Ride to Die: Masculine Honour and Collective Identity in the Motorcycle Underworld

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Abstract

This article discusses the nature and extent of violent practice in the motorcycle underworld. It does this by considering the murder of Gerry Tobin, and then uses the biography of the founding member of the Hell's Angels motorcycle club for a critical analysis. We are interested in understanding the role of *masculine honour* and *collective identity*, and its influences in relation to violence – namely fatal violence in the motorcycle underworld. We argue that motorcycle gangs are extreme examples of what Hall (2012) considers 'criminal undertakers' – individuals who take 'special liberties' often as a last resort.

Keywords

Organised Crime, Masculine Honour, Collective Identity, Hell's Angels, United Kingdom

Introduction

August 12th 2017 marked the ten-year death anniversary of Gerry Tobin. Gerry, a member of the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club (HAMC), was travelling down the M40 motorway after returning from a Hell's Angels annual event when a green car pulled alongside him and fired multiple shots (Campbell and Balakrishnan, 2008). Gerry died immediately at the scene. This paper critically analyses Gerry's death with significant attention to *masculine honour*, *collective identity* and violent practice in the motorcycle underworld.

Organised Crime and Contract Murder

Organised crime research in the UK draws towards the consensus that the phenomenon is sustained by collusion, corruption and complacency, which makes it difficult to excavate facts (Gounev and Ruggiero, 2012; Congram, Bell and Lauchs, 2013; Lavorgna, Lombardo and Sergi, 2013). In the UK, Wright (2006) argues that organised crime has become 'disorganised', as there is a contemporary absence of home grown, effective organised crime networks, which therefore has provided an entrée for today's transnational crime syndicates (Southwell, 2009). On the contrary, a series of ground-breaking ethnographies have established that violence, illegal trading networks and organised crime are deeply woven into the social and cultural fabric of British born working-class citizens (Winlow, 2001; Hobbs, 2013; Fraser, 2015). In addition, they all allude to the definitional ambiguities surrounding gangs, professional criminals and organised crime groups. Fraser and Hobbs (2017) argue that the academic and political categorisation of these phenomenon's as the pitfall of understanding the complex nature of these social realities. They persuasively urge scholars to be mindful of the wider structures that shape criminal collaborations of which include, but are not limited to: the political economy, the proletarian class, industrialism and post-industrialism. Other scholars, however, take a more functional approach and centre

their arguments on what is meant by the description "organised" in the term "organised crime" and how there are various ways of answering this question, including the suggestion that this supposed organisation is intermittent, flexible and weak, rather than hierarchical and stable (Coles, 2001; Naylor, 2004; van Duyne, 1996; Williams, 2001).   Whilst it is not our aim in this paper to critically engage in this debate, we accept that it is often difficult to conclude authoritatively about these matters given the blurred and slippery world of organised crime and the violence that accompanies it, or at least provides an enabling context.   However, it is imperative to acknowledge pioneering research that consider organised crime groups and other criminal fraternities.

To strengthen the understanding of 'organised crime' globally, scholars suggest differentiating organised crime from 'enterprise crime' and the 'mafia' (Gambetta, 2009; Varese, 2010).   The enterprise model is based on the premise of 'continuum' – from 'legitimate to illegitimate' business ventures (see, Smith, 1975; Reuter, 1983).   Schelling (1971) argues that a key component of organised crime is "monopoly" that "seeks not only influence, but exclusive influence" (p.72).   Indeed, if the enterprise model considers organised crime groups primarily focusing on "illegal profits" and "monopolization", they are likely to "systematically commit crimes with serious damage for society" (Kleemans, 2013: p.617).   Through the enterprise model, this would be achieved by "loose networks" of individuals, who seek to "regulate and control the production and distribution of a given commodity or service unlawfully" (Varese 2010: p.16).   The work of Paoli (2004) distinguishes the Italian mafia and criminal enterprises and reveals, that mafias are not restricted to economic profiteering, as they are often motivated by power and profit.   This is often influenced by 'cultural values', which clearly forms as part of their "collective identity" (Fijnaut and Paoli, 2006).   In short, the 'enterprise' form of organised crime is commonplace in the UK and large parts of Europe (Hobbs 2013; Klerks 2003; von Lampe 2008).

Whilst some scholars have discussed the problems of differentiating criminal groups, others have attempted to clarify distinctions.   For instance, Ferrell (1996) notes the importance of how members of these groups see themselves in identifying as one of a gang and how others within their communities perceive them.   Criminal orientation and 'self-identification' are often indicators of a group evolving into a street gang (Klein, Maxson and Miller, 1995). However, it is also worth noting that some scholars do not view gangs and organised crime groups as separate entities.   Densley (2014) rightly argues that some gangs can 'evolve' into, or be employed by organised criminal groups, suggesting a fluidity to the concept as well as the presence of a division of labour.

Comment [MR1]: R1: 'The last sentence of the first paragraph on page 2 requires further development and explanation'.

Revision: Agreed – we have made the above point more explicit by discussing key definitional debates surrounding 'organized crime'.

Comment [MR2]: R1: 'The paper requires a more extensive discussion of the literature related to organised crime and gangs in both the UK and internationally'.

Revision: Agreed – we have taken into consideration the above comment and therefore a section has been inserted which considers organised crime.

Comment [MR3]: R1: The literature review requires further development overall. For example, there is no mention of research on gangs and the paper would benefit from a more critical appraisal of a wider range of sources.

Revision: Agreed –we have taken into consideration the above comment and therefore a section has been inserted which considers gangs.

Indeed, violent practice has often been a catalyst to exert dominance over an illicit product or service (Wright, 2006; Gambetta, 2009; Varese, 2010; Hobbs, 2013), and this is consistent with the findings from the 2000 Palermo Convention for Transnational Organized Crime (UNODC, 2004). In recent years, scholars have drawn attention to the synergy between organised crime and contract killers (Shaw, 2017; Kassab and Rosen, 2018). MacIntyre *et al*. (2014) describe a hitman as "a person who accepts an order to kill another human being from someone who is not publicly acknowledged as a legitimate authority regarding 'just killing'" (p.326).

The pioneering work of Levi (1981) is the first to academically chart contract hits within a psychological context. However, the pitfall of the research is that the primary findings are based on one hitman who was convicted of multiple hits. This is also the case for research that has been done through the FBI's Homicide Working Group, which focuses on murders executed by individual killers (Black, 2000; Black and Cravens, 2001). Indeed, the work of Mouzos and Venditto (2003) is one of the most useful scholarly contributions as it provides a detailed examination of the levels of police intervention and prevention of successful and attempted hits. More recently, within a British context, Cameron (2013) explored the economics of contract murder, whilst Wilson and Rahman (2015) have discussed the motivations and the psychological reframing processes of 'becoming a hitman'. The findings of Wilson and Rahman (2015) resonates the work of Sykes and Matza (1957), in the sense that some hitmen 'drift' into this lethal practice, which involves the killers separating their morally responsible self from the rest of themselves to strategically kill.

MacIntyre *et al's*. (2014) pioneering study developed a four-division typology: Novices, Dilettantes; Journeymen; and Masters. We are particularly interested in 'Journeymen' hitmen, given that we are discussing two of the most internationally renowned motorcycle gangs – the HAMC and the Outlaws MC (OMC) – of whom are recognised as '*Outlaw*' biker organisations and organised crime groups (Scaramella *et al.*, 1997; Trethewy and Katz, 1998; Lavigne, 2000; Marsden and Sher, 2006). This parallels with MacIntyre *et al's* (2014) understanding that Journeymen operators are either affiliated, or somewhat attached to the criminal underworld. MacIntyre *et al.* (2014) define a 'Journeyman' hitman as someone who is "capable, experienced, and reliable but not an especially exceptional performer" (p.10). They suggest that Journeymen are likely to be 'organised' in how they go about conducting the hit, but may nonetheless leave traces of forensic evidence at the crime scene. Typically, their targets are business associates or gang rivals of those who contract the hit and MacIntyre *et al.* (2014) hypothesised that Journeymen hitmen come from military backgrounds, or occupations encompassing the use of firearms. They also suggest that Journeymen are usually apprehended through local, police intelligence networks which, for

Comment [MR4]: R1: A more extensive 'linking section' is required to transition from research on organised crime to the review of extant literature and contract killings.

Revision: Agreed – a linking section has now been established.

Comment [MR5]: R1: The section on contract murder requires further development i.e. research is cited but not explained in sufficient detail.

Revision: Agreed – a dedicated section has been inputted which critiques some of the key existing literature.

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them, was their most important finding given that it was local intelligence, which brought most of the British hitmen in their sample to justice, as well as the perpetrators of Gerry's death.

Masculine Honour and Collective Identity

This sub-section critically reviews the key criminological literature on masculinities and violence, providing a context in which to situate this research and its theoretical arguments. In particular, we discuss the successive paradigm shifts (Hood-Williams, 2001) within the literature concerning masculinities and violence, and draw attention to the plurality of gender expression (Ellis, 2016), specifically the socially, culturally and historically contingent nature of masculinity.

The investigation into the relationship between masculinity and violence, which examined why males seemingly appear to engage in, and commit, higher proportions of crime than females (Renzetti, 2013; Gundy and Kappeler, 2014), appeared to commence with an examination of men's biology (Walklate, 2004). There have been numerous studies that have attempted to search for answers within the male body, running with assertions that, in contrast to the 'meekness of femininity' (Ellis, 2016: p.10), men are naturally violent and aggressive, with overwhelming and insatiable sexual drives (Smart, 1976; Brittan, 1989). So too, positivist orientated research has attempted to place the causes for violent behaviour at dangerously high testosterone levels, problematic chromosome patterns, and instincts that have evolved as a means of gaining and defending resources (Hearn, 1998; Edwards, 2006; Jones, 2008). Jones (2008) and Wieviorka (2009) note that violence has strong cultural dimensions both in how it is perceived, as well as its prevalence, which are influenced by temporal, spatial and contextual factors. While the legacy of the positivist studies still lingers today, criminological investigations gradually began to focus more on the individual's immediate social contexts and wider socio-structural conditions in order to explain their involvement in crime. These more sociological studies highlighted the significance of male and female "sex roles" in creating patterns of crime by sex (Messerschmidt, 1993). Sutherland and Cressey (1966) draw attention to such patterns:

> [V]ariations in the sex ratio in crime are so great that it can be considered that maleness is not significant in the causation of crime itself but only as it indicates social position, supervision, and other social relations
>
> (Sutherland and Cressey, 1966 cited in Ellis, 2016: p.19).

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Ellis (2016) continues, noting that sociologist Talcott Parsons attributed young males' greater involvement in crimes due to a sense of alienation within the context of family, and that their actions suggest a form of 'compensatory masculinity' (p.19). Further to this, Cohen's (1955) study of delinquent youth gangs drew on the previous works of Sutherland and Parsons, and suggested that the activities of these gangs did not comprise the qualities associated with the male sex role. In particular, the gang represented a solution for young men experiencing alienation from society's respectable values embodied in the middle-class institution of the education system. While these early twentieth century studies attempted to re-orientate the discussion away from the male body, they still appeared to be guided by assumptions that sex roles were in situated within nature.

Here it is important to take into account the work of Messerschmidt (1993) and his seminal work on the socially structured action of masculinity, which attempts to assist in explaining the masculine nature of crime. Within this particular theoretical framework, the social construction of masculinity places particular emphasis on ideas such as dominance, sexual competency, and a un-acknowledgment of feminine characteristics and attributes. This notion of the social construction of masculinity, especially in relation to crime, is perhaps best illustrated in the work of Connell (1995), in which he argues that there is no such thing as one masculinity but many. Further to this, Connell suggests that there is a form of masculinity in which men strive to achieve – namely "hegemonic masculinity" (Gardiner, 2013; see also Cooper and McGinley, 2012; Spencer, 2013).

Moreover, the concept of "hegemonic masculinity" has also been met with criticism. For example, Hall (2002) argues that this concept downplays the role of political economy and class power in a theoretical evacuation of capitalism's global socio-economic process. Following the work of Bourdieu (1984; 1990), Hall (2002) argues that the rule of capital is more dependent on symbolic cultural capital than on overt violence. Thus, capitalism, according to Hall, creates a hyper-masculine proletarian "other", who is insecure and peripheral social inclusion depends on their serviceability. Further to this, as cited by Ray (2011), to regard violence as "social domination neglects the dimorphic nature of violence as symbolic and material practice" (p.91). Hall (2002) reinforces that capitalism drove the pacification of internal territory crucial to its social reproduction, but this subsequently resulted in violent behaviour no longer being the route to power or affluence. Here, it is important to note that crimes such as homicide are predominately committed by those situated with the marginalized fragments of the working class (Ray, 2011).

According to Bairner (1999), within this context men with "dead end lives" might find allure and meaning in guns, violence and gangster way of life. Furthermore, Hatty (2000) notes

Comment [MR6]: R1: Far more consideration of extant literature related to gender, and masculinity is required

Revision: Agreed – all highlighted text are new additions, which address reviewer's comments
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that "violence is the prerogative of the youthful male, especially when confronted by the contradictions and paradoxes of thwarted desire and personal and social disempowerment" (p.6). According to Ray (2011), this particular approach to masculinities and violence suggests that violence or subcultures of violent practice might be "part of a response to perceived crises rather than an expression of a dominant masculinity" (p.93). Indeed, Bourgois's (2003) research into Puerto Rican migrants to the USA demonstrates such crises in action. This particular ethnographic study of street-level drug dealers in East Harlem found that the work these migrants sought was disappearing, but they were unwilling to take jobs in the service sector, as this was perceived as 'women's work'. Further to this, the migrant's wives and partners did gain such employment and as a result gained more financial independence, consequently threatening the historically male dominance in the household. Due to this perceived threat to their masculinity, such men "took refuge in the drug economy, where there were very violent norms of gang rape, sexual conquest, abandonment of families and 'real manhood' based on devotion to group membership" (cited in Ray, 2011: p.93). This notion of masculinity in crises has been met with some challenges, with Hall (2002) arguing that there is not so much a crises of masculinity, but rather a crises on the traditional capitalist order where the separation between criminality and legality are blurred, where hyper-masculinity is deeply embedded and pointless hostility rages on the margins of neo-capitalism. In particular, the injuries of class, which consist of shaming and self-doubt, "set the scene for contests for dignity" (cited in Ray, 2011: p.95). With reference to this notion of dignity, attention will now shift to focus upon the idea of masculine honour and the concept of collective identity within the context of organised crime.

The notion of masculine honour has traditionally focused upon cultural factors and influencers in order to assist in explaining why men from particular societies may express more overt masculine qualities. Thus, we draw attention to the concept of *collective identity*, which has been used extensively by social movement scholars attempting to determine how social movements generate and sustain commitment and cohesion between actors over a period of time (Fominaya, 2010). Snow (2001) defines the concept of *collective identity* as:

> …a shared sense of 'oneness' or 'we-ness' anchored in real or imagined shared attributes and experiences among those who comprise the collectivity and in relation or contrast to one more actual or imagined sets of others (p.212).

Comment [AL7]: R1: Far more consideration of extant literature related to gender, and masculinity is required

Revision: Agreed – all highlighted text are new additions, which address reviewer's comments
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Johnson and Demetriou (2016) state that masculine honour has usually been thought to depend on the man's virility, martial valor, and willingness to defend his woman and social prerogatives with violence. Moreover, the authors suggest that "what really matters for male honour is performance, especially on the battlefield" (p.4), and that battles or other forms of violent encounters are frequently an occasion for men to flaunt their courage and martial excellence, often due to an audience of their peers being present to witness their display of masculine honour. This resonates with the work of Hallsworth and Silverstone (2009), who analysed the significance of honour with regard to lethal gun-related violence in Britain. With reference to Campbell's (1993) notion of hyper-aggressive forms of masculinity, the authors highlighted the term "on the road", which was often referred to by their interviewees to explain the importance of violence in the protection of their perceived masculinity. Hallsworth and Silverstone (2009) argue that "on the road":

> …is a vision of purified masculinity where being 'hard' assumes master status. This is a masculinity where backing down in the face of honour and status threat is difficult and where the onus to retaliate in the face of provocation is imperative (p.367).

Developing this term "on the road" further, the authors suggest that street-level drug dealers or street robbers need to be "physically strong or intimidating and there is a 'business logic' to punishing those who steal from you" (p.371). Thus, street codes also represent ideas of honour, responsibilities and patterns of action that are necessary when particular events arise. These codes include the essentials of "never inform[ing] the police", "one must always be loyal to one's area and associates", and stressing the imperative of "righting physical attacks or verbal attacks with equivalent or superior force" (p.371).

In bringing this sub-section to a close, we refer to Polk (1994), who states that "not all males feel compelled to defend their reputation or status with such violence. Why it is that some males pursue violence to secure their reputation or status, while others avoid such challenges, is a major theoretical question that must guide future research" (p.188). Taking this into consideration, we seek to develop such theoretical understandings in relation to masculine honour, collective identity, and organised crime – namely to that of the HAMC.

Methodology

In regards to theoretical framework, we accept that there are various and often conflicting perspectives on the nexus between masculinity and violence. However, our methodological approach seeks to analyse the paradigms of *masculine honour* and *collective identity*, and

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how the OMC applied this notion when executing the senseless murder of Gerry Tobin. So too, we triangulate these findings by critically analyzing the biography of the founding member of the Californian chapter of the HAMC – Sonny Barger. Further to this, a case study inevitably offers "constraints and opportunities" (Easton, 2010: p.119). One such constraint was being limited to secondary sources as a means of data collection. The primary justification for adopting this approach derives from the issue of validity in regards to offender narratives (Presser, 2009; Presser and Sandberg, 2015). Having said this, it is important to note that in recent times there have been several pioneering ethnographic studies on bikers gangs which display successful in-depth qualitative interviews with offenders (Wolf, 2008; Droban, 2017; Kuldova and Sanchez-Jankowski, 2018). Interestingly, all the ethnographers validate those that they have researched through cross referencing secondary information, of which includes; court transcripts, police records and media sources.

Given this, the use of only secondary sources was deemed less of a constraint and presented fewer pitfalls in the way of reliability and validity of data. The strength of a case study approach is that it offers scholars a variety of ways to examine new research areas in some depth (Eisenhardt, 1989). Despite the scepticisms that a case study approach often receives, Rowley (2002) argues that such a method may offer "insights that might not be achieved with other approaches" (p.16). Yin (1994) also notes that a case study approach is appropriate when the researcher has little or no control over the variables under investigation, in comparison to a laboratory experiment, for example, in which it is necessary to replicate the phenomenon under investigation.

Case study approaches have also the advantage of being flexible about the types of data that they can employ. Within this case study, we were fortunate that both Gerry's murder and Sonny Barger's time in the Hell's Angels have been much commented upon and written about in a range of sources. We also had access to books (both scholarly and 'true crime'), and newspaper articles. Newspaper articles were collected via Nexis, a search engine, which houses all major British newspapers, including both national and regional titles (Yardley, Wilson, and Lynes, 2014).

Indeed, it would be naïve to overlook concerns of research validity in relation to the use of true crime sources. So too, it is worth noting that much in-depth enquiry into homicide has stemmed from 'true crime' genre and investigative journalism (Clarkson, 2003, 2008; Thompson, 1996, 2011). Indeed, offender narratives in biographical formats offer an in-depth account of criminal careers, of which most academic work overlooks or fails to achieve. While texts like Barger *et al.* (2001) are often dismissed by academic

Comment [MR8]: R1: The methodology is missing citations. For example, the sentence on the validity of interviewing murderers requires a reference and further development, particularly as multiple scholars have successfully conducted qualitative interviews with convicted murderers/violent offenders. Not to mention the plethora of studies that have considered violent crime on the streets and by use of ethnographic methods – which should at least be mentioned within the methodology section.

Revision: Agreed – An acknowledgement has been provided about validity/qualitative research.

criminologists, Durham *et al.* (1995) note: "the true crime genre is an important, yet understudied, aspect of popular representations of crime" (p.144). With this in mind, it should be highlighted that true crime accounts do risk muddying the waters somewhat through a range of misrepresentations of the crimes they purport to 'reveal'. Such impact extends from general popular understandings to official narratives (Barkan and Bryjak, 2013). However, the fact that they are able to offer a thorough biographical account of offending provides a *different* type of insight to critically explore within the case study model. To ensure validity was achieved throughout the course of this research, all criminal events discussed in true crime books were cross referenced with newspaper archives. We omitted any information that we felt was unreliable or which we could not verify.

The 'coding' program – Nvivo was used to facilitate all secondary data. Nvivo is an established computer assisted qualitative data analysis software designed for working with text or multimedia based information, where extensive analysis of small or large data volumes is required. The software operates based on 'known attributes' generated by the researcher (Bachman and Schutt, 2015). So too, once the quality of the secondary outputs were manually checked for academic validity, all datasets were inputted for *coding*. The codes that emerged from the dataset were; *masculinity, honour, violence, collective identity*. We accept that one of the limitations of using Nvivo is the potential to overlook information that may not register correctly with the software. Hence, we felt that coding all secondary manually after the electronic process would do no harm. We felt that the manual process would connect us more personally to our datasets, and invariably the field of study. Indeed, the manual process was immensely time consuming, however we benefitted from the process as certain codes that we established were missed when using Nvivo.

We consider this paper a critical think piece, and acknowledge the lack of academic information on violence, and fatal violence in regards to the HAMC and OMC gangs. Various sources (see, for example Richardson, 1991; Barker, 2007; Wolf, 2008) provide commentary on the invisibility of motorcycle gangs in mainstream society, their multiple layers of secrecy, their mythology, and their convention of misinformation. Hence, all of this invariably makes it problematic for any academic research about these criminal enterprises, and their offences. Indeed, the layers of secrecy and misinformation within the motorcycle underworld has resulted us to turn towards a case-study approach, with biographical understanding of violence. Indeed, there are many advantages of combining these methods, as stories and accounts of violence are central in many street cultures and have been shown to contribute to organising relationships and social networks (Anderson 1999; Bourgois, 2003). Sandberg *et al.* (2015) also advocate stories of violence, and state that

Comment [MR9]: I would question whether it is appropriate to draw on 'true crime' type books as a means of data. And if the author/s choose to do so far more discussion about the ways in which the information from these sources was analysed is necessary. For example, how did the author/s note bias? Were details checked? What method of analysis was used?
I question the validity of the methodology for this research and I am unsure whether it is appropriate to triangulate media sources with 'true crime' stories as described by the authors/s.

Revisions: Agreed – A new paragraph has been inserted to address the above comments.

Comment [MR10]: R1: What method of analysis was used? There is no mention of how the authors collected the data or coded the data, nor is there any discussion of how the data was analysed.

Revisions: Agreed - A new paragraph has been inserted to address the above comments.

they are particularly important in 'violence-prone' subcultures and among those partaking in the illegal economy. We begin by critically discussing the biographical account of Sonny Barger (2001) – entitled: *'Hell's Angels: The life and times of Sonny Barger and the Hell's Angels motorcycle club'* – and then theoretically explore role of masculine honour and how this can be applied to the murder of Gerry Tobin.

Sonny Barger: The American Badass

Ralph 'Sonny' Barger Jr. was born in 1938, and spent his childhood and teenage years in California, USA. His father – Ralph Hubert Barger Sr., was a non-aggressive alcoholic who worked as a pavement layer. Barger Sr's work commitments meant that he was away from home for long periods, and it was only when Sonny was four months old that his mother – Kathryn Carmella left him and sister – Shirley Marie for a bus driver. Sonny describes his father as a "hardworking, hard-drinking functioning alcoholic" (Barger, Zimmerman and Zimmerman (2001: p.12); *all subsequent quotes in this section are taken from Barger and Zimmerman's*).

Sonny was discharged from the US Army after 14 months of service. However, this period was crucial for Sonny's future, as he enjoyed spending time with war veterans, who taught him to become a machine gunner and to appreciate motorcycles. Sonny's observations of bomber squadrons and military men forming tight fraternities post wars interested him to start up his own motorcycle movement. Of note, the concept of biker 'patches' emerged from military men, who would stitch patches to represent their identity on government-issue leather bomber jackets. He recalls that the term "Hell's Angels" 'had been bouncing around the military as far back as World War I, when a fighter squadron first took on the name (p.28). Soon after, Sonny created the Oakland Hell's Angels chapter, and in 1958 he founded the HAMC became club president. A swift approach was taken by Sonny to enforce club rules and discipline, in which he notes that in order "to shore up our territory fast we made up tactical rules early on" (p.32).

Throughout the biography, Sonny alludes to the importance of how members of the HAMC are obliged to support fellow members under any circumstances: "The story of the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club is the story of a very select brotherhood of men who will fight and die for each other, no matter what the cause" (p.67); "we stand up for ourselves and a Hell's Angel should never break and run" (p.146); "it's like a golden rule: when a Hell's Angel fights a citizen or a rival club member, everybody rat-packs to his side" (p.148). So too, Sonny proudly mentions how the "Hell's Angels love to fistfight" (p.87). Often, however, the

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Oakland HAMC chapter would go on regional and national runs as a pack, which inevitably led to violent confrontations with rival gangs, which only helped gain nationwide notoriety. Sonny recalls how "everywhere the Hell's Angels went we'd outdrink, out-fuck, and outfight everybody. People would take one look at us and step back" (p.141).

Here, it is important to note that the propensity of violence is what separates 'patched' bikers from mainstream bikers. Thus, the former is labelled as the 'One-Percenters', those that "engage in unconventional behaviour, often criminal behaviour" (Baker and Human, 2009: p.174). Quinn and Koch (2003) consider how status frustration and endless quest for power drives the 1%ers to "extreme in establishing and maintaining an image as dangerous, unpredictable, and outrageous" (p.286). Barker and Human (2009) further clarify that the One-Percenters are of "all one race, sex, or sexual orientation" (p.174). Indeed, the tension between intense allegiance and hierarchal control on the one hand, and the violent masculinity and the other, is perplexing to the 'outsider' (Becker, 1997). As Quinn and Koch (2003) observe, "loyalty to a national hierarchy reinforces deeply felt tribal solidarity and power" (p.289).

In 1977, the federal government put Sonny and several members of the HAMC on trial on Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) charges. The jury acquitted Barger on the RICO charges with a hung jury on the predicate acts: "There was no proof it was part of club policy, and as much as they tried, the government could not come up with any incriminating minutes from any of our meetings mentioning drugs and guns" (p.221). What the RICO case and other incidents that Sonny and the HAMC were involved in only reaffirms the collective identity of a 'patched' biker. They were all learning and testing times for the core values of the HAMC (Barker, 2007), and those who were unable to successfully accomplish this in the eyes of Sonny were: "disloyal, no-good chickenshit and not a true brother" (p.227).

For Sonny, maintaining a collective identity through honour and respect was imperative, and while his biography does not provide a sensational disclosure about the inner-life of the HAMC, by presenting a subjective view of the culture of the most notorious and world leading outlaw biker organisation, it provides a second opinion, that is credible to official and journalistic accounts that is worth taking note of.

Fallen Angel: The Murder of Gerry Tobin

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The work of Canter (2003) considers "the significance of the place in which the deed is done is especially important for murder" (p.21). The nature of Gerry's murder in the MC underworld is not foreign. In 2001, a small group of French-Canadian Hell's Angels left the Bulldog Bash and were heading towards London on the southbound of the M40 motorway, which connects London and Birmingham. A dark coloured saloon followed the three-bike convoy, and a handgun appeared from the passenger window that fired several shots. One of the bikers was shot in the leg, but thankfully survived (Thompson, 2011). With little evidence and an uncooperative victim, the police wound down their investigation, and concluded that it was a motiveless attack that had no connections to the HAMC or the Bulldog Bash. Similarly, in 2006, Roger 'Bear' Mariani, a Connecticut based Hell's Angel was assassinated on the highway I-95. Both incidents were studied by Simon Turner and Sean Creighton, who were patched OMC members from the South Warwickshire, England chapter.

Turner was a heavily tattooed OMC member who had a criminal record for violent practice. While Turner led the South Warwickshire chapter, he made Creighton his 'Sergeant-at-Arms'. Both Turner and Creighton drew parallels with the 2001 M40 shooting, and the 2006 I-95 shooting, and identified that no one had been arrested for both incidents. Meanwhile, Turner kept regularly kept up to date with international OMC affairs, and was infuriated when he found out that members of the US OMC were being killed by members of the HAMC. Turner's motivation to kill was inspired by international events, which at the same time was encouraged by the National OMC President, Jack Rosga, who in 2007 gave OMC members the 'green light' to retaliate after an Outlaw was fatally shot outside a strip club in Georgia (Thompson, 2011). As far as Turner was concerned, the ruling applied to him and members of his South Warwickshire chapter.

With a motive to execute a hit, Turner recruited members from his chapter for various roles. Turner's plans of a motorway assassination encompassed five OMC members, three vehicles, and a revolver handgun. The Crown's case was that the murder was carefully planned, and a recognisance or "scouting" over three or four days was carried out before the killing (R. v Turner, 2010). On 12th August 2007, Hell's Angels member Gerry Tobin, also a Harley Davidson mechanic, attended the annual "Bulldog Bash", which had taken place at Long Marston, Airfield in Warwickshire ('Armed guard as biker gang jailed' _BBC News_ 28 November 2008). Later that afternoon, he was riding his motorcycle homewards towards London on the M40. At about 2.30pm, just south of junction 15 of the M40 motorway, a green Rover 420 pulled out of a lay-by. One of its occupants – Sean Creighton fired from a revolver at Gerry. Gerry was killed instantly. Another shot from the car was fired at the rear wheel of his motorcycle. The car was later torched. It was found by emergency services in a

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remote part of Coventry, engulfed in flames ('The bloody biker', _The Independent_, 29 November 2009).

While it can be accepted that the task of executing an assassination in the given circumstances would have been extremely difficult, it is important to acknowledge that the unfortunate success of the 'hit' was by no means luck. Indeed, during the investigation process, police recovered a 'dummy target' that was used by Creighton as target practice for Gerry's murder. So too, based on MacIntyre _et al's_ (2014) typology, Creighton should be categorised as a "Journeyman" hitman. Here, we must also point out that some may argue that the hit committed against Gerry was executed successfully, and therefore makes the perpetrator a "master" hitman. However, Macintyre _et al._ (2014) argue that a master description can only be provided to those who avoid apprehension. Thompson (2011) discusses the difficulties during the investigation process of Gerry's murder and notes the unwillingness of HAMC member when cooperating with the police. It can be argued that members of the HAMC were reluctant to provide police with any information as it would violate their 'code' of interacting with law enforcement. This itself reveals the sophisticated and secret nature of the HAMC.

According to the Crown's case, much telling evidence was provided by vehicle index recognition technology, CCTV footage and mobile telephone cell site records. Creighton, Turner and Dane Garside were in the green Rover car. Garside was the driver and Creighton fired the fatal shot. The other applicants, Ian Cameron, Karl Garside and Dean Taylor lay in wait in a white Range Rover further along the motorway at junction 11 in case the first attempt failed. The last man, the co-defendant Malcolm Bull, was in another vehicle alone (R. v Turner, 2010). During November 2008, all the perpetrators received life imprisonments, with minimum tariffs ranging between 25 to 30 years.

Discussion

While the findings of this article considers the predisposition of rivalry based violence, it should not overshadow the fact that both the HAMC and OMC are some of the biggest transnational organised crime syndicates, who often operate in a rational manner akin to traditional organised crime groups (Hill, 1980). Both have successfully adopted the 'glocal' notion of organised criminality (Hobbs, 2013), and it is evident that a symbiotic relationship exists within the HAMC and the OMC, and the criminal enterprises that occur partially or wholly within it. By disconnecting from the legal and mainstream biker society, the welfare of

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the HAMC and OMC depends on that of its members, and therefore such illicit endeavours are not discouraged by these fraternities.

Concurrently, influential leaders and bikers like Sonny Barger see their personal welfare as dependent upon their club's power, and therefore will assure that it is some distance from being recognised as a criminal enterprise. As aforementioned, due to club ethics, which centres on power, tribal and cultural honour, clubs like the HAMC will support their members, even if their acts bring trouble for the group. Their patches signify the likelihood of this type of behaviour, and the colours themselves are the pinnacle credentials of a biker. Like military strips, they are honoured with the utmost respect.

Organisations like the HAMC have set rules, which are influential for the development and lifestyle of a Hell's Angel. For instance, the rules created and enforced by Barger not only abetted the Hell's Angels to become a worldwide brand, but it has also influenced the notion of masculine honour. Masculine honour has traditionally focused upon cultural factors and influencers in order to assist in explaining why men from particular societies may express more overtly masculine qualities. Developing from masculine honour, here it is important to refer to the previously introduced concept of collective identity. For the HAMC and OMC, the sense of 'oneness' or 'we-ness' is exhibited no better than through acts of collective violent practice. Sonny Barger's militaristic approach to the HAMC in its early days created discipline and territorial penetration for the Hell's Angels, which invariably shaped brotherhood and cultivated violent masculine identities for his organisation. As Oliver (1994) observes, violent masculine identities are built around an exaggerated emphasis on toughness function as a substitute for when conventional notions of masculinity are unachievable. As discussed above, for Sonny and his comrades, violence within a collective capacity was a masculine method of responding to challenges and asserting dominance.

What is also interesting to note here is how women are viewed and incorporated into the HAMC organisation. For example, Stewart (2010) presents an examination into how women, specifically the wives and girlfriends of members, come to personify particular characteristics and traits often associated with male affiliates of the HAMC. It should be highlighted here that Stewart's examination into the women of the HAMC took place in 1965, a time when women were usually seen as compliant housewives (Stewart, 2010). The findings here are of interest when we consider the work of Bourgois (2003), in which the very idea of women moving away from traditional feminine roles were a source of a perceived crises for men, who in turn moved to a life of crime. Instead, such a crises does not seem to be present within the Hell's Angels, where women seem to be encouraged to join and partake in what can considered traditional masculine behaviours. What is also of interest, and one that

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requires further examination beyond the scope of this study, is why certain organised crime groups appear to be more welcoming to female involvement. For example, Nayak (1999) found that white skinhead groups appear to represents a "violent consolidation of masculinity [and] sexuality" (cited in Ray, 2011: p.93), and, further to this, Hebdige (1987) argues that such groups intend to express what is referred to as a nostalgic exaggeration of traditional male roles. As noted by Albanese (2011), gender has, historically, played a small role in the examination of organised crime.   Indeed, organised crime has been perceived as a masculine behaviour with women involved only for purposes of exploitation (for example, prostitution), or as silent supporters or followers of their husbands' or loved ones' criminal undertakings.

> **Comment [AL11]:** R1: Discussion to descriptive
>
> Agreed – please see highlighted text where we develop this key point in relation to female involvement in the Hells angels

In relation to the concept of collective identity, it could be argued that like the male members of the HAMC who have come to reject mainstream masculine qualities, females associated with the organisation have also discarded traditional feminine attributes – with both the men of the HAMC and their partners contrasting their shared characteristics against actual or imagined sets of others associated with more mainstream or accepted characteristics related to gender. While there may be a shared collective identity between both the male members of the organisation and their respective partners, it is apparent that such collectivism is limited. For example, Katz (1988) determined that women still "exist as an annex to the male gang...and the possibilities open to them [are] dictated and controlled by the boys" (p.126).

What is clear within the *Outlaw Biker's* worldview is that it can only be a male dominant ideology, with no allowance for female interference (Wolf, 2008). Thus, Messerschmidt's (1993) notion of 'hegemonic masculinity' fits the male dominated subcultures of the HAMC and OMC, which therefore provides the clubs with 'exclusive' masculine identities (Wolf, 2008). In regards to subcultural values, *Outlaw* MC's place high importance and value to those with mechanical skills, especially those within their own organisation (Bay, 1998; Quinn, 2001). While there is no direct quotation to illustrate this, it can be argued that Gerry's expertise in mechanics would have been respected and utilised by HAMC members, which therefore made him a viable asset for the HAMC. So too, the points above are combined with a strong emphasis on traditional masculinity, including being honourable, tough, strong, practical, independent and non-submissive (Wolf, 2008).

Similarly, to the work of Ayres and Treadwell (2011) on the deviant and criminal practices of English football firms, it can be argued that the HAMC's practices of 'outdrink[ing], outfuck[ing] and outfight[ing]' are all characteristics much needed to craft a subcultural form of masculinity, status, and collective identity. For *Outlaw* organisations like the HAMC and

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OMC, retaliation is perceived as an alternative form of criminal justice that is compulsory to undertake to defend their status of honour and masculinity. This is further reinforced when we consider the work of Winlow (2012), who argues that "men [become] acutely aware of their close proximity to other men who are willing to use violence, and the cultural benefits and respect often afforded to these individuals" (cited in Ellis, 2016: 29). In other words, to not act antagonistically may produce a form of social stigmatisation, because "responding with toughness and strength becomes imbedded in the definition of being a man" (Gilbert and Andrews, 1998: p.266). The seven members of the OMC who executed the murder of Gerry, merely saw him as an 'object' that would enable them to defend and advance their 'masculine honour'. Demetriou and Johnson (2016) state: "what really matters for male honour is performance, especially on the battlefield" (p.4). In the tragic case of Gerry, the kill zone was the M40 motorway, and this particular space and place should be considered of significant, as homicide researchers often neglect and overlook place, although according to Brolan, Wilson and Yardley (2016) in their study of hitmen and the spaces of spaces of contract killings, researchers "stand to benefit significantly from such a focus" (p.3). As aforementioned, the 'hit' was by no means chance or luck. The assassination was premeditated and executed by individuals who had previous serious criminal convictions and had previous experiences with firearms. It can be argued that there was an urgency from the OMC to follow the orders of Jack Rosga to execute retribution. As Lauger (2014) notes, if gang members fail "to follow the script without a reasonable excuse may cause one to be labeled as an imposter" (p.14). Thus, in the case of the OMC, this displays the failure of masculine honour, collective identity, which invariably can lead to intra-gang retribution.

Comment [AL12]: R1. Wider engagement with literature

Agreed – added a reference from Winlow

Recommendations for Future Work

We believe that future research on motorcycle gangs in the UK can benefit from a larger data set, which could open the avenue of causal understanding of organised crime and fatal violence through a social network analysis. Due to the lack of scholarly work on motorcycle gangs within the United Kingdom, future research could also benefit from a wider geographical parameter. In doing so, the research would enable a better geopolitical understanding of social embeddedness in organised crime. So too, this would be advantageous theoretically, as there would be for instance, the scope for researchers to consider the 'underexposed role of women' in the motorcycle underworld.

Comment [MR13]: A new subsection has been inserted that focuses on recommendations for future work.

Conclusion

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This article has revealed the instinctive, tribal and cultural natures of the HAMC and OMC by exploring the importance of masculine honour and collective identity, and how these notions were pivotal for Gerry's murder.   For Sonny Barger and the men that murdered Gerry, extreme violence in defence of honour is definitively a masculine affair, which ultimately becomes influential for one to elevate themselves and their peers within an asocial hierarchy.

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