecho/a, o muy insatisfecho/a?***	Muy satisfecho/a	***5***			
		Satisfecho/a	***4***			
		Ni satisfecho/a ni insatisfecho/a	***3***			
		Insatisfecho/a	***2***			
		Muy insatisfecho/a	***1***			
108	***¿Qué es lo más importante para vos en la vida?*** *[No leer opciones y marcar solo una respuesta]*	Vivir en paz, en un entorno seguro	***1***			
		Cuidar de tus propios hijos	***2***			
		Seguir los consejos de tu madre	***3***			
		Tu relación con Dios	***4***			
		Tu relación con tu esposo/a o pareja	***5***			
		Tener un buen trabajo/carrera	***6***			
		Graduarte de la escuela/universidad	***7***			
		Tener una buena relación con tu familia	***8***			
		Defender al barrio, a la pandilla/mara	***9***			
		Otro (especifique):	***77***			
109	***¿Cuál creés que es el problema principal que enfrentan las personas como vos?*** *[No leer opciones]*	Ninguno	***0***			
		Falta de oportunidades educativas	***1***			
		Falta de oportunidades de empleo	***2***			
		Barrios inseguros	***3***			
		Acceso a drogas y armas	***4***			
		Acoso de la Policía	***5***			
		La violencia en general	***6***			
		La pobreza, situación económica	***7***			
		Discriminación de la sociedad	***8***			
		Falta de apoyo familiar	***9***			
		Otro (especifique):	***77***			
110	***¿Qué tiene que hacer alguien como vos para salirse de la pandilla/mara?*** *[Marcar una sola respuesta]*	Nada, no se puede salir de la pandilla/mara	***0***			
		Hablar con los líderes	***1***			
		Unirse a una iglesia o a un programa de rehabilitación	***2***			
		Cumplir con una misión	***3***			
		Solo irse, solo salirse	***4***			
		Otro (especifique):	***7***			

Nº	Pregunta	Respuesta				Saltar a pre-gunta	Código de respuesta	
111	***¿Cuánto tiempo dura el proceso de supervisión cuando alguien de tu clica se calma?***	No hay supervisión			***99***	**113**		
		Nunca termina, es para toda la vida			***0***			
		Menos de seis meses			***1***			
		Entre 6 y 12 meses			***2***			
		Más de 12 meses			***3***			
112	***¿Qué tan intenso es el proceso de supervisión: muy intenso, algo intenso, poco intenso, nada intenso?***	Muy intenso			***1***			
		Algo intenso			***2***			
		Poco intenso			***3***			
		Nada intenso			***4***			
113	***Por lo que sabés, ¿los/as jóvenes que viven en tu barrio o comunidad son forzados/as a unirse a una pandilla/mara?***	No, ellos/as no son forzados/as a unirse a la pandilla/mara			***0***			
		Algunos/as tienen un poco de presión para unirse a la pandilla/mara			***1***			
		Todos/as son forzados/as a unirse a la pandilla/mara			***2***			
114	***¿Alguna vez has pensado en calmarte o dejar la pandilla/mara?***	No, nunca me calmaré o dejaré la pandilla/mara			***0***			
		Sí, calmarme			***1***			
		Sí, dejar la pandilla/mara			***2***			
¿Qué tanto creés vos que las siguientes cosas ayudarían a que gente como vos se calme o deje la pandilla/mara?		**Mucho**	**Algo**	**Poco**	**Nada**			
115	***Acceso a educación y entrenamiento. ¿Ayudaría?***	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			
116	***Perdonar los delitos por parte de los jueces. ¿Ayudaría?***	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			
117	***Programas de protección, garantías contra pandillas/maras rivales. ¿Ayudaría?***	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			
118	***Tener hijos y familia propia. ¿Ayudaría?***	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			
119	***Acceso a buenas oportunidades de empleo. ¿Ayudaría?***	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			
120	***Ser aceptado por la comunidad, por el pueblo. ¿Ayudaría?***	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			
121	***Encontrar a Dios, unirse a una iglesia. ¿Ayudaría?***	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)			
122	***¿Qué pasaría (o ha pasado) si vos te calmás de la pandilla/mara? ¿La pandilla/mara te amenazaría (o ha amenazado)?***	No, ellos no amenazarían (o han amenazado) a nadie			***0***			
		Sí, me amenazarían (o han amenazado) a mí			***1***			
		Sí, amenazarían (o han amenazado) a mi familia			***2***			
		Sí, nos amenazarían (o han amenazado) a todos			***3***			

Nº	Pregunta	Respuesta		Saltar a pre-gunta	Código de respuesta	
123	***En tu opinión, ¿Quién sería el más adecuado para dirigir programas de rehabilitación para pandillas/maras?*** *[Marcar una sola respuesta]*	Ninguna organización sería adecuada	***0***			
		Iglesias, organizaciones religiosas	***1***			
		ONG de desarrollo	***2***			
		Institución gubernamental	***3***			
		El Ejército y la Policía	***4***			
		Otro (especifique):	***7***			
124	***¿Conocés a alguien que se haya calmado o se haya ido de la pandilla/mara y reintegrado con éxito en la sociedad?***	Sí	***1***			
		No	***0***	**126**		
125	***¿Qué hizo esa persona para calmarse?*** *[Marcar una sola respuesta]*	Nada, solo se salió	***0***			
		Se fue para otro lado, emigró	***1***			
		Se metió a una iglesia, se hizo pastor	***2***			
		Encontró un buen empleo, oportunidad de trabajo	***3***			
		Se casó y tuvo familia	***4***			
		Otro (especifique):	***7***			
126	***¿Con qué frecuencia sentís que no tenés esperanza para el futuro?***	Siempre	***2***			
		A veces	***1***			
		Nunca	***0***			
127	***¿Tenés a alguien en quien confiar, alguien que te ayude cuando lo necesitás?***	Siempre	***2***			
		A veces	***1***			
		Nunca	***0***			
128	***¿De las siguientes cosas, ¿qué dirías de ti mismo la mayoría del tiempo?*** *[Responder cada ítem]*	Me enojo fácilmente	***0*** ***1***			
		Me siento triste	***0*** ***1***			
		Tengo mucha energía	***0*** ***1***			
		Me gusta ayudar a los demás	***0*** ***1***			
		Sé cómo tranquilizarme	***0*** ***1***			
		No me gusta hacer nada	***0*** ***1***			
		Me siento inútil	***0*** ***1***			
		Me enfoco en mi futuro	***0*** ***1***			
129	***¿Cuándo fue la última vez que te revisó un médico o un dentista?*** *[LEER opciones]*	Este año	***1***			
		Durante los últimos 5 años	***2***			
		Cuando era pequeño	***3***			
		Nunca	***0***			

Nº	Pregunta	Respuesta		Saltar a pre-gunta	Código de respuesta	
130	***¿Qué le pedirías a la sociedad como miembro (o ex-miembro) de una pandilla/mara?*** *[Escuchar y marcar la respuesta más cercana. No leer opciones]*	Que no nos juzguen	***0***			
		Que no castiguen a miembros de pandillas/maras	***1***			
		Que provean a los/as jóvenes un mayor acceso a la educación	***2***			
		Que provean a miembros de pandillas/maras oportunidades de empleo	***3***			
		Que crean que los/as jóvenes miembros de pandillas/maras podemos cambiar	***4***			
		Otro (especifique):	***7***			
	Observaciones					

Honduras Gang Desistance Study
Experts Interview Guide

Organization name:	
Expert's Position:	
Organization's Role in Preventing or Responding to Gang Violence or Reintegration:	
Length of Time Doing this Work:	
Communities/Cities Where Work is Done:	

1. El problema de las pandillas en Honduras.
    a. ¿Cuál es el mayor problema con las pandillas en Honduras?
    b. ¿Cómo han cambiado las pandillas en los últimos 20 años?
    c. ¿Hay manera de reducir la criminalidad/violencia de las pandillas?

2. La estructura de las pandillas.
    a. ¿Cree que las pandillas tienen un objetivo claro? ¿Cuál sería?
    b. ¿Cómo están organizadas las pandillas? ¿Qué niveles de membresía y roles existen?
    c. ¿Cómo la actividad de las pandillas varía por la región?

3. El involucramiento en la pandilla.
    a. ¿Por qué los jóvenes entran en la pandilla?
    b. ¿Qué diferencias existen en los papeles en términos del sexo y la edad?

4. La desistencia de la pandilla.
    a. ¿Cuáles son las condiciones necesarias para que alguien se calme o deje la pandilla?
    b. ¿Por qué algunos miembros de la pandilla deciden calmarse y otros no?
    ¿Es más fácil para algunos calmarse/dejar la pandilla que para otros?
    c. ¿Cómo varían las maneras de calmarse/dejar la pandilla entre hombres y mujeres?
    d. ¿Qué retos enfrentan los ex-miembros de la pandilla?

5. Las políticas públicas.
    a. En términos de la reinserción, ¿qué papel juegan la familia, la escuela, la policía, la iglesia sociedad civil?
    b. ¿Qué puede hacer el gobierno para resolver el problema?
    c. ¿Qué puede hacer la sociedad para resolver el problema?
    d. ¿Puede recordar ejemplos de iniciativas locales que fueran exitosas en prevenir la violenci reintegrar a los expandilleros?
    a. ¿Qué necesitan los jóvenes pandilleros para su futuro? ¿Qué le pedirían a la sociedad?
    b. ¿Qué organizaciones deberían liderar los programas de reinserción?

NOTE: En las entrevistas con los ex-pandilleros usar "pandilla"/ "mara"/ "grupo antisocial."

Honduras Gang Desistance Study
Guía de Entrevista para los ex–miembros de pandilla/mara

Nombre de la pandilla/mara:	
El último rango que tuvo el participante dentro de la pandilla/mara:	
A qué edad se metió en la pandilla/mara:	
Cuánto tiempo estuvo dentro de la pandilla/mara:	
Edad del participante:	
Hace cuánto se salió de la pandilla/mara:	

Primera parte: Temas generales

1. La estructura de las pandillas.
   a. ¿Crees que las pandillas tienen un objetivo claro? ¿Cuál sería?
   b. ¿Cómo están organizadas las pandillas? ¿Qué niveles de membresía y roles existen?
   c. ¿Cómo la actividad de las pandillas varía por región?
2. El involucramiento en la pandilla.
   a. ¿Por qué los jóvenes como vos entran en la pandilla?
   b. ¿Qué diferencias existen en los papeles en términos del sexo y la edad?
3. La desistencia de la pandilla.
   a. ¿Cuáles son las condiciones necesarias para que alguien se calme o deje la pandilla?
   b. ¿Por qué algunos miembros de la pandilla deciden calmarse y otros no?
      ¿Es más fácil para algunos calmarse/dejar la pandilla que para otros?
   c. ¿Cómo varían las maneras de calmarse/dejar la pandilla entre hombres y mujeres?
   d. ¿Qué retos enfrentan los ex-miembros de la pandilla?
4. Las políticas públicas.
   a. ¿Qué puede hacer el gobierno para resolver el problema?
   b. ¿Qué puede hacer la sociedad para resolver el problema?
   a. ¿Qué necesitan los jóvenes pandilleros para su futuro? ¿Qué le pedirían a la sociedad?
   b. ¿Qué organizaciones deberían liderar los programas de reinserción?

** Toda la conversación debe fluir y construirse a base de la historia personal de la persona entrevistada. El orden de las preguntas es flexible, se hacen a lo largo de conversación. Todas las preguntas tienen que ser abarcadas, pero las resaltadas en amarrillo se pueden profundizar más que otras.*

Segunda parte: Social Network

Instrucciones:

- *GRABACIÓN. La entrevista se graba. También se anotan las respuestas en el formulario adjunto solo para guiar al entrevistador.*
- *CASILLAS. Las casillas sirven de guía para el entrevistador. Se llenan de la manera que sea más cómoda para el entrevistador, a su propio juicio. Abajo hay algunas sugerencias.*
- *ORDEN. El orden de todas las casillas corresponde a la primera pregunta, al orden en que se nombraron las personas desde el inicio.*

"Ahora te pido que recuerdes tu último año antes de salir de la pandilla. Trata de recordar las 10 personas más importantes en tu vida en aquel momento, con las que tenías contacto regular al menos 1 vez al mes. Empieza por pensar en las personas con las que vacilabas cada día. Después, piensa en las personas con las que hablabas o a las que veías más. Pueden ser miembros de tu familia, amigos, vecinos, o incluso personas que no te caían bien."

¿Me podrías decir las primeras letras de sus nombres?
[usar solo la primera letra, apuntar las letras en el orden de nombrarlas en un segundo papel visible para el entrevistado para que le sirva de guía]
[También anotar las letras en la respuesta a la pregunta 1 abajo, en el mismo orden]

Q1: Primera letra del nombre (10 personas) – *[escribir la letra y H/M al lado]* ¿Es hombre o mujer?									
Q2: ¿Qué edades tenían más o menos? *[aproximada o exacta]*									
Q3: ¿Quién es cada una de esas personas? • Familiar (especifique), Pareja, Amigo, Maestro, Pastor • Otro (especifique)									
Q4: ¿Cómo se conocieron ustedes? *[anotar la palabra clave en cada casilla, el resto se debe quedar grabado]*									
Q5: ¿Cuántos días a la semana pasabas con cada una de esas personas? *[apuntar número de días a la semana o al mes]*									
Q6: ¿Todos estaban en la misma colonia o no? No → especificar y señalar el lugar (otra colonia, cárcel, otra ciudad, etc)									
Q7: ¿Con quién(es) de ellos te sentías muy cercano? ¿Quién(es) te caía(n) muy bien? *[anotar las letras de los nombres]*									

Q8: ¿A quién(es) de ellos le pedías consejo si tenías problemas? *[anotar las letras de los nombres]*									
Q9: ¿Con quién(es) de ellos te la pasabas bien / te gustaba vacilar más? *[anotar las letras de los nombres]*									
Q10: ¿Quiénes de ellos vacilaban juntos, sin o con vos? Piensa en cualquier tipo de contacto, aunque uno no le caiga bien al otro. *[anotar las letras de los nombres que pasaban tiempo juntos en una casilla. Ejemplo: X+Y+Z]*									
Q11: ¿Quién(es) sientes que tenía(n) efecto positivo en tu vida? Y ¿quién tenía efecto negativo? *[anotar las letras de los nombres]*									
Q12: ¿Qué lugares visitabas durante una semana típica? ¿Cuántas veces a la semana visitabas esos lugares? *[NO leer opciones. Anotar el lugar y número de días a la semana]* • Escuela, Casa, Trabajo, Esquina/calle, Cancha (deportiva), Cárcel, Iglesia, Meetings, Casa de amigos, Casa loca, Plaza (de drogas) • Otro (especificar)									
Q13: ¿En qué lugares estabas generalmente con cada uno de ellos? *[NO leer opciones. Anotar el lugar en la casilla correspondiente al nombre, en el orden correspondiente]* • Escuela, Casa, Trabajo, Esquina/calle, Cancha (deportiva), Cárcel, Iglesia, Meetings, Casa de amigos, Casa loca, Plaza (de drogas) • Otro (especificar)									
Q14: ¿Quiénes de ellos pertenecían a una pandilla? *[anotar las letras de los nombres, junto con el nombre de la pandilla y el rango]* ¿A qué pandilla? ¿Qué rango tenían?									
Q15: ¿Algunos de ellos te trataban de convencerte salir de la pandilla? *[anotar las letras de los nombres]* Sí → ¿Quién(es)?									
Q16: ¿Quiénes de ellos habían estado en la cárcel antes de que salieras de la pandilla? *[anotar las letras de los nombres]*									