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OUTLAWS VS. INLAWS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CHILDHOOD
BACKGROUNDS OF OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE CLUB MEMBERS AND NON-OUTLAW
MOTORCYCLE CLUB MEMBERS

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OUTLAWS VS. INLAWS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CHILDHOOD
BACKGROUNDS OF OUTLAW MOTORCYCLE CLUB MEMBERS AND NON-OUTLAW
MOTORCYCLE CLUB MEMBERS

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE
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BY

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Dedication

To Mack and Fergus

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Abstract

Why do individuals join Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs? The present research study explores the childhood backgrounds of Outlaw Motorcycle Club members compared to the childhood backgrounds of Non-Outlaw Motorcycle Club members. Three questions direct the research study: (a) do Outlaw Motorcycle Club members experience more risk factors during childhood than Non-Outlaw Motorcycle Club members, (b) can risk factors motivate one to join a stigmatized group such as an Outlaw Motorcycle Club, and (c) how is belonging restored in the Outlaw Motorcycle Club? Street gang research provides a model for analysis of how risk factors predict joining an Outlaw Motorcycle Club. Utilizing a descriptive, exploratory, and quantitative design, data collection involved outlaw and non-outlaw participants throughout Canada and the United States. An evolutionary psychological perspective combined with the Belongingness Hypothesis frames the interpretation and analysis of what differentiates outlaw from non-outlaw motorcyclists. The outlaw literature can be interpreted as incomplete because of its outdatedness and limited information on outlaw's childhood backgrounds. Further, newer research identified more similarities between outlaws and non-outlaws. Thus, it leaves us without an understanding of what differentiates them. Knowing the differences is important as law enforcement considers Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs highly organized criminal groups. While many might believe the difference between outlaws and non-outlaws is deviance, this research study suggests exclusion during childhood leads to an impeded self-control and a heightened need to belong causing one to reject society and join a stigmatized group such as an Outlaw Motorcycle Club. In the Outlaw Motorcycle Club one can regain their self-control and restore belonging. Recommendations for future research include comparing participant's past and present sense of belonging.

***Keywords:* outlaw motorcycle clubs, exclusion, impeded self-control, need to belong**

Chapter 1

Opening Narrative

“Existing evidence supports the hypothesis that the need to belong is a powerful, fundamental, and extremely pervasive motivation” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 497).

“Perhaps people who are ostracized—and thus predisposed to be attracted to anyone acting interested in them—are susceptible to the untoward influence of fringe groups that prey on such vulnerable individuals by offering them an opportunity to belong and be significant” (Williams & Nida, 2011, p. 74).

1.1 The Need to Belong

“...the need to belong is a...fundamental, and extremely pervasive motivation” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 497).

It is easy to imagine that even a stigmatized group such as an Outlaw Motorcycle Club (OMC) as serving the fundamental need to belong (NTB). Its group dynamics satisfy long-term and positive relationships. Moreover, members of OMCs described their motorcycle clubs (MC) as a *brotherhood*, which is synonymous to *belonging*. However, some might wonder why the attraction to a stigmatized MC over a non-stigmatized MC. A few might argue the pull is deviance. Still, deviance can be performed individually. There is likely something else drawing an individual to choose a stigmatized MC over a non-stigmatized MC. This research study suggests that outlaws likely experienced threats to their NTB (exclusion) during their childhood, placing their self-control in a disrupted state and their NTB in a heightened state. When we experience exclusion, especially during childhood and within the family unit, we long to restore this *powerful, fundamental, and pervasive motivation* to belong. As the research study views human behaviour and motivation through an evolutionary psychological perspective, the

Belongingness Hypothesis (BH) provides a framework for understanding the heightened NTB as a predisposing factor for joining an OMC.

1.2 Exclusion

“...people who are ostracized...are susceptible to the untoward influence of fringe groups that prey on such vulnerable individuals by offering them an opportunity to belong and be significant” (Williams & Nida, 2011, p. 74).

Why would the OMC be an ideal group for an individual who experienced exclusion? Exclusion causes negative emotions and behaviour. The point is exclusion leaves individuals in a vulnerable state. Vulnerability does not necessarily mean they are weak. However, vulnerability triggers one’s self-control to restore the primary goal of belonging. While vulnerable, some individuals react in prosocial fashions trying harder to belong, and others react in antisocial fashions feeling resentful towards those who rejected them. For those with antisocial reactions, they might be influenced by feelings of resentment and therefore reject society for a stigmatized group that promises non-conformity, loyalty, and brotherhood such as the OMC. The OMCs strong emphasis on loyalty makes the club an ideal option for restoring self-control and belonging in addition to ensuring future exclusion will be less likely.

1.3 Rationale for Applying the Belongingness Hypothesis

After examining many of the criminological theories explaining crime and gang membership, it appeared that many of the theories had a standard measure - a motivation to *belong*. However, a question remained unanswered - why do some individuals join criminally stigmatized groups rather than engaging in deviancy on their own – especially since belonging to a criminally stigmatized group places one under the target of law enforcement. There must be more to joining a stigmatized group. This research study utilizes the theme of a *heightened need*

to belong as identified in the BH to explain the path of joining a stigmatized group such as an OMC. In a stigmatized group such as an OMC, individuals spend considerable amounts of time socializing. The group allowing for a sense of belonging is what human's need. However, what does that mean? At this stage, it is necessary to briefly distinguish between belonging in individual relationships and belonging in groups. In individual relationships, there is more fluidity in that one can alternate between different friends or choose to spend time alone depending on one's needs. In a sense, there is less obligation and more freedom. In a group (OMC), the individual members spend time with each other and often, and may also have their behaviour modified by club rules of membership. Here, individuals might be bound to tolerate various personality types because of group dynamics. Belongingness within a group and belongingness within individual relationships differs to a degree; thus, to refine the focus of the research study it highlights belongingness within a group.

1.4 Rationale for Modelling Street Gang Research

Examining the childhood backgrounds of street gang members and non-street gang members who resided in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods offered valuable insight into risk factors predicting street gang membership. Many young people who resided in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods did not join street gangs – thus, what differentiated them from the young people in the same neighbourhoods who did join street gangs? It is notable that there are some differences between street gangs and OMCs. For instance, street gangs included mostly young people and some adults whereas OMC members are adults. Street gangs may also have various ethnic groups, while OMCs are mainly White individuals though, there are Hispanic and Black OMCs. Street gangs can be all male, all female, or co-ed whereas OMCs are all male. Street gangs also claim territory within their neighbourhoods while OMCs claim territory of

provinces and states. Both groups, however, maintain some structure, group cohesiveness, leadership, communication style, and use of symbols. More importantly, since street gangs and OMCs are both stigmatized groups, it made sense to compare the childhood backgrounds of OMC members and Non-Outlaw Motorcycle Club (NOMC) members.

Conducting a comparative analysis of OMC members and NOMC members was also crucial in helping to avoid bias and verify or falsify relationships. Members of NOMCs were also chosen for comparison because prior OMC literature found similar traits between members of OMCs and NOMCs. It must also be noted that while law enforcement deems OMCs criminally stigmatized groups, they deem NOMCs recreational groups. Thus, the other reasoning behind comparing the two groups. While street gang researchers agreed two dominant risk factors included residing in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods and where street gangs were present (Miller, 2000), several risk factors from five life domains – individual, family, peers, school, and community – predicted street gang membership - regardless of gender or ethnicity (Alleyne & Wood, 2014). Risk factors are life experiences associated with an increase in problem behavior. Not all members of OMCs necessarily resided as children in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods where street gangs were present; however, this does not mean that risk factors were not present in their childhood. While they may not have had access to street gangs, they had access to OMCs at some point in their lives. As such, a comparison between OMCs and NOMCs is valuable as there has been little data collected on the childhood backgrounds of either.

1.5 Research Problem

Law enforcement claimed the number of OMCs were increasing and considered a threat to society due to their allegedly criminal nature. Though, Barker (2005) interjected that official

statistics were not kept on OMC activities and crimes. He also said while there was no accurate count of the number of OMCs and their chapters in the United States or the world, the National Alliance of Gang Investigators estimated more than 300 OMCs in the United States (as cited in Barker, 2005). It was also difficult to find statistics of the number of OMCs in Canada; however, Canadian criminal intelligence discovered 950 organized crime groups in 2007 compared to 800 groups in 2006 (CISC-SCRC, 2007). These statistics, however, does not distinguish between the types of organized crime groups, for example, mafia and OMCs.

Barker (2005) also added that many criminologists dismissed studying OMCs as it was difficult to distinguish between the non-criminals and criminals within the OMCs. Barker argued, however, there is a reason to challenge this assumption and called for more research on these stigmatized groups. Librett (2008) agreed OMCs are under-researched and added that comparative analyses might assist in providing more information into the MC subculture. Earlier research described OMC members as White male, veterans from working-class backgrounds. However, in some cases, it was uncertain if the working-class backgrounds were meant to describe OMC member's backgrounds or their family's backgrounds. In addition, the research is outdated. There is newer OMC research, though it mostly compared the similarities between OMC members and NOMC members. Other researchers focussed on OMCs as criminals and claimed they were highly sophisticated criminal organizations involved in murder, extortion, and violence (Quinn & Forsyth, 2009; Vergani & Collins, 2015). Further, there has been little to no research into OMC member's childhood backgrounds. There has also been limited quantitative data on OMC members. Thus, we have no up to date and accurate understanding of what differentiates outlaws from non-outlaws – and it is essential to understand groups labelled as criminally stigmatized.

To be sure this research study did not intend to prove or disprove criminality of OMCs. It is also notable that some MCs are *sisterhoods*. However, the focus of this research study is the *brotherhoods* since OMCs are male. To gain a full understanding of individuals, it is also helpful to examine their childhood backgrounds. Many researchers insisted the formative years are where the human brain is programmed; therefore, one's childhood experiences provide insight into how individuals will behave in the future. Thus, if motorcyclists have similar traits, then why do some motorcyclists choose OMCs over NOMCs? The present research intends to contribute to this gap in the literature.

It is important to acknowledge that much of the motivation for this work derived from an evolutionary perspective with the following questions in mind - *Is it important to feel like we belong? What happens to those who do not feel like they belong? How do we come to belong?* In the end, it is this vision and the BH that provided the guiding framework. The results of the research study may also assist in preventing young people who are at risk of joining stigmatized groups or clubs. Further, the results could stimulate future research comparing OMCs and NOMCs including implementing the 'Need to Belong Scale' (Leary, 2013) to understand participants sense of belonging as adults compared to their sense of belonging felt in childhood. Most importantly, it also provides insight into human behaviour and motivation, besides, opening knowledge on the OMC subculture.

Examining the childhood backgrounds of outlaws and non-outlaws also added to Thompson (2008) and Librett's (2008) comparative research on NOMCs/OMCs and OMCs/Law Enforcement Motorcycle Clubs, respectively. Similar to their studies, this research study also suggests similarities were found, specifically – feeling like one belongs, is respected, and is with family within their respective MCs - however, this research study also suggests that OMC

members have more risk factors in more life domains than NOMC members. While many might believe the difference between joining an OMC and a NOMC is deviance the data can suggest exclusion during childhood leads to an impeded self-control and a heightened need to belong causing one to reject society and join a stigmatized group such as an OMC.

1.6 Research Purpose and Objective

This research study aimed at understanding what differentiates individuals who join OMCs from those who join NOMCs. The primary objective was to investigate if childhood risk factors might differentiate an individual who joins an OMC over a NOMC. To assist in determining what might differentiate outlaws from non-outlaws this research study referred to street gang research and its identification of risk factors that predicted street gang membership. Street gangs are comparable to OMCs as they are both considered criminally stigmatized groups. In addition, street gang research established variations between street gang members and non-street gang members who resided in the same neighbourhoods. In fact, an accumulation of risk factors in multiple life domains were predictors for street gang membership. The present research study also explains how risk factors are a product of exclusion. For example, a risk factor that predicted street gang membership was a *low attachment to parents or family*. A *low attachment to parents or family* is equivalent to exclusion as it may indicate the child experienced such things as parental neglect. Since exclusion disrupts self-control and heightens the NTB, street gang members might have decided to reject society and join a stigmatized group such as a street gang to restore belonging.

It was predicted then, that compared to NOMC members, OMC members likely experienced an accumulation of risk factors in multiple life domains during their childhood. Moving beyond this, the research study also utilized descriptive and exploratory research to

describe how risk factors (exclusion) interrupt belonging and impedes an individual's self-control and heightens their NTB to the point they reject society and join an OMC.

1.7 Research Questions

- (a) Do Outlaw Motorcycle Club members experience more risk factors during childhood than Non-Outlaw Motorcycle Club members?
- (b) Can risk factors motivate one to join a stigmatized group such as an Outlaw Motorcycle Club?
- (c) How is belonging restored in the Outlaw Motorcycle Club?

1.8 Thesis Outline

This thesis consists of 7 chapters. Chapter 1 provided an overview of the research study. Chapter 2 introduces OMCs and NOMCs starting with a historical account of OMCs and NOMCs. Chapter 3 discusses the OMC literature blended with the BH as a theoretical framework. It also reviews pertinent literature such as street gang research, which assists in offering a conceptual framework for this research study. Chapter 4 introduces the methodological approach to the research study. Chapter 5 outlines the results of the quantitative data collected. Chapter 6 discusses the findings and limitations of the research study. Chapter 7 presents a conclusion while identifying implications and areas of future research.

Chapter 2

Introduction to Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs

2.1 Overview

Before proceeding with the outlaw literature, it is important to distinguish between *outlaw* and *non-outlaw* motorcyclists. The subculture of motorcycle clubs (MC) and motorcyclists, in general, have been described in a variety of ways. Thus, we should understand the differences and similarities between Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs (OMC) and Non-Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs (NOMC) before describing what might differentiate one from joining one type of MC over the other. Without such knowledge, it is difficult to explain why it is necessary to understand what differentiates them. To enable this understanding is through the analytical lens of a historical account of OMCs preceded by a background on both OMCs and NOMCs including their recruitment and structure. Following this is a discussion distinguishing the use of *outlaw* and *non-outlaw terminology* as is used in this research study.

2.2 History of the Outlaw Motorcycle Club

As the concept of the OMC and NOMC are connected, most individuals assume all MCs are OMCs. Although, many MCs have varying missions and values. It is also notable that law enforcement considers OMCs criminally stigmatized groups and NOMCs recreational groups. Historically, the MC subculture has an American ancestry. Hollywood captured the motorcyclist in American culture in a variety of motorcycle movies such as *The Wild Angels* and *Easy Rider*. Besides, many might visualize motorcyclists as the modern-day version of horse-riding gangs of gun-toting villains - like Jesse James - terrorizing new settlers and federal Marshalls of the Wild West. The villains of the Wild West now being the modern-day motorcyclists portrayed by the likes of Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda: mysterious, intimidating, and rowdy bikers drawn

together and linked to the past through the commonality of criminal activity seeking to evade the federal Marshalls of the past, and still seeking to do so now. On the other hand, others might view motorcyclists as a group of motorcycling enthusiasts joined for riding and camaraderie – the retired law enforcement officer’s MC riding for charity. Wherever the truth may be on the civilian spectrum ranging from good to bad, the beginning of the OMC, however, is best understood in a scholarly way through the following OMC expert’s account:

During the 1800s-1900s bicycles became popular in the United States as an economical form of transportation before becoming expensive motorized machines. With motorization, companies such as Harley-Davidson Motor Company emerged in addition to motorcycle associations and clubs. In fact, soldiers were trained to operate Harley-Davidson Motorcycles and Indian Motorcycles during World War II. The American Motorcyclist Association also formed rules to uphold motorcycle safety and a friendly public image. When soldiers returned to the United States at the end of the war, they also resumed motorcycle riding to ease the difficult transition to regular life. Motorcycling and drinking with fellow veterans recaptured the familiarity and excitement of the war but also the strong bonds developed during the horrific events of the war. These various motorcycle clubs became known as outlaw motorcycle clubs as they were not registered with the American Motorcyclist Association. They were also allegedly responsible for creating a negative image. For example, at a July 4, 1947 motorcycle rally in Hollister, California various drunken non-American Motorcyclist Association motorcycle clubs caused a public fiasco. This event also created two myths: (a) media staged a photograph of a drunk motorcyclist on a

Harley-Davidson motorcycle surrounded by beer bottles and claimed outlaw motorcycle clubs were a menace during the Hollister event, and (b) the American Motorcyclist Association made a statement that 99% of the motorcyclists at the event were law-abiding citizens, implying the other 1% were not. As such, the outlaw motorcycle clubs accepted the 'one-percenter' term. In 1964, two Oakland Hells Angels Motorcycle Club members were also charged with raping two women. While charges were dropped for lack of evidence, the government demanded an investigation into outlaw motorcycle clubs, which resulted in a 'Lynch Report' that declared outlaw motorcycle club members as menaces who engaged in gang-raping women. A Hells Angels Motorcycle Club member was then charged with the homicide of a female at a 'Rolling Stones' concert until found not guilty. Over time, media coverage and Hollywood movies played on the negative outlaw motorcycle club image. Between 1948-1960s motorcycle clubs extended from California throughout the United States and continued to grow (Dulaney, 2006, pp. 45-63).

Veterans joined to rebel against domestic expectations such as starting a family and becoming homeowners for spending time with like-minded friends (Austin, Gagne, & Orend, 2010). The OMCs were originally loosely organized MCs with tough leaders and members who met weekly to drink, seek excitement, and have sex with women (Hopper & Moore, 1990). Veterans rode mostly as law-abiding citizens; however, by the mid-1950s motorcycling in the United States was viewed as a dangerous lifestyle (Austin et al., 2010). The separation between the two groups also continued during the 1970s-1990s where the media and law enforcement described OMCs as involved in drugs, prostitution, illegal weapons trade as well as buying and

reselling stolen goods (Librett, 2008). The OMCs eventually became radical entrepreneurs that substituted gang mentality with a highly sophisticated criminal mentality that subscribed to extortion, murder, and replacing Harley-Davidson motorcycles with luxury automobiles (Quinn & Forsyth, 2009). Eventually, OMCs replaced toughness with smartness (Quinn, 2001) and embraced violence and club loyalty (Vergani & Collins, 2015).

Quinn (2001) also argued illegal activity might not be the core of OMCs in fact; these MCs utilized public means to improve their image from the crime and unpredictable behaviour they became known for (Barker, 2005). Most of the OMCs also maintained they were not criminal organizations. "...Sometime during the 80's law enforcement changed the meaning of the 1%er to what they wanted it to represent...The 1%er definition as we see it is one that explains our commitment to Biking and Brotherhood...To say that 1%er's are criminals or people of a lesser moral code than the rest of society is a tainted opinion...We may not live by the rules of society, but we do live by it's laws" (Vulture 1%er, 2018). "...People judge us by appearance...Media portrays us as the boogie man...Law enforcement arrests US for existing...And the courts judge and jail us based on the patch we wear..." (Bandidos MC Texas, 2018). "The Black Pistons MC are a brotherhood and not a criminal organization. We are a group of men united to ride, and have fun. We have families, jobs, and responsibilities just like everyone else and although the media like to portray us as being criminals, the truth is we share a common goal of enjoying life to the fullest" (Black Pistons Motorcycle Club Canada, 2018). Nonetheless, the *Criminal Code of Canada* (s. 467.1) attempts to define OMCs under criminal organizations as follows:

"Criminal organization" means a group, however organized, that

A. is composed of three or more persons in or outside of Canada; and

B. has as one of its main purposes or main activities the facilitation or commission of one or more serious offences that, if committed, would likely result in the direct or indirect receipt of a material benefit, including a financial benefit, by the group or by any of the persons who constitute the group.

It does not include a group of persons that forms randomly for the immediate commission of a single offence (Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, 2010, p. 11).

Scholarly research of OMCs and NOMCs often discussed the hierarchy in the motorcycle subculture. For example, Quinn and Forsyth (2009) divided MCs into four categories:

- (a) Riding Clubs (RC) are organizations for motorcycling enthusiasts that engage in little or no criminal activity and have either strict or lenient membership standards.
- (b) Support Clubs have minor or moderate involvement in criminality and have a relationship with the largest One-Percenter MCs for protection and to strengthen their reputations.
- (c) Satellite Clubs are created and controlled by members of the largest One-Percenter MCs and recruit members for the largest MCs and partake in criminality related to the largest MCs.
- (d) The largest One-Percenter MCs are at the top of the criminal hierarchy.

Some One-Percenter MCs, like the Hells Angels MC, became so predominant that they have become incorporated and trademarked. Barker (2014) also noted Support Clubs and Puppet Clubs affiliated with dominant OMCs and served as their recruiter in addition to providing a

portion of their illegal gains. Dulaney (2006) argued that the difference between the MCs was the 1%er patch but mentioned the criminal activity was minimal among the 1%er MCs. He also argued the MC subculture considered the OMCs the elite MCs. Most researchers agreed that within the MC subculture there was a hierarchy. For instance, if one wants to start an MC one must first approach the dominant MC in one's jurisdiction for their approval and present them with the purpose of ones MC, club colours, and potential name (Motorcycle Club Riding Club Education, 2008). In other words, compared to NOMCs, the OMCs are the dominant MCs that claim territory.

2.3 The Process and Structure of Outlaw and Non-Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs

Overall the two types of MCs both have similar processes and structures. For example, Librett (2008) argued the OMCs require Harley-Davidson V-Twin Motorcycles, runs, participating in activities to acquire and maintain dominance in a particular area, a clubhouse, a militarized structured, and a club constitution that established a code of conduct and set group expectations. Other MCs such as Bondslaves MC requires members to ride North American made motorcycles only (Bondslaves MC, 2018a). "In support of American made motorcycles" Warthogs MC also require their "members to own and operate a V-Twin motorcycle manufactured by a North American Owned Company" (Warthogs MC, n.d.). Unlike OMCs however, NOMC members typically belong to the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA), Triple A, Motorcycle Safety Foundation rider's associations, Motorcycle Riders Foundation (motorcycle advocate), or have roadside assistance (Thompson, 2008). Most MCs, however, have a headquarters or a mother club with a national president. There are then local club chapters with a president and vice president followed by a secretary, treasurer, road captain, and sergeant-at-arms. Next, are the other full-patch members, prospects, and hang-arounds. Several

MCs also have chapters with a specific number of members across the world. Similarly, most MCs follow a set of rules and by-laws specified to their MC.

Most MCs tend to follow similar recruitment procedures. It is noteworthy that members of other MCs can sometimes be patched over into an OMC if they were proven trustworthy by the OMC. Thus, the members miss the prospecting phase, which is described next. There is generally an age requirement of 18 or 21 years, and an individual must be invited by a full patch OMC member to be a *friend of the MC* and then a *hang around*. These phases allow the friend/hang around to become familiar with the OMC rules and allow the friend/hang around and the OMC members to become familiar with each other (Dulaney, 2006). Eventually, the individual enters a *prospecting* phase that can last up to two years and involves hazing and rituals to break the individual of their identity and strengthen their connection to the OMC (Librett, 2008).

Joining an MC is not a simple task as is demonstrated on OMC websites. For instance, "...you should talk to a member in your area. If you have to ask where the nearest Charter is ... you are not ready to join our Motorcycle Club" (Hells Angels MC World, n.d.a). "Do NOT write us asking how to join! Find an Outlaw and ask him!" (Outlaws World, 2019). "...do not email us asking how to join. Find a Keltic and introduce yourself" (Keltics Motorcycle Club, 2018). Although in some of the NOMC's, the membership process might be less intimidating especially if it is an RC. If one signs a membership form and pays dues, one can become a member. On the Harley Owners Group (2017) website, an individual can submit an online membership form, select a membership country, and make a payment to become a member. The website of the Bondslaves MC (2018a) suggested emailing them on their contact page for membership information. As one can see, MCs follow specific recruitment practices.

Most members of MCs tend to share similar appearances. For example, most motorcyclists wear leathers, do-rags, vests, and boots for safety and practicality. Many motorcyclists also have tattoos however, with the popularity of tattoos in mainstream society, many individuals have tattoos. The MCs also traditionally wear three-piece patches on the back of their vests, known as ‘club colors’ to display their identity. In some of the NOMCs, the patches could be one or two-piece patches. The patches generally consist of a top rocker that displays the MCs name, a middle patch that displays the MCs symbol and a bottom rocker that displays the MCs territory. In addition, OMCs generally display another patch on the back of the vest with the acronym ‘MC’ whereas some NOMCs use ‘MC,’ ‘MCC’ (Motor Cycle Club), ‘RC,’ or ‘LEMC’ (Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club).’ After completion of the prospecting phase the individual receives their colours in a final initiation, and it is only the most powerful MC that ‘flies colours’ with a bottom rocker labelled with a state – smaller MCs might label a city or county on the bottom rocker (Librett, 2008). As such, most MC members tend to dress for practicality and display their club colours for loyalty.

Some of the MCs differ in their gender and race requirements. The OMCs are only open to male membership while the NOMCs might allow females or have auxiliary MCs for females; in addition, there are some MCs that are all female members. In the NOMCs some women ride motorcycles yet tend to fulfill a subservient role although only when participating in the MC (Thompson, 2008). In all the OMCs women are not allowed to become full patch members, wear club colours, or participate in club meetings. Instead, women fill a subservient role often working for the OMC and are said to be the property of full patch members. Some women within OMCs wear a patch on their vest entitled ‘property of [full patch member’s name]’ (Hopper & Moore, 1990). Women of OMCs are also subject to ranking deemed by the

OMC members. While some rank names vary, in general, they include rank names such as *mamas*, *sheep*, and *old ladies*. Mamas are considered groupies who belong to the OMC and attend MC parties as well are expected to provide sexual acts to members (Hopper & Moore, 1990). The sheep are often girlfriends of OMC members or gifts to OMC members who are also expected to provide sexual acts to other members (Hopper & Moore, 1990). The old ladies are the wives of the full patch members. While the old ladies might have more prestige within the OMC, their husbands can do such things as trade them for another woman, a bike, or prostitute them (Giusto, 1997; Hopper & Moore, 1990). Often women of the OMCs work as prostitutes and dancers for the OMC, whether inside or outside the OMC (Hopper & Moore, 1990). The women are sometimes required to participate in a 'gang bang' or 'train' in which all OMC members have sex with them (Montgomery, 1976; Hopper & Moore, 1990). In addition, some OMCs have race restrictions (Thompson, 2008) whereas many NOMCs do not impose race restrictions. It is evident; the OMCs are more rigid in their gender and race requirements compared to NOMCs.

The level of commitment to the MC varies in the motorcycle subculture. If one is a member of an RC, one can choose to leave when one desires. For example, in some of the RCs, the primary purpose is to congregate for riding with few commitments or requirements. In fact, in many of the RCs, the purpose is to improve their riding skills. Thus, there is not necessarily the imposition of a lifelong commitment to the club. The OMCs emphasize intense loyalty and expect those who join to be members for life (Harris, 2016); otherwise; they might face negative consequences if they leave. The OMCs require a commitment 24 hours a day 7 days a week to the MC including participation in club activities (Librett, 2008). In NOMCs, members are expected to be committed and participate in club activities; however, leaving might not be as

serious an issue as leaving an OMC. While the basis of most MCs is the love of riding motorcycles and brotherhood, some have an occupational or support basis such as law enforcement/firefighter MCs, veterans MCs, sober support MCs, and faith-based MCs. In general, both OMCs and NOMCs claim to be serious about their level of commitment to the MC, apart from some RCs. Overall, it is fair to suggest that while both types of MCs have similar structures, processes, dress, and commitment levels, the OMC is *one's life* whereas the NOMC is *part of one's life*.

2.4 Explanation of Outlaw and Non-Outlaw Terminology

It is necessary to distinguish between the terms OMCs and NOMCs as well as outlaws and non-outlaws as is used in this research study since much of the literature uses different terms to describe the two types of MCs and members. It is notable that prior research used terms such as *legal/legitimate, illegal/illegitimate, gangs* or *outlaw motorcycle gangs*. It was determined not to use these latter terms as it was not the intention of this research study to determine if OMCs are gangs. Dulaney (2006) described OMCs as those MCs not affiliated with the AMA. In addition, to the alleged criminal activity occurring amongst the minority of its members, he argued OMCs are a subset of all One-Percenter MCs identified explicitly by the measurable traits of holding the MC superior to its:

- (a) Individual members;
- (b) The family members of individual members; and
- (c) Any legal or other occupations held by individual members.

For the purposes of this research study, the definition of an OMC is those MCs:

- (a) That identify as one-percenters;
- (b) That are known one-percenters; and

(c) Who affiliate with one-percenters (Support Clubs or Puppet Clubs).

To explain, the 1% diamond patch worn on the OMC members' club colours (vests) or by members' declaration of 1%er status on their websites or Facebook pages can often establish which MCs are OMCs. Some OMCs are also well known One-Percenter MCs based on common knowledge they are/were a One-Percenter MC. The Support Clubs and Puppet Club's status are also based on common knowledge they are/were a Support Club or Puppet Club. In addition, establishing the Support Club or Puppet Club status is sometimes verifiable by the declaration worn on their club colours and claimed on their websites or Facebook pages.

By comparison, NOMCs refer to Non-One-Percenter MCs, Non-Support Clubs, and Non-Puppet Clubs. Similarly, a declaration on the NOMCs website or Facebook pages can sometimes identify their type of MC. In addition, sometimes it is common knowledge the NOMCs are/were not a One-Percenter MC, Support Club or Puppet Club. In other words, if some MCs do not affiliate with Motorcycle Club Confederations in Canada and the United States, it does not necessarily classify them as an OMC for the present research study.

It is also important to discuss the reasoning for applying the terms *outlaws* and *non-outlaws*. Past outlaw research used the terms *outlaws*, *non-conventional bikers*, and *bikers* to describe members of criminally stigmatized MCs. In a like manner, the same research used the terms *new bikers*, *conventional bikers*, *rich urban bikers a.k.a. RUBS*, and *motorcyclists* to describe members of non-criminally stigmatized MCs. While it was the intention of the present research study to use the terms *non-conventional* and *conventional*, comments from both members of OMCs and NOMCs found the terms both laughable and offensive. Some participants explained to the author that all motorcyclists are conventional. It was eventually decided to use the terms *outlaws* and *non-outlaws* as well as *Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs* and *Non-*

Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs. These terms did not appear to present issues with participants. The lack of issue is plausible since there is somewhat of a romanticizing by society of OMC members as mysterious in nature. As a note, when referring to outlaws, this research study is not referring to the 'Outlaws MC' unless so specified. As such, it is assumed that at least some participants were accepting of the terms - outlaw or non-outlaw.

2.5 Summary

As demonstrated, in the MC subculture OMCs and NOMCs became separated in the United States after World War II. American veterans were looking for a way to regain the brotherhood and excitement felt during the war. Their alleged partying at a motorcycle rally in Hollister, California was a pivotal event as it generated certain myths, particularly one that inferred outlaws were 1% of the motorcycle subculture that was not law-abiding, followed by descriptions of their menacing nature. The menacing label turned into criminal stigmatization over time through media and law enforcement narratives. Accordingly, the OMCs accepted their fate and wore the 1%er diamond patch proudly and continue to do so to this day. Today, there is still a separation among the OMCs and NOMCs with the OMCs considered the dominant and elite of the motorcycle subculture. If the menacing ways of OMCs began as a myth – then what might genuinely be the differentiating factors between OMC members and NOMC members.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

3.1 Overview

The point of vision for this research study is the Belongingness Hypothesis (BH) and its concept of the fundamental human *need to belong* (NTB). In theory, it was straightforward to propose the idea of *belonging* as the impetus for joining an Outlaw Motorcycle Club (OMC) as it is human nature to seek to belong however, why choose to join a stigmatized motorcycle club (MC) such as the OMCs as opposed to a non-stigmatized MC such as the Non-Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs (NOMC). Many might assume it is to engage in deviance though; one can engage in deviance on one's own without the need to be a group member as a pre-condition for deviance. The answer surfaced in the OMC literature in which theorists categorized OMC members as *outcasts* of society and claimed that OMC members also preferred to be left alone from society. The notion of outcasts is where the theory is slightly more complex. Street gang research offered insight.

Street gangs are also stigmatized groups, and research found when comparing street gang members to non-street gang members who resided in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods, street gang members possessed an accumulation of risk factors in multiple life domains that predicted street gang membership. A way to launch this research study was predicting that OMCs also have more risk factors from their childhood than NOMC members. During childhood individuals can experience risk factors in the face of broken social bonds/exclusion. For the purposes of this research study, the terminology used is exclusion. After reviewing the risk factors for street gang membership one can interpret them as consequences of *exclusion*. One can also interpret exclusion as being connected to *outcast*.

While there is limited data on the childhood backgrounds of OMC members, it is necessary to review the prior OMC literature to understand if there is any evidence of risk factors in OMC members that distinguished them from NOMC members. Dulaney's (2006) historical account of OMCs in the previous chapter did not necessarily reveal any risk factors. However, it represented separation and longing. The separation between the two types of MCs began when soldiers returned after World War II. At that time, they developed MCs to reclaim the brotherhood and excitement they missed from overseas. Thus, they were coping with the disconnection from fellow soldiers they knew during the war, and as such, they were attempting to restore belongingness.

The BH argued that exclusion means ones NTB is not satisfied. Accordingly, the NTB heightens, and individuals become compelled to restore belonging. In some cases, individuals coped with exclusion by acting out and rejecting the society that rejected them. Williams and Nida's (2011) research supports this view as they wrote about the negative effects of exclusion on an individuals' self-control. The authors argued that when individuals faced exclusion, they demonstrated coping behaviours. In their research, they found that individuals coped by trying harder to belong or acting out against society. It would make sense then that excluded individuals would join a stigmatized group that prioritized brotherhood and loyalty over mainstream society to restore their sense of belonging.

3.2 Theories on Outlaw Motorcycle Club Members

While reading Millers (1958) narrative on gang delinquency, he described the lower-class culture as leading to gang membership. He viewed lower-class as having its traditions apart from the rest of society. Those involved in gang membership represented a form of success that was significant to the lower-class. Gang members were carrying out the values that

surrounded them. In search of an answer to gang delinquency, he also described traits involving trouble, toughness, smartness, excitement, fate, and autonomy that were a form of achievement in the lower-classes. It was these traits that motivated the gang delinquency. The traits also violated middle-class values with malicious intent. Miller wanted to disclose that lower-class traits were not the opposite of middle-class traits, but rather, lower-class traits were traditions of long ago. It should be noted that Miller's study mainly referred to adolescent street gangs however, he did refer to outlaws in his research. Other researchers also referred to Miller's research when describing outlaws, thus, it is important to refer to Miller's work. As such, Miller envisioned a naturally learned cultural value of the lower-class.

The idea of a learned cultural value of lower-class focal concerns is comprehensible. Observations were significant since social workers personally observed 21 areas in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods over 3 years. However, it did not account for the predisposition of certain gang traits of some individuals. For instance, Miller (1958) argued that gang delinquency was a form of success in the lower-class. However, there was little description of their childhood backgrounds as a possible cause for these traits.

Further, while participant observations are informative, they can be subjective, and there were no comparisons to the other young people in the studied neighbourhoods and why they did not display these lower-class focal concerns. In addition, one can question whether these lower-class traits were gender specific as there was little discussion of the females who resided in the same neighbourhoods. It is also arguable that these traits might be common in adolescent boys from non-socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods. We cannot assume that only lower-class individuals possess deviant traits. Even though Miller stated the lower-class traits

have a long history, it is difficult to apply Miller's concept without a full understanding of where the traits might have originated.

The literature on OMC as a reactive subculture is informative. In Montgomery's (1976) research, he illustrated how OMCs are reactive subcultures within the lower-class that use the MC as an attempt at their version of middle-class success within the lower classes. He argued that if this is true OMCs should identify as self-governing elites, which he found they did. Montgomery's reactive subculture differed from Miller's (1958) lower-class focal concerns because the OMC was a form of status frustration among the lower-class whereas Miller described it as merely subscribing to lower-class focal concerns. In a later article by Montgomery (1977), he further defined the OMC members as lower-class because middle-class or even the average lower-class individual would have no use for some of the outlaw skills such as, fighting, highway vandalism, motorcycle theft, bargain grocery binges, technical-practical jokes, reckless riding poetry regarding MC names, and conning.

As cited in his work, Montgomery (1976) also reflected on Bloch and Niederhoffer's (1958) 'The Rites of Adolescents,' which explained, how youth gangs are a way to strive for adult status through such things as tattoos, nicknames, contrived language, separation from women and home, sexual uncertainty, hazing, economic profiting, various roles, sex fertility, and death and rebirth myth. Montgomery (1976) viewed OMC members as striving for adult status particularly through their emphasis on masculinity. He suggested this was accomplished through their large stature even suggesting they were *ugly* and *repulsive* with their excessive body hair and weight. That they crudely boasted of sexual activity, wore dark clothing to look sinister and uniform, in addition, used their motorcycles to instill power. He further suggested that only outlaws were *stupid* and *reckless* enough to ride certain motorcycles. Lastly, the author argued

that OMC members also engaged in the use of nicknames and contrived languages. While OMC members might be older than youth gang members, Montgomery (1976) also argued that most outlaws are 20-25 years of age, which is not a full adult. Nonetheless, Montgomery's theory provided knowledge that members of OMCs are striving for something.

The concept of reactive subculture indeed described aspects of OMCs. However, it was not necessarily all-encompassing. For example, Montgomery (1976) was assuming that members of OMCs came from lower-class backgrounds like youth gang members according to Millers (1958) focal concerns. While it makes sense OMCs can be considered a subculture, separated from the mainstream, we cannot assume they were attempting some distinction from lower-class without knowing if they came from lower-class. Montgomery (1976) also suggested that members of OMCs considered themselves to be part of an elite group of the lower-class, which is significant since today OMCs are considered elite amongst the MC subculture. However, while OMCs are known as the elite in motorcycle subculture, we know that outlaws seem to express a low self-perception of themselves, which is described later. The author also described how OMCs strived for adult status. He argued that 20-25 years of age was not full adulthood. While he likely meant this from the perspective that the human brain continues to develop into the mid-twenties, in Canada and the United States physical and intellectual maturity is generally 18 or 21 years of age. While this is a dated article, the description of their physical stature and dress, as well as their inappropriate, crude sexual comments and sexual boasting, can explain other individuals today, not just OMC members.

Further, nicknames and a unique dialect is not that uncommon in other groups. To illustrate, football team members sometimes use nicknames for fellow teammates or coaches. Nicknames can even represent a type of affection towards one another such as nicknames used

between friends. The descriptive words *ugly*, *repulsive*, *stupid*, and *reckless* to describe OMC members is also subjective and is not necessarily informative even though this is a dated article. Nonetheless, the description of a reactive subculture was sensible, and Montgomery's (1976) insight was useful considering he claimed to have been part of the OMC Road Gypsies for 1 1/2 years, maintained weekend riding, and utilized participant observation. Further, in embracing the idea of a reactive subculture, he indicated some of the MCs were named *Losers* and *Born Losers* – which can indicate they were striving towards *something* whether that be status frustration or belonging.

Like Miller (1958), Watson (1980) believed that OMC members subscribed to lower-class values as described in Miller's study however, it was only to a partial extent. For Watson, outlaws were also products of downward mobility. Watson (1980) agreed with Montgomery (1976,1977) that outlaws were concerned with masculinity and appearing tough and unclean. He also demonstrated their downward mobility through Miller's (1958) focal concerns in the following ways. First, *trouble*, which expressed masculinity and enforced solidarity among members by demonstrating they were outsiders. Second, *toughness* was shown through their large motorcycles and by not showing love for women and children. Third, *smartness* was where they differed from lower-class values as outlaws preferred avoidance or confrontation. Fourth, they enjoyed the *excitement* of extremes such as drugs, alcohol, and salacious partying. Fifth, *fate* also differed for outlaws in that they saw themselves as losers. In addition, economic success meant they were no longer an outlaw. Sixth, *autonomy* or freedom was the corner of the outlaw world in that they wanted to be left alone, however, in their world togetherness was key since their lifestyle was dangerous, they would never travel alone - antisocial behavior would find one excluded from the group. Some OMC members also depended on women for money.

As such, Watson (1980) saw OMC members as subscribing to the lower-class focal concern. However, they were also products of downward mobility which could be due to subscribing to lower-class values. Downward mobility is plausible as he argued that a fair amount, of outlaws, indicated their fathers had respectable working-class or lower- middle-class family jobs. He also said that outlaws were not from multigenerational poverty and the OMC appeared to have a coherent and consistent value system and lifestyle. Watson (1980) further said that righteous outlaws were racist, White males, believers of in-group superiority, employed irregularly, unclean in appearance, drug users, and not violent but impulsive. Watson (1980) also claimed that women and children were viewed with contempt yet; he said the women attracted to OMCs were: "...tough and hard-bitten themselves" (p. 42). Watson further described outlaws as non-respectable working-class marginals having finished high school and some college. He said some outlaws were veterans and most were married more than once and could not achieve success. In his writing, he further described outlaws as hostile, contemptuous, indifferent and threatened by society. Likewise, outlaw bikers viewed society as hostile with weak and feminine qualities. However, he argued that outlaws were not hostile toward family, government, and education. As such, Watson argued there was a self-fulfilling prophecy to outlaw lifestyle -uncleanliness and looking mean was a way to scare others into leaving them alone, which others did. Thus, Watson's description of outlaws, being working-class or lower-middle class with some downward mobility provided some understanding of what might differentiate them from non-outlaws.

While Watson was not an outlaw member, he spent 3 years as a participant observer within their subculture where he informally interviewed OMC members and utilized informants to confirm information. He also built and rode motorcycles, which allowed him access into

outlaw socialization scenes. This likely assisted in building trust with participants. On the other hand, his argument can be viewed as subjective especially if Watson came from a higher social class. His study was also limited to OMCs in Tennessee.

Further, Watson studied outlaws from an adult standpoint and did not establish an in-depth discussion of outlaw's childhood backgrounds or why they may feel the way they do about society. It is interesting, however, that instead of placing OMC members in the lower-class he placed them in working-class or lower-middle class with some downward mobility. Nonetheless, describing OMC members as lower-middle-class with downward mobility does not leave us with an understanding of what brought OMC members to engage in downward mobility other than they were lower-middle class – not all lower-middle class individuals engage in downward mobility thus, what might the difference be.

A few studies incorporated quantitative data by examining incarcerated motorcyclists. One study compared incarcerated bikers to incarcerated non-bikers throughout the United States. Danner and Silverman's (1986) research illustrated how biker inmates compared to non-biker inmates were White males, younger, high school graduates, politically conservative as well their most serious crime was violence and they served less time in juvenile facilities. Similar to Miller's (1958) research, the authors indicated the biker inmates rejected middle-class values and placed value on toughness, excitement, fate, and group autonomy. Danner and Silverman (1986) were also able to connect bikers to working-class backgrounds from urban areas as well as having extensive offense histories. The authors said the biker inmates also had similar education levels to non-biker inmates, however, were less concerned with smartness. Danner and Silverman further envisioned the OMC as providing status and meaning to a masculine role.

In a newer and similar study by Motiuk and Vuong (2006) those incarcerated with organized crime offenses also had stronger attachments to family and criminal groups and exhibited more lifestyle stability compared to other convicted offenders, which in part corresponded with Watson's (1980) observations of family perceptions. Incarcerated organized crime offenders also had more criminal contacts and criminal attitudes, as well less youth custody, lower risk and higher re-entry potential and began criminal careers later in life than other incarcerated offenders (Stys & Ruddell, 2013).

The value in the abovementioned studies on incarcerated bikers was the quantitative data and comparative analyses. Danner and Silverman's (1986) research confirmed prior research that bikers tended to be White males, younger, high school graduates, and politically conservative. However, they concluded, based on these traits, that bikers rejected middle-class values, which might be difficult to conclude based on those traits alone. What was particularly interesting was they revealed less time in juvenile facilities than non-bikers, but their most serious crimes were violent. In other words, is the following information indicative of an aggression issue and less of a deviance issue?

Another interesting point was that Danner and Silverman (1986) found the biker inmates placed importance on group autonomy – possibly meaning a drive for belonging or some familial structure. The authors however, determined inmate bikers from non-inmate bikers based on participants answering 'yes' to preferring motorcycles as a mode of transportation. Preferring to ride motorcycles does not necessarily qualify an individual as an outlaw however, the study is dated meaning motorcycles might have been more associated with outlaws during that period compared to today. Further, the study assumed there were no NOMC members incarcerated.

In the newer studies on incarcerated bikers by Motiuk and Vuong (2006) and Stys and Ruddell (2013), they discovered valuable information regarding those incarcerated with organized crime offences, in that they had stronger family attachments, more stable lifestyles than other convicted offenders, and began criminal careers later in life. Such information could be indicative that deviance was not a driving force to join an OMC. An issue with the newer incarcerated studies, however, were they were based on incarcerated offenders who committed organized crime offences, but the study did not separate OMC members from mafia and radicals. There was also bias in both the earlier and newer incarcerated studies in that they were only studying incarcerated bikers (incarcerated outlaws) without comparing them to non-incarcerated bikers (non-incarcerated outlaws).

There may be a clue to what differentiates OMC and NOMC members from studies of females of OMCs and NOMCs and female street gang members. Like OMC members, females involved with OMCs were White individuals, rebellious, low in self-esteem, and from lower-class families. They also valued toughness, freedom, club security, masculine men, and conservative beliefs including subservience to men. Some females of OMCs were also high school graduates, and one female came from affluence but was rebellious (Hopper & Moore, 1990). Watson (1980) characterized the females of OMCs as displaying signs of premature aging, which he said was typical of lower-class. Watson also indicated that many of the females of OMCs could be purchased and often worked for OMC members. He further argued that most OMC females had illegitimate children and little respect for themselves before they became involved in the OMC world. From these descriptions, the females of the OMCs tend to play a demeaning role.

Similarly, the females of the NOMCs play a subservient role, albeit temporarily.

Thompson (2008) found that while females of NOMCs played subservient roles in the motorcycle subculture, it was only during weekend rides. During the week, the females returned to feminist ideals. They also differed from females OMCs as they had college or post-graduate degrees, professional or technical jobs, and some rode their own motorcycles. Further, most females of NOMCs came from the middle- and upper-middle classes (Thompson, 2012). Thompson (2012) further found the females of NOMCs were similar to males of both OMCs and NOMCs in that they too felt freedom, excitement, and empowerment from riding their own motorcycles – even though they maintained their femininity as opposed to subscribing to a masculine role. Temporary seems to be the keyword for females of NOMCs in that like the males of NOMCs, the MC is not *their life* but rather *part of their life*.

The OMC females appeared to share more similarities with female street gang members. Similarities were observed through such things as deviancy and associating with dominant men, in addition to experiencing parental abuse, parental alcoholism, and divorce (Hopper & Moore, 1990). The same females also wanted to associate with OMCs to be with like-minded individuals and expressed they felt well treated by OMC members. Likewise, female street gang members joined street gangs to fit in and felt protected by male street gang members (Miller, 2000). The OMC females also associated with OMC males during their teenage years (Hopper & Moore, 1990) like female street gang members who ‘hung around’ with street gang members at about age 12 prior to joining the street gang at about age 13 (Miller, 2000).

While differences between OMC females and female street gang members included age, ethnicity, or class, OMC females also traveled with the OMC as opposed to remaining in the

neighbourhood. The OMC females were also not interested in brand name clothes and integrated their children into the MCs as opposed to leaving them with relatives. The OMC members also expected the OMC females to earn money whereas male street gang members did not necessarily expect that of females (Hopper & Moore, 1990). Nonetheless, some of these differences might be due to age differences between OMC females and female street gang members. Regardless, the backgrounds of MC females and female street gang members might be transferrable to the backgrounds of males in the MC subculture.

It is not surprising that females of the MC subculture and female street gang members might provide hints to the backgrounds of OMC and NOMC members as there is likely a tendency to attract like-mindedness. For example, females of the OMC tended to come from the same class and education backgrounds as OMC members. One of the most obvious traits of both females of OMCs and NOMCs was subservience. However, the research described females of NOMCs as playing a temporary subservient role, which might be indicative of the MC being only part of their life (as we see later in this section), which is similar to NOMC members. Research also noted females of OMCs and female street gang members as having low self-esteem, being rebellious, allowing others to purchase them, associating with dominant men, experiencing parental abuse and parental alcoholism, experiencing divorce, and in need of protection. These risk factors were telling in that the females likely experienced life stressors that potentially led them to utilize stigmatized groups such as OMCs and street gangs as a coping method. While the female studies might have provided clues to what differentiates OMC members from NOMC members, more evidence is required to understand the draw of OMCs versus NOMCs for men.

Moving slightly backward, two dissertations from 1971 and 1997 also contributed to the knowledge of the OMC subculture. In his writing, Shamblin (1971) revealed that OMC members often came from single-parent homes. Both parents also had high school educations or less. If there was an involved father, they usually worked blue-collar jobs. Still, for members who came from more economically stable homes, the OMC members did not experience conventional backgrounds, nor did they get on well with their parents. The author also found that OMC members experienced alienation – meaning they felt separated from mainstream society and hostile towards mainstream society. Alienation was notable in such factors as leaving school and jobs because OMC members thought achievement proved futile. Some members even expressed they felt powerless to cope with mainstream society. They also felt hostility and resentment before joining the OMC. As such, the OMC provided support and identity, which they felt was otherwise unavailable to them. The elevated level of commitment to the OMC also meant it interfered with marriages and employment. The members, however, thought loyalty belonged to the MC first, before anyone or anything else. Shamblin also noted the MC had a stabilizing effect on the members especially since most members had no formal structure in their lives and experienced alienation from their families.

In Giusto's (1997) writing, she introduced her readers to the females of the OMCs. First, she illustrated that 'old ladies' were the girlfriends and wives of the 'old men' (OMC members). Giusto who claimed to be a one-percenter's 'old lady,' said women were attracted to OMC members because of the men's charisma, masculinity, and instincts. However, the OMC members might not have felt the same sentiments towards the females. The OMC members expected respect from the females including that the females catered to the members. In fact, OMC members reaped pleasure in telling their 'old ladies' what to do - the author noted

'directing' the 'old ladies' especially occurred in front of other members. There seemed to be many females; nonetheless, who wanted to be ordered around by their 'old men.' For instance, Giusto admitted she desired to work in a 'whore house,' serving men's needs, though she claims it was because she was curious, and her friends worked there. However, her 'old man' would not allow it. The members of OMCs also placed other males and their motorcycles above the 'old ladies.' The view of the OMC members, according to the author, was that females were second class citizens or of a 'lower evolution.' This was depicted through their choice words to describe their 'old ladies' such as "...goon, air-head, old what's her name, bitch, too low for zero, split tail, cunt, walking sperm bank or depository, sweet meat, snapper, perch, and bubble head" (Giusto, 1997, p. 201). Nonetheless, the author indicated that both the 'old ladies' and 'old men' were responsible for the negative treatment of the females. Such an unfavourable attitude towards females also meant that females were not allowed to ride motorcycles but rather 'belonged' on the back of one.

While the above two studies are dissertations and dated, they provided valuable insight into the OMC member. Shamblin (1971) was able to immerse himself in a medium sized OMC. Evidently, the participants began to exhibit some trust with the researcher, which might have allowed the participants to share with the researcher. At the same time, such participant observations can be biased and even cause transference between the participant and the researcher. Transference is a deflection of feelings and attitudes from past relationships to current relationships (Tellides et al., 2008). It is interesting to note, some members felt powerless to cope with mainstream society, possibly indicating some disconnection within their social networks. Such disconnection could also be true as the researcher revealed that the participants experienced alienation from their family. One could argue that exclusion drove

them to the OMC lifestyle. Exclusion is especially possible since the participant said the club made them feel as though they had support and identity.

Likewise, while Giusto's (1997) study offered insight into the view OMC members held regarding females, it also provided information on the OMC member. What was particularly intriguing about this study was that the author claimed to be an 'old lady' of a one-percenter. The title of 'old lady' permitted her direct access to the OMC subculture. As such, members and females already knew her, which would add a level of trust and comfort in disclosing information. On the other hand, being an 'old lady' also meant she might have had preconceived notions on what she was permitted and not permitted to report. Preconceived notions are especially true since she was studying some of her 'old man's' fellow club members and their 'old ladies,' meaning she might have had to maintain a level of caution in what she reported. Although, in her writing, one can see she did not appear to hold back information.

Most importantly, the misogynistic view she described among the OMC members could be indicative of a lower sense of self-esteem and apathy. Such feelings are especially true since she indicated the 'old men' usually ordered the 'old ladies' in front of other OMC members, possibly to prove themselves as dominant to their fellow members. The negative treatment of the females could also be a reaction to any potential exclusion from females during their childhood. It was interesting that the author said the negative view of females was the responsibility of both the 'old ladies' and 'old men' – meaning the females might also have little respect for themselves as do the members. The misogynistic attitude, however, requires more in-depth analysis and is out of scope for this research study.

Newer research on OMC members found similarities between OMC members and NOMC members. Thompson (2008) examined what he identified as the *new biker* subculture of

educated, middle- and upper-class professionals to understand why they embraced the allegedly deviant OMC lifestyle. Thompson noted the new biker subculture differed from the outlaw biker subculture in that they were less formal regarding motorcycle subculture, such as being weakly committed to their MCs, more safety conscious, including wives/girlfriends during riding, and adopting the deviant lifestyle temporarily (weekend riders). However, he found more similarities between the new biker and outlaw biker subcultures. For example, he noted a sense of commitment and bonding with the new bikers, though he explained it was likely due to the cost of motorcycles, gear, and personal risk. Likewise, while females in the new biker subculture were at more of an equal level with men, the men in the new biker subculture still dominated. The new biker women, like women involved in OMCs, were also in sexualized roles (though temporarily) and sexually objectified in motorcycle advertisements. He also noted that while other brands of motorcycles were accepted, the Harley-Davidson motorcycle dominated. The new biker subculture also assumed club colours, symbols, language, and biker codes. Even though specific clothing was necessary for protection, there were also similarities in apparel and appearances. The new bikers might have worn designer jeans, but like the outlaw bikers, they also wore leather apparel, skullcaps, and bandanas. The new bikers also had tattoos, beards, and earrings (in the left or both ears) but only on weekends or when in the MC subculture. The author noted however, that outlaw bikers might not wear designer jeans because they were not just weekend riders but rather full-time riders.

Thompson (2008) also referred to Millers (1958) traits of trouble, toughness, smartness, excitement, fate, and autonomy. He explained how the new bikers, like outlaw bikers, shared these traits. He argued that *trouble* found the new bikers when they violated helmet, drinking and driving, and marijuana possession laws as well as when they engaged in trash talking and

fighting on internet blogs and message boards. Thompson also reported that riding a motorcycle required some physical and mental *toughness* for long rides and risks in riding. Similarly, the new bikers valued all types of *smartness* related to riding motorcycles. When asking new bikers why they rode they often replied fun, freedom (*autonomy*), or *excitement*. That outlaw bikers and new bikers looked at automobiles as *cages* whereas motorcycles represented freedom. Lastly, new bikers were also found to dabble in *fate* by attaching a biker bell to their motorcycles, a superstition to protect a biker from accidents. “The paradoxical nature of the new biker subculture is striking. Its members are simultaneously deviants yet conformists, risk-takers yet safety conscious, individualists yet an integral part of society, feminists yet sex objects, loners yet part of a brotherhood, and they reflect a longstanding tradition while creating something new” (Thompson, 2008, p. 110). In other words, the author argued the MC is not the new biker’s *life* but rather *part of their life*.

Thompson (2008) examined why well-educated professionals would temporarily label themselves as deviant. He argued it could either be a *downward trend* of the working- or lower-classes or *edgework* in which middle-aged men/women who conformed to societal norms of education, family, and work strived to be different on the weekend to experience freedom and relaxation. Edgework also involved individuals who derived pleasure from living their lives on the edge by partaking in voluntary risk-taking activities. Quinn and Forsyth (2009) also described weekend motorcycling as rebellion or relief from the rigid lifestyle of professionals. Thompson (2008) further expressed it was possible the motorcycle world, once inexpensive and requiring little knowledge became more expensive and technical; thus, appealing to educated middle- and upper-classes. Austin, Gagne, and Orend (2010) would agree as they described the increase in motorcycle enthusiasts as a shift from a production to consumption-based society.

Thompson (2008) attempted to understand why NOMC members would want to exemplify a supposedly deviant lifestyle; however, instead, he found more similarities between OMC members and NOMC members. In fact, Thompson successfully applied Miller's (1958) lower-class focal concerns to NOMCs, which can indicate the traits are not necessarily specific to the deviant world. The only differences he revealed between OMC members and NOMC members were that NOMC members were less committed to the 'biker' lifestyle. It was also unclear if he interviewed one-percenter's, and what his definition of an 'outlaw biker' was. He also argued the motorcycle subculture became more expensive and technical; thus, attracting educated middle- and upper-classes. The problem with this assumption is it assumes we know that OMC members are not educated or from the middle- and upper-classes.

Further, he noted the new biker subculture included not only educated middle- and upper-classes but also blue-collar workers. While he thought the blue-collar workers were more similar to the well-educated middle-class professionals who he argued dominated the new biker subculture it is worth noting that prior research suggested members of OMCs tended to be blue-collar workers. Thus, we should determine why blue-collar workers in OMCs would differ from blue-collar workers in NOMCs. This study was important however, as it provided an updated comparative analysis of OMC members and NOMC members. Further, Thompson (2008) is a sociologist who had first-hand experience considering he also rode a motorcycle and was able to immerse himself in the biker lifestyle.

Librett (2008) referred to *edgework* and *power* when he examined the similarities and differences between Law Enforcement Motorcycle Clubs (LEMC) and OMCs. To be certain, the LEMC is also a NOMC. Librett wanted to understand why law enforcement officers looked for excitement and freedom similar to the excitement and freedom outlaw motorcyclists sought.

Especially considering during the 1970s-1990s law enforcement described outlaw bikers as highly sophisticated criminal organizations yet, at the same time created LEMCs. Comparable to Thompson (2008), Librett found many similarities between LEMC members and OMC members. Such similarities included a military structure of the MC, resistance to control, uniforms, symbols, patches, maintaining clubhouses, and comparable recreational activities. Both LEMC members and OMC members also possessed related traits – mental toughness, solidarity, autonomy, freedom, and edgework. The LEMC members were also White males.

In his article, Librett further described the law enforcement recruitment processes (police academy, field training, and probation) as similar to the OMC prospecting phase. The process included recruiting young lower-middle to middle-class European American males and using nicknames such as cadets and rookies as opposed to hang arounds and prospects. The police rookies, like OMC prospects, were also made to recognize their inferior status. Like OMC prospects, police rookies also had to surrender privacy, through such things as signing documents to permit background checks. Eventually, like OMC prospects, police rookies experienced initiation and celebrating the completion of the police probation phase.

Another comparability between LEMCs and OMCs was the sacredness of club colours, badges (patches), and their social processes. It was essential that LEMC members not lose club colours and badges or allow non-LEMC members to wear them; otherwise, there would be consequences. Librett further pointed to similarities in how members of LEMCs and OMCs socialized. While OMC members associated in bars with women, they labelled *broads*, law enforcement officers and LEMC members associated in ‘cop’ bars with women they labelled *police groupies*. Like OMC members, law enforcement officers also ranked women. For instance, they applied more prestige to friendships and romantic partners compared to other

women. Both types of MCs also believed in maintaining secrecy and impressions given. What is telling is Librett described the difficulty in telling a LEMC from an OMC. He indicated this was especially true when viewing either a LEMC or an OMC driving their motorcycles in formation together on the road.

Librett concluded that the pull towards the LEMC was a form of living on the edge and a longing for power. He reasoned this was because the law enforcement workforce experienced a decrease in power and use of force. For example, the police force faced accusations of corruption, racism, and extreme use of force, which made it necessary to curb their image. Diversity in the police force, particularly the increase in female law enforcement officers, also caused male officers to want to return to a sense of brotherhood they once adapted too. Librett also argued, female officers are still not considered equal. Inequality is another comparison to OMC members who allegedly view women with contempt. Thus, the LEMC was a way to reclaim brotherhood and tradition. What is interesting was Librett found law enforcement officers as experiencing an us (officers) versus them (society) perception and the LEMC was a way to ensure they never became them (society). Again, this is like the perception OMC members hold of themselves and society.

Librett's (2008) study highlighted the similarities between LEMCs and OMCs. Like many of the other scholars who studied OMCs, Librett had inside experience. Prior to becoming a professor in criminal justice, he was a law enforcement officer and motorcyclist, which allowed him entry into the motorcycle subculture and to observe a LEMC. He also rode a Harley-Davidson motorcycle and associated with a group of friends that included outlaw hang arounds and prospects. For this author, he described his time as a law enforcement officer as a rush of power and upon retirement from the force felt a sense of loss in identity and power of

membership. He described the LEMC, as a re-creation of the officer's brotherhood, which they felt they lost due to a decrease in power and an increase in diversity in the workplace, particularly due to female law enforcement officers. Joining the LEMC however, could also be described as coping with the separation from the brotherhood. The author easily demonstrated how the sense of brotherhood and loyalty was evident in both LEMCs and OMCs from the probationary or prospecting phase to becoming a full patch member. It was also easy to imagine the similarities in dress and structure between the two groups.

Librett (2008) also pointed out during the 1970s-1990s law enforcement labelled OMCs as criminal enterprises yet mirrored them with their own MCs. He explained the mirroring of outlaws as living towards the edge. Like Thompson's (2008) finding of traits with new bikers and outlaw bikers, Librett also found shared traits between police bikers and outlaw bikers – mental strength, freedom, unity, and edgework. Could this mean they shared similar traits in childhood? Although, at times Librett overlapped some of the similarities between LEMC and OMCs with the law enforcement workplace, i.e., the signing of documents or use of nicknames. Such overlaps could describe many workplaces. It would also be interesting to know what percentage of law enforcement officers joined LEMCs to gain a fuller understanding of how similar they were to OMC members.

Of interest, in Librett's (2008) study was the similarities in ranking females. We saw from the studies discussed earlier in this chapter that females fulfilled a subservient role in OMCs and street gangs. The misogynistic attitude towards women requires a greater understanding. Is it related to a sense of power or due to harm experienced from females during childhood? Further, if there are many similarities between OMC members and LEMC members it might be less likely OMC members joined OMCs to engage in criminality. Instead, they were

likely striving for something else. Perhaps, like the LEMC members, seeking to restore brotherhood and tradition. Moreover, we cannot assume criminality did not exist in NOMCs/LEMCs. Another question is if there were so many similarities, then why would individuals join an OMC instead of a career in law enforcement. The difference could be in access - meaning OMC members might have had less opportunity to join law enforcement in terms of where or how their guardians raised them. Nonetheless, we still do not know what differentiates the OMC members and the NOMC members.

3.3 Street Gang Research

After reading OMC literature that described outlaws as *outcasts*, the idea of a *heightened* NTB as the reason for joining an OMC becomes evident. The idea behind the heightened NTB is because we can link outcast and exclusion. If one experiences exclusion, it is likely their NTB heightens. Exclusion can be examined through the risk factors that predicted street gang membership. For one, we can consider risk factors as products of exclusion. In addition, if street gang members experienced exclusion, they likely experienced distress and sought relationships within street gangs. Since both street gangs and OMCs are considered criminally stigmatized groups, we may be able to predict that OMCs experienced risk factors that led to joining their MC. Even though street gangs tend to be young people and OMCs tend to be adults it is not necessarily an issue. The difference is that street gang members generally reside in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods whereas members of OMCs may not have necessarily resided in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods during childhood. However, it is described later in this section through the BH, that the NTB is universal meaning it does not matter the age, class, or culture one originated – we all NTB.

3.3.1 Definition of a street gang.

It is important to define street gangs since the present research is referring to street gang research to understand if risk factors exist in the childhood of OMCs. For some time, and indeed, scholars and practitioners debated the issue of how to define street gangs. In fact, there are various definitions of street gangs across jurisdictions. Street gangs were thought to consist of more than three young people, neighbourhood peers with group names/symbols, an exclusive style of communication, loose organizational structure, a claim over a specific neighbourhood, and engagement in deviant behavior. The Eurogang definition stated, a street gang is “any durable, street-oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of its group identity” (Maxson, Egley, Miller, & Klein, 2014, p. 1). Klein and Maxson (2006) claimed that some of the criteria used to define street gangs included age, gender, size, ethnicity, territory, cohesiveness, leadership, organization, rules, illegal activity, as well as names or symbols. Some scholars viewed the inclusion of illegal activity as only beneficial to law enforcement for labelling and incarcerating street gang members. Klein and Maxson (2006) even said describing street gangs as organized, criminal, and violent agencies dismissed their various structures. Drug gangs, for example, dealt in drugs and were territorial (Taniguchi, Ratcliffe, & Taylor, 2011) while street gangs claimed territory and engaged in various criminal activity (Alleyne, Wood, Mozova, & James, 2016). Loosely structured street gangs may also fluctuate over time, and young people may move in and out of street gangs, continually affecting their structure. Further, some street gangs have strict or mild initiations. It is because of the variations and fluctuating nature of street gangs that there is no common definition of a street gang.

3.3.2 Risk factors predicting street gang membership.

Although every young person is unique, theorists felt the reasons for joining a street gang are not. Often joining street gangs was a logical option for a young, vulnerable person. Much of the research suggested that street gang membership helped to meet unfilled needs including psychological, social, and economic. Often, many of the street gangs existed because individuals faced limited resources and the inability to earn adequate money in legitimate jobs. It was foreseeable then, that young people with these risk factors joined street gangs as early as ages 12-13 (Hennigan, Kolnick, Vindel, & Maxson, 2015; Miller, 2000). As such, several negative life experiences across many of a young person's life domains reinforced the likelihood for entry into street gangs. Many street gangs also formed out of socially disorganized neighbourhoods and were a way to gain control over the neighbourhood and seek protection. Street gangs also provided entertainment and socialization. In Miller's (2000) study, both street gang members and non-street gang members noted it was partly neighbourhood peers and the drive for belonging and fun that was responsible for them wanting to join street gangs. Street gang members also indicated that because of residential instability, joining a street gang helped them to fit in. In addition, young people associated with street gang members prior to joining a street gang (Miller, 2000) and because they were at a vulnerable age, they often viewed street gangs as an opportunity for protection, support, and power. The rules of street gangs even represented familial support (Wood & Alleyne, 2010). Although some young people might have been enticed into gangs by drugs. Nonetheless, it appeared that joining a street gang had a common denominator – belonging. Thus, it is worth examining the risk factors.

After comparing street gang members to non-street gang members that resided in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods street gang research identified multiple risk factors from

multiple life domains that predicted street gang membership. The life domains included family, individual, peers, school, and community (Esbensen, Peterson, Taylor, & Freng, 2009; Alleyne & Wood, 2014) that increased the odds for joining street gangs. In fact, an examination by Howell and Egley (2005) combined several long-term studies that demonstrated an accumulation of risk factors across multiple life domains that increased the likelihood of joining a street gang:

Risk Factors in Family Domain:

- Poor family structure;
- Family poverty;
- Family transitions;
- Financial stress;
- Sibling antisocial behavior;
- Low attachment to parents or family;
- Child mistreatment;
- Low parent education level;
- Parent proviolent attitudes;
- Low parental supervision/control/or monitoring; and
- Teenage fatherhood.

Risk Factors in Individual Domain:

- Violence;
- General delinquency;
- Aggression;
- Conduct disorders;
- Disruptive/antisocial/ behaviour and beliefs;

- Early dating and precocious sexual activity;
- Hyperactivity;
- Alcohol or drug use/early marijuana use and early drinking;
- Depression;
- Life stressors; and
- Poor refusal skills.

Risk Factors in Peer Domain:

- Association with peers who engage in delinquency or other problem behaviors; and
- Association with aggressive peers.

Risk Factors in School Domain:

- Low achievement in elementary school;
- Negative labelling by teachers;
- Low academic aspirations;
- Low school attachment;
- Low attachment to teachers;
- Low parental college expectations;
- Low degree of commitment to school;
- Low math achievement test score; and
- Identified as learning disabled.

Risk Factors in Community Domain:

- Availability or perceived access to drugs;
- Neighbourhood youth in trouble;
- Community arrest rate;

- Feeling unsafe in neighbourhood;
- Low attachment to neighbourhood;
- Neighbourhood residents in poverty or family poverty;
- Availability of firearms;
- Neighbourhood disorganization; and
- Neighbourhood drug use (pp. 339-340).

3.3.3 Risk factors for street gang membership are products of exclusion.

Examination of the risk factors for street gang membership showed that they were products of *exclusion*. As it is a basic human need to want to belong, this need may be especially overwhelming for a young, vulnerable person. If the young person felt disconnected from their life domains – the relationships, rules, and structure within a street gang may fulfill that need. For example, Hirschi’s Social Bond Theory (1969) illustrated that negative parenting produced psychological unrest in children (as cited in Lilly, Cullen, & Ball, 2010). If parental neglect is a form of exclusion or if it can lead to attachment issues, it may lead to a desire to join a street gang. In fact, childhood neglect correlated with increased psychological issues and difficulties in relationships (Gauthier, Stollak, Messe, & Aronoff, 1996). Even extreme antisocial personality was a predictor for joining gangs (Egan & Beadman, 2011). In other words, even those with antisocial traits (attachment issues) joined street gangs to avoid social exclusion and ensure they found belonging with likeminded individuals. Accordingly, the risk factors predicting street gang membership can be interpreted as the consequences of exclusion experienced in the various life domains.

In the *family life domain*, risk factors involved such things as, poor family structure, low attachment to family members, low parental supervision, child mistreatment, and sibling

antisocial behaviour. These risk factors indicated disconnection. For instance, child mistreatment can involve neglect or abuse - meaning that a young person was left to care for and protect themselves. Such family risk factors might even lead to stress in other life domains. This is not to suggest that risk factors originated within the family; however, some theorists such as Bowlby (1969) argued the mother-child bond sets the stage for future relationships. Howell and Egley (2005) also found risk factors such as conduct problems at ages 3-4, school failure at ages 6-12, and delinquency at age 12 were present prior to joining a street gang. Early risk factors then can indicate weak family attachments. Although, when arguing that risk factors are the product of exclusion – the BH would indicate that exclusion can affect us at any age.

Risk factors were also present in the *peer life domain* where there was an association with delinquent and aggressive peers. These were possible signs, of acting out from rejection from family or society by engaging with likeminded individuals. The *school life domain* included such factors as low school attachment to teachers and negative labelling by teachers, which can both be signs of exclusion or rejection by teachers. Similarly, risk factors in the *community life domain* were connected to such factors as a low attachment to the neighbourhood and neighbourhood youth in trouble, which again was a potential disconnection between the young person and their environment. If young people with weak family attachments do not find acceptance among peers, school, and the community they might also experience individual risk factors. In the *individual life domain* factors such as aggression, antisocial behaviour, and alcohol/drug use was evident – all which can be signs of coping exclusion, which is explained later.

It could be argued though, if a young person felt threatened by peers or within the community, they might face enticement into a street gang for protection. However, feeling

threatened is a form of exclusion from one's environment and without anywhere or anyone to turn to, the street gang might be the option to restore belonging. It could further be argued that even if a young person had strong relationships within their family unit, they still might be influenced to join a street gang. Joining a street gang is especially convincing since young people mature and seek relationships outside the family unit and if those relationships are unfulfilled a street gang might be the option to find relationships and friendships. The BH also argued that we required a minimum amount of frequent, positive and mutually caring relationships. In other words, family relationships alone may not be sufficient to sustain one throughout life. Thus, risk factors within any one of the young person's life domains were products of exclusion and any acting out or joining a street gang can be explained as ways to cope with exclusion.

3.3.4 Theories on street gang membership.

While risk factors are not a direct cause for joining a street gang, researchers viewed risk factors as individual and social conditions that interacted with one another and assisted in anticipating the likelihood a young person would join a street gang. For one, joining a street gang can be the consequences of one's environment. The Social Disorganization Theory by Thrasher (1927) contended that socially disorganized neighbourhoods had a breakdown of social control leaving open more opportunity for deviancy and less ability for positive social bonding among residents and businesses (as cited in Lilly, Cullen, & Ball, 2010). Namely, the social networks were too weak to provide strong attachments, and young people formed street gangs to meet their needs. In fact, Hagedorn (2005) described street gangs as replacements for legitimate operations that were too weak to offer the community socioeconomic benefits. The notion of the Social Disorganization Theory was influential especially given that many street gang members

resided in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods. However, Hennigan et al. (2015) argued it was only a small portion of young people in socially disorganized neighbourhoods that joined street gangs, and even in high gang neighbourhoods, many young people involved in criminality did not become involved with street gangs. There must be something else pulling young people into street gangs. The Social Disorganization Theory also ignored individual differences between young people. Obviously, there was more to joining a street gang than the nature of the neighbourhood and involvement in criminality.

Cornish and Clarke (2003) described street gang membership as a rational choice. Through their Rational Choice Theory, a young person weighed the advantages and disadvantages of joining a street gang. Was there a personal benefit to joining a street gang? The idea of rational choice was important in that it relied on self-interest although its main idea lied within making a choice for good or bad behaviour. We cannot assume individuals chose to join a stigmatized group to engage in bad behaviour. However, if we did rely on the Rational Choice Theory that would mean an individual's current lifestyle was less appealing than becoming involved in a stigmatized club, which may lead to a dangerous lifestyle. A choice towards a dangerous lifestyle might also indicate that an individual had little to no social bonds in their current life situation. Nonetheless, many individuals would hesitate to join a subculture in which they would have to abandon all other relationships for the loyalty of the group.

Similarly, theorists envisioned Strain Theory in which lower-class individuals had no access to achieve society defined standards; thus, joining a street gang was a means to achieve such (Agnew, 1985). Agnew (1992) described through his General Strain Theory that strain or stress resulted in individuals experiencing negative emotions and engaged in crime to cope. Street gangs was also a means to gain control over the neighbourhood and achieve success.

What was interesting about Strain Theory was it considered individual characteristics for coping; however, the Strain Theory did not account for the other young people growing up in the same neighbourhoods who did not join street gangs.

Hirschi's (1986) description of joining a street gang was inspired by the idea of weak attachments. In his Social Control Theory, street gang membership highlighted weakness in *attachment* to family and others, *commitment* to societal norms, *involvement* to socially accepted activities, and *beliefs* regarding societal norms. Thus, an individual who was unattached to their individual, social, and environmental life domains were susceptible to non-conformity.

Therefore, individuals had the propensity to deviate; however, most resisted due to fear of rejection by the society within which they lived. The issue with this theory is that it believes deviance is a possibility for anyone and those who avoid it wish to maintain social bonds. It is difficult to assume that those lacking social bonds will only turn to deviance.

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) then identified through Self-Control Theory that weak parent-child attachments led to low self-control in childhood (as cited in Lilly, Cullen, & Ball, 2010) and thus potentially led to joining a street gang. Accordingly, low self-control resulted in risk-taking, insensitivity, needing immediate gratification, and deviancy. For Gauthier et al. (1996), they thought that parental neglect during childhood resulted in psychological problems and attachment issues, therefore the desire to join a street gang. The notion of self-control becoming impeded due to low family attachment was convincing especially since the family is where our first relationships and learning about life begin. Although, like the critique of the Social Control Theory, it assumed a low level of self-control led to criminality. It should also be noted that while both the Social Control Theory and Self-Control Theory were insightful in that each theory believed bonds were important to humans, neither theory seemed to explain the

reasoning for joining a *group*. While the theories appropriately described how low levels of self-control could become affected by weak parental attachment, we cannot assume low self-control is not restorable if one finds attachments with others. Thus, there must be a more relevant explanation of why someone would join a stigmatized group.

Other theorists described street gang membership as a social process. In Sutherland's (1947) Differential Association Theory, he described individuals as learning behaviour from other individuals (as cited in Lilly, Cullen, & Ball, 2010). Offenders engaged in criminal activity because they associated with and observed other offenders participating in criminal activity. Further, when individuals shared a type of deviance, they also formed a deviant subculture based on that shared deviance. This social process was persuasive in that it explained what happened when young people associated with street gang members. Similarly, the Social Learning Theory by Akers (1998) explained that learned behaviour involved continuing behaviours that were reinforced and discontinuing those behaviours that were punished (as cited in Lee, Akers, & Borg, 2004). Thus, behaviour was motivated by seeking pleasure and avoiding pain.

Learning by example and socially reinforced behaviour though did not explain how individuals became involved in situations where they learned negative behaviour and were reinforced for certain behaviour. For example, if a young person learned to become a street gang member because they associated with street gang members, why were they associating with street gang members in the first place. Was it because the young person's caregivers did not have the opportunity to monitor the young person's activities and whereabouts? Was there a disconnection between the family and child? According to the social process theories, to be a street gang member then means to learn to be a street gang member.

Much earlier Maslow (1954) described how impediments to ones' basic human needs influences human motivation. As such, it is important to consider his Hierarchy of Needs to explain street gang membership. Through his Hierarchy of Needs, one can see the street gang as satisfying the following human needs in order of importance - physiological, safety and security, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Indeed, humans evolved to meet their fundamental needs to survive. Therefore, it was easy to envision how street gang members had opportunities to earn money to feed themselves, receive protection from fellow street gang members and feel a sense of belonging when displaying gang colours. Together, these needs might have assisted the street gang member in feeling as though they achieved success. While the street gang can be viewed as meeting all the fundamental human needs, the issue with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is it is arguable what need was the most important to satisfy.

Many of the above noted theories on street gang membership also described disconnection. For example, the Social Disorganization Theory, as cited in Lilly, Cullen, and Ball (2010), explained a disconnection between the young person and the neighbourhood. The Strain Theory by Agnew (1985) described the lower-class young person *yearning* for middle-class standards. The Rational Choice Theory by Cornish and Clarke (2003) further argued that joining a street gang was based on weighing the advantages and disadvantages. Thus, if there were no meaningful relationships in their current lifestyle, the street gang might be more appealing. The Social Control Theory by Hirschi (1986) also described disconnections to family, societal norms, socially acceptable activities, and in beliefs related to societal norms. The Self-Control Theory, as cited in Lilly, Cullen, and Ball (2010), also described weak family attachments; in addition, The Differential Association Theory, as cited in Lilly, Cullen, and Ball (2010) and Social Learning Theory, as cited in Lee, Akers, and Borg (2004) further described

how individuals learned deviant behavior and deviant behavior was continued through reinforcement. Such a learning process could mean the young persons were involved in unfavourable situations with individuals, meaning they were coping with exclusion. Each of these theories evoked terms such as *disconnection* and *exclusion* – feelings highlighting the unmet NTB.

We also cannot be certain individuals were drawn to street gangs to engage in crime; however, it appeared that was the aim of the street gang theories and OMC theories. Further, we cannot necessarily assume individuals are naturally deviant, and any disruption of their self-control will lead to deviance. Individuals can also engage in crime on their own; they do not need a group to accomplish such. In fact, how do we prove individuals join street gangs or OMCs for criminality? There is likely something stronger driving an individual to a street gang or an OMC (stigmatized groups). That is one of the elements that make the BH stand out from the other theories. The BH removed the criminal element.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954) was comparable to the BH in that it addressed meeting the fundamental needs for joining a street gang. The concern with the Hierarchy of Needs is what fundamental need came first. Maslow felt the physiological needs were the most important. However, the BH viewed the belonging need as the most important. Understanding what human need is the most important, is out of the scope of this research study to argue however - if exclusion is considered one of the most painful experiences a human can impose onto another human being (Williams, Cheung, & Choi, 2000) it makes sense the belonging need is the most powerful need. Williams and Nida (2011) found that while exclusion affected all human needs, if participants perceived inclusion as possible, belonging and self-esteem needs motivated the individual to seek the inclusion. Thus, utilizing the BH to explain how belonging

leads individuals to join street gangs or OMCs makes sense since we are social animals and few individuals in the world choose to live in isolation.

3.4 Theoretical Opening

While examining the literature on why individuals chose to belong within stigmatized groups such as OMCs and street gangs (though the focus of this research study is OMCs), a theme of *exclusion* and *outcasts* naturally merged with the theoretical background of *belongingness*. For instance, Watson (1980) wrote how OMC members saw themselves as *outsiders, dumb bikers, and losers* who would *not fit in* or *felt out of place* in middle-class society. What is notable is Watson also described OMC members as part of the *dropout* subculture. One could infer these perceptions and feelings were the product of rejection from mainstream society rather than from within their MC. For example, Montgomery (1976), who would be considered part of mainstream described OMC members as *ugly, repulsive, stupid, and reckless*. In another study, a member of an OMC, voiced that he liked to fight for the *underdog* (Giusto, 1997) indicating empathy for the outcast, perhaps because he too was an outcast. Those who do not feel a sense of belonging might be prompted to stand up for those with whom they better relate. This same participant mentioned his family were *gypsies* who had no steady home. The term gypsy implies a nomadic lifestyle, one not necessarily conducive to being able to form close attachments.

In Chapter 2, we learned from Dulaney (2006) that the American Motorcyclist Association inferred 1% of motorcyclists (OMC) were *menaces* compared to the other 99% (NOMCs). Moreover, Librett (2008) viewed the one-percenter patch as a *boundary* between the MC subculture and mainstream society as well as between OMCs and NOMCs. The OMCs were based on ideals that did not fit with the societal norms of the mainstream culture – thus, it

was an us (mainstream) versus them (OMC) mindset. Likewise, Miller (2000) advised that not only were street gang members *vulnerable* individuals but they joined to *fit in*. Risk factors predicting street gang members also involved *antisocial* behaviour, *low parental supervision*, *low school attachment*, and *low attachment to the neighbourhood* (Howell & Egley, 2005). Each of the *emphasized* terms describing OMC members and street gang members is either an outcast type of self-perception or description of lifestyles, which could be symptomatic of the unmet NTB. The literature demonstrated that OMC members perceived themselves as outsiders to mainstream society, which can mean they were experiencing a heightened NTB.

Theorists also examined joining OMCs and street gangs based on a lower social class and deviance. While we know most street gang members resided in lower-class neighbourhoods, we cannot assume all OMC members originated from lower-class society. For example, OMC members were described as working-class or lower-middle-class individuals engaged in downward mobility. We also cannot assume deviance was the reason individuals joined OMCs or street gangs. To illustrate, such an explanation was that OMC members were a reactive subculture striving for elitism or adulthood in their lower-class worlds or a successful part of the lower-classes. Other studies found the OMC members presented family and life stability, in addition, demonstrated a later onset for criminality, which can mean individuals did not join the OMC based on deviance. The family and life stability can also indicate a feeling of content within the OMC. In each of these studies, we also do not know why they are different from others in lower social classes.

Studies examining females of OMCs and female street gang members also found the females shared similar stressors and life experiences of the OMC members and male street gang members. The female life stressors could also be interpreted as pushing them towards the

stigmatized groups to escape the difficulties of their lives and seek what they deemed, a protective family. The studies using data derived from incarcerated bikers also found the inmate bikers to favour group autonomy indicating the want for belongingness. It might be best to remove the notion of criminality and lower-class deviants to gain a fuller understanding as to what distinguishes individuals from wanting to reject society and join a stigmatized group such as the OMC as opposed to a NOMC. It would seem more likely individuals, whether adult or children, who feel like outcasts and are described as outcasts would feel excluded from society, however, still seek somewhere to belong.

3.5 Why We Need to Belong

Belongingness has long been studied, and researchers recognized the fact that humans need each other. We are born with the NTB. Researchers believed our NTB was evolutionary in origin. Historically, and anthropologically humans depended on groups for survival. Humans found strength in numbers. Groups allowed safety against enemies or animals. The construct of the group also made it easier to find food and shelter, made reproduction likelier, and enabled their genes to survive. Children born into groups had a greater chance of survival than a child not born into a group. In other words, natural selection favoured humans who had an NTB.

Freud (1930) suggested that the motivation for relationships was based on the sexual drive or bonds between parent and child (as cited in Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of Needs described five basic human needs: physiological, safety, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Bowlby (1969) considered the caregiver-infant bond as influencing child development and impacting the child's relationships throughout their life. The infant behaved in such a way (crying) to ensure a caregiving response. Thus, infants entered the world programmed to form attachments to survive.

What is thought to be the most significant interpretation of the NTB however, was the 1995 study by Baumeister and Leary. They described the NTB as the most powerful human need – given that belonging was a human need meant that humans must acquire and maintain a minimum number of long-term, positive, and mutually caring relationships. Thus, the need to develop relationships increased our chances of survival.

3.6 Belongingness Hypothesis

What distinguishes Baumeister and Leary's (1995) research from others, is their evaluation of vast amounts of empirical evidence on the NTB and applied conditions to illustrate that belonging was a basic human need. Through the BH they demonstrated the importance of social connections and how such connections improved the physical and emotional quality of individuals lives. In other words, there was an association between a positive sense of belonging and our health. This association included understanding the consequences that followed if the need was unmet, thus, strengthening their argument that if the need is not fulfilled negative outcomes follow. As such, they suggested the NTB was connected to emotions, behavioural responses, cognitive processing, and physical and mental well-being. They proposed that belonging required two factors:

- (a) Individuals needed positive interactions with other individuals.
- (b) Interactions must be frequent and stable with mutual caring for each other's well-being.

The authors found that belongingness was an innate drive to form and maintain a minimum number of meaningful and lasting interpersonal relationships.

“We searched the empirical literature of social and personality psychology for findings relevant to the belongingness hypothesis. The following sections summarize the evidence we found pertaining to the series of predictions about belongingness” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995, p. 501).

The author’s summarized the following conditions that met the BH:

- (a) *Social bonds formed easily regardless of the circumstances and individuals were hesitant to break social bonds.* The term, *the more the merrier* comes to mind considering simply being around others, whether in a temporary situation or a newly formed group can instigate the forming of bonds even in negative settings, with opponents, or in the face of threats. Group loyalty even formed easily without expectations of benefit. Individuals were also willing to invest time in maintaining bonds - even remaining in relationships when the cost of staying was greater than leaving. In fact, when individuals must part, for example, due to a move to another city, they promised to stay in touch. Distress even occurred when insignificant bonds broke. Strengthening the argument was that researchers across various disciplines also observed the strength to maintain social bonds.
- (b) *There were cognitive elements to the need to belong.* In close relationships, individuals merged thoughts of themselves with others. If a couple broke up, they thought about one another continuously. In fact, individuals prioritized those who they were closest. Even the anticipation of a future encounter with some will affect cognition, meaning an individual might form an opinion of an individual before meeting them. Individuals even saw relationships with those that might not exist. For example, a cashier at a movie theatre might assume a man and a woman standing together in the ticket line are a couple. Further, individuals correlated negative memories with those outside their friend group.

In support of negative effects on cognitive processes after experiencing exclusion Buelow and Wirth (2017) found a link between ostracism and making risky-decisions.

(c) *The formation and separation of relationships impacted our emotions.* When interactions such as intimate relationships, joining groups, or new employment were functioning well, individuals experienced joy. If relationships were not functioning well, individuals experienced distress and other negative emotions.

(d) *When individuals were fully or partially deprived of meaningful relationships, they suffered physically and emotionally.* When individuals lacked meaningful relationships or experienced social exclusion, they experienced emotional distress including anxiety, depression, and loneliness in addition to physical distress such as weakened immune systems and ill health. In fact, even after a brief online ball-tossing game (Cyberball), participants felt excluded when they believed the other participants, who were strangers to them, meaning they could not see, communicate with, or anticipate future interactions with them, purposefully denied tossing the ball to them (Williams, Cheung, & Choi, 2000). Jealousy was also experienced when a social bond was threatened. Interactions with the same individual must also be frequent and caring. Individuals further required frequent interactions with the same individuals and the interactions must be stable and mutually caring. Frequent interactions without a deep bond would cause distress as did deep bonds with limited interactions. Mutual love produced positive effects whereas one-sided love produced distress. Essentially, it is quality over quantity.

(e) *Satiation and substitution.* In terms of satiation, there was such a thing as too many relationships meaning individuals were only capable of having a few close relationships compared to having several acquaintances or casual relationships. DeWall, Baumeister,

and Vohs (2008) found that accepted individuals are content where they are, meaning they do not need further relationships as they already belong (satiation). Feeling content made sense since individuals invested heavily in forming and maintaining social bonds. On the contrary, when a social bond broke, individuals quickly substituted it with another acceptable social bond to avoid distress.

- (f) The NTB was based in *innateness, universality, and evolution*. Individuals across the globe were born with the motivation to seek and maintain close relationships.

The BH appeared to focus on one-to-one relationships. However, Baumeister and Leary (1995) noted that it could also apply to groups. Comparable to earlier times, groups or tribes provided a sense of protection, identity, and belonging. There were many types of groups and the most important one for a child was likely the family unit as that is where we began and developed the skills for adulthood. It was evident that the group was more powerful than one-to-one relationships in terms of survival. The power in numbers helped to provide security, a sense of loyalty, and identity.

As a group member, we must conform to the rules of the group to remain a part of the group. The BH said that individuals became aggressive to demonstrate loyalty to group peers to ensure they would not experience rejection from the group. Such aggression is evident in Giusto's (1997) study in which OMC members seemed to purposefully make commands of females in front of other OMC members. Baumeister and Leary (1995) further suggested that new or old group bonds, demonstrated loyalty to one another even if it went against their morality. Individuals even formed bonds with opponents and that external threats appeared to foster individuals to form bonds. In addition, Baumeister and Leary pointed out that individuals would be resentful towards groups they could not belong and that antisocial or aggressive

behaviour, was used to show acceptance and commitment to their group. In understanding how individuals gain belongingness from groups, Easterbrook and Vignoles (2013) conducted a study that found perceived group similarity predicted feelings of belonging within groups perceived as social categories but not within groups perceived as social networks. This notion makes sense if individual members see each other as similar (social categories) as opposed to wanting to understand the quality of the relationship (interpersonal networks). As such, individuals would stay in troubled group relationships to avoid disconnection.

Considering this research study is examining the childhood backgrounds of OMC members and NOMC members, it is also important to identify how the BH applies to children. This research study defined the childhood years up to age 18. The BH also found that since belonging is a fundamental need then children would also have the innate motivation to belong. If broken social bonds caused distress in adults, then the same effect likely occurred in children. As the NTB is innate, then children would be programmed to seek acceptance, conform and cooperate to survive. At this juncture is where the BH and Bowlby's (1969) Attachment Theory differed. As described earlier, the BH argued all interactions were important while the Attachment Theory argued that the mother-infant bond was the most important. Since the BH suggested all interactions were important it was safe to assume the caregiver-infant bond and other-infant interactions were important because the infant seeks interactions early in life.

Over (2016) examined the BH by reviewing studies on childhood behavior. In the author's review, she found that infants started seeking interactions as early as 8 weeks old. Infants looked at others and responded with a smile. Over also found that infants smiled during positive interactions and not during negative interactions. Further, infants tried to prolong interactions as well as imitate, help, and cooperate. In addition, as children grew, they tried not

to anger or upset but rather flattered individuals whom they preferred. The author also suggested that preschool children resolved conflicts quickly and were attracted to other children who preferred to mend conflicts. Moreover, children attempted to join and rejoin groups and conformed once accepted – they even became more generous and recalled more positive information as well as considered their group over other groups when making moral decisions. In fact, children learned to separate friends from non-friends. At kindergarten age, children became cooperative during play and worked together towards goals.

There were also cognitive elements to the NTB for children as seen in their prioritization of friendships during early and middle childhood years. At ages 5-6 children understood the differences between intimacy (friends), task (individuals working), social (individuals who looked alike), and loose association groups (individuals waiting at a bus stop) in terms of traits, relationships, and obligations to one another (Plötner, Over, Carpenter, & Tomasello, 2016). Children ages 3-5 years predicted that a group member from one group would harm members of a different group, but all group members helped one-another, and children ages 6-10 predicted between group member harm and to help their group members (Rhodes, 2012). Likewise, the formation and separation of relationships impacted children's emotions. Over (2016) explained the loss of social contact for school-age children had negative and sometimes serious consequences on their emotional well-being and children even stayed in unhealthy relationships for fear of losing the bond. Thus, children came equipped with the ability to fulfill their NTB.

Baumeister and Leary (1995) admitted that belongingness was difficult to examine empirically due to the lack of recognized and tested hypotheses. Difficulty included collecting data to demonstrate which motives derived from another. Evolution of the NTB was also challenging to test. Thus, the condition remained unfounded. Another issue was if we conform

to ensure we remain in groups why do some individuals want to stand out from the group? One thing that might also be difficult to explain was why some marriage partners lose interest in one another if individuals were meant to be together long-term. Another weakness was how the BH would explain the lives of spies who lived in secret and spent lengthy time separated from family or had no family. An examination of children who were adopted can also be considered a weakness or a strength of the BH. Even if some adopted children experienced loving and secure environments, some struggle with belonging especially if their personality or physical traits differed from their adopted family. The adopted children may also struggle with the unknown of where they came from or why their guardians placed them for adoption. In effect, the children were struggling with a sense of loss or rejection. Nonetheless, one can explain many of the weaknesses of the BH.

In defense, Baumeister and Leary's (1995) BH is attractive in that it investigated the emotional, cognitive, and physical aspects of the NTB. The authors also examined what happened if the need was not met. As for its view on evolution, historically belonging to groups helped humans survive as groups functioned as safety mechanisms. Today we still want to belong to groups whether it be family, friends, or other groups. Over (2016) also studied developmental beginnings. She found relationships with caregivers and others, even strangers, were important early in a child's development; in fact, she found that even as early as 8 weeks old, we began looking for interactions. Shonkoff (2011) also noted that childhood was where we were mentally programmed. Thus, it makes sense we would start seeking relationships early in our life. The Attachment Theory by Bowlby (1969) described the mother-infant bond as the basis for the child to build future attachments. Secure attachments during infancy permitted children to deal better with moments of not belonging compared to those children who

experienced insecure attachments. During this time children learned a great deal about the world they lived in and how to adapt to the members of their groups.

Hirschi (1986) agreed on the importance of bonding. He believed that a lack of attachment to society was so distressing that it caused individuals to engage in deviant behaviour. Other theorists also viewed belonging as part of human development. Hirschi's (1986) Social Control Theory argued that healthy self-control was a characteristic developed at a youthful age due to attentive caregivers. If individuals did not have properly developed self-control, there was a likelihood for negative behaviours such as impulsiveness and insensitivity to others.

Spears, Ellemers, and Doosje (2009) also found that individuals liked to be with others (groups) who shared the same opinion. However, within the group, they indicated some individuals did not mind standing out from one another though it was only due to wanting to stand out rather than not wanting to be part of the group. In terms of broken marriages, couples may lose physical intimacy for one another based on evolution, meaning human beings are meant to reproduce so their genes will not only survive but also be dominant. Evolution then would mean ones' body would be predisposed to seek reproduction with more than one individual. However, a loss of physical intimacy does not necessarily mean an individual wants the bond to be broken. Further, when the marriage bond breaks it is distressing for couples. Baumeister and Leary (1995) further stated belonging does not mean one has a separate need for social contact and intimate contact but a need for regular social contact with individuals we feel connected. The BH also said individuals tried hard to keep bonds together and if they cannot, they quickly replaced them. Further, we do not know what the definition is of long-term relationships.

As for spies, it was possible that spies still had some social bonds; spying does not mean they are in isolation. Otherwise, they would have difficulty with their physical and emotional well-being. Solitary confinement is an excellent example in that without human connections mental health deteriorated. In fact, various researchers examined the effects. Kaba et al. (2014) found that inmates detained in solitary confinement performed acts of self-harm and fatal self-harm and even verbalized they would do anything to escape the conditions of isolation. Haney (2003) argued 10 days in solitary confinement revealed damaging physical and emotional effects on individuals such as hypertension, suicidal thoughts and behavior, uncontrollable anger, hallucinations, emotional breakdowns, and chronic breakdowns. Even in solitary confinement cells where the inmate was under video surveillance 24 hours a day further caused a deeper detachment from reality as their senses began to deceive them. Thus, spies are likely not within total isolation as they would have difficulty performing their jobs.

As previously stated, the effects of adoption work for or against the BH in that if the adopted child had satisfying bonds with their adopted family, they should not experience distress from being adopted. Although it makes sense, they would experience distress as they experienced the loss of social bonds from their biological family whether they knew the biological parents or not. Their level of emotional distress would also be dependent on whether they currently had enough meaningful relationships. It would be interesting to understand how adopted individuals felt if they did not know they were adopted, meaning did they have any lingering feeling of exclusion even though they had no knowledge of their adoption, however, that would be difficult to test. Today, we still belong to groups such as family, friends, co-workers, and sports teams, therefore it makes sense there was an evolutionary basis to belonging. In addition, most individuals would rather feel acceptance than rejection.

3.7 The Heightened Need to Belong

We learned through the BH that belonging is a fundamental need. Through the BHs description of the NTB it also described such that if belonging went unmet, individuals would engage in negative emotions and behaviours such as resentment and aggression. Such adverse behaviour is because our self-control becomes threatened when we do not meet our NTB. Self-control is the inner ability to monitor ones' thoughts, emotions, and behaviours according to the situation, likely due to evolution (DeWall, Baumeister, & Vohs, 2008). Baumeister and Leary (1995) also argued that while some individuals developed negative behaviour, it was because they felt cheated out of the natural right to belong. Thus, when our self-control becomes threatened, we experience a *heightened* NTB. DeWall et al. (2008) confirmed this by arguing the act of exclusion agitated self-control and intensified the NTB. Any negative behaviour is an attempt to compensate and regain self-control. Thus, the heightened NTB is an attempt to restore belonging. As a reminder, while the BH discusses *broken social bonds*, the term utilized in this research study is *exclusion*. It should also be noted, some individuals vary in their *drive* to belong meaning some will require more social bonds than others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Verhagen, Lodder, & Baumeister, 2018) however, this should not be confused with a *heightened* NTB, which is affected by the unmet NTB such as through exclusion.

When a fundamental need is unfulfilled it becomes intensified and such intensity causes one distress, the distress is a means to ensure they will fulfill the unmet need. For example, if an individual were starving, their hunger would heighten, and they would experience distress to the point they may steal to feed themselves. Likewise, if an individual experienced a sexual assault or home invasion their sense of security may heighten to the point, they may install a security alarm or purchase a guard dog or firearm to ensure and maintain protection.

Similarly, DeWall et al. (2008) found that individuals want something more if it is denied and want it less if offered it. This notion is comparable to the BHs *satiation* and *substitution* condition. If the individual has enough meaningful relationships, they will not seek other relationships (satiation). If the belonging need is threatened the individual will quickly try to restore the need (substitution). Specifically, however, excluded individuals will do what is necessary to restore belonging.

It is important to note, not everyone will respond the same to exclusion. Some excluded individuals acted friendlier and tried harder to belong while others became aggressive (DeWall et al., 2008). If an impeded self-control heightened the NTB then why do some individuals behave friendlier while others behave aggressively? This difference in behaviour is particularly interesting, since we NTB, so it would make more sense for individuals to act nicer as opposed to aggressively since aggression can potentially further isolate an individual. As explained earlier, individuals become aggressive due to their impeded self-control; however, Baumeister and Leary (1995) also argued that it depended on how bad their self-control is affected. For example, if one has a solid foundation of enough meaningful relationships, one subtle act of exclusion may not seriously affect their self-control. DeWall et al. (2008) also explained that while excluded individual's self-control decreased, accepted individuals' self-control remained, however, when excluded individuals were presented with a new opportunity to present oneself as desirable excluded individuals *regained* their sense of self-control. They described this as honouring their end of the bargain in that human's looked at belonging as an agreement - 'I want to belong, so you should accept me.' To illustrate, in the Cyberball or ball-tossing experiment, discussed earlier, ostracized individuals tried to conform to a new group when the group became available (Williams et al., 2000).

In comparison, researchers confirmed that those who became nicer after exclusion was only in instances towards those who were willing to accept them at once (Maner, DeWall, Baumeister, & Schaller, 2007; DeWall, Twenge, Gitter, & Baumeister, 2009). However, when individuals were not immediately accepted, those excluded individuals behaved hostile (Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, Stucke, 2001). DeWall et al. (2009) explained that individuals became aggressive because the exclusion was the same as betrayal and individuals viewed betrayal as hostile and therefore reacted hostile. DeWall et al. (2009) also found that excluded individuals had hostile thoughts that led to aggression even towards individuals not involved in the excluding. Twenge et al. (2001) noted that if it is simple enough to provoke aggression in an experiment, imagine the level of aggression in real life when individuals experience chronic exclusion. As such, some individuals react more favourably in the face of exclusion if their self-control is not badly impeded or a new opportunity for inclusion presents itself.

Excluded individuals will also look beyond their rejectors for inclusion. Williams and Nida (2011) found that excluded individuals were more likely to engage in certain behaviours to secure future bonds with new individuals or groups. Maner et al. (2007) also argued that exclusion prompted individuals to seek bonds with new individuals rather than the individuals who excluded them. Excluded individuals even felt bias and resentment to those groups they could not belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). In Williams and Nida's (2011) writings, they described individuals as more likely to mimic, comply, obey, cooperate, and express attraction to others, even if those others had unusual beliefs. They further found that excluded individuals became more attune with their surroundings. Williams and Nida also demonstrated the length individuals go to belong. For example, individuals would not assist others when their own group's members were around because they did not want to risk acting *unlike* the other. Likely

for fear of facing exclusion. Individuals also remembered the act of exclusion over and over in their head, which often caused them to experience pain each time (Williams & Nida, 2011) thus, the process and effects of exclusion can become a vicious cycle. It is no wonder that excluded individuals' distance themselves from their rejectors.

DeWall et al. (2008) identified why individuals might choose to reject those who excluded them and what occurs if an excluded individual cannot find inclusion. The following is the 3-stage process individuals experience in the face of exclusion:

- (1) Initial act of exclusion;
- (2) Coping; and
- (3) Resignation.

Imagine a group of children in a physical education class waiting to be chosen by two student team captains to play on a team. Those students chosen first by the team captains likely feel joy while the child chosen last (initial act of exclusion) likely feels sad and embarrassed that a team was stuck with them. That child may never forget that feeling (remember the act of exclusion over and over). That same child might also be experiencing neglect in their home (family risk factor), bullying by their teachers (school risk factor), and rejection from their peers (peer risk factor). At first, the child might try harder to belong (coping). If trying harder to belong through cooperation, mimicking, or complying does not work, individuals will eventually stop caring if individuals like them and will instead want others to notice them through outrageous or aggressive behaviour (coping). Again, Baumeister and Leary (1995) argued eventually, the child might become withdrawn, further isolating themselves and the exclusion can carry into adulthood. Such experiences of exclusion turn into chronic exclusion, which might cause them to give up (resignation). This unfavourable process answered Twenge et al.'s

(2001) concern that if aggression can simply be incited experimentally what about when chronic exclusion happens in real life. Excluded individuals might act negatively to cope with the experience of exclusion, and if the exclusion becomes chronic, excluded individuals might give up on life.

As noted, individuals can experience one traumatic episode of exclusion or chronic exclusion. Chronic exclusion is the focus of this research study, in that it predicts OMC members might have experienced an accumulation of risk factors across multiple life domains during childhood. Chronic exclusion could cause distress and resentment to the point one no longer wants to conform to societal norms and therefore joins an OMC (coping). Though it could also mean one played exclusion over and over in their head, and it continued to bother them, so they chose to belong to new groups as opposed to those individuals who excluded them. The point is that exclusion can cause a negative reaction in individuals as a means to cope and re-establish a natural balance of belonging.

The link between exclusion and aggression was also described as having neurological consequences. DeWall and Bushman (2011) reiterated that because belonging is a fundamental need, the exclusion would also affect neural responses. They felt excluded individuals became hypersensitive to signs of threat that often increased, aggression and impaired self-control. Though, they agreed with earlier research that if excluded individuals were offered potential acceptance, they became motivated to belong. De Wall and Bushman also argued that while some individuals responded aggressively to exclusion when there was no potential for acceptance, they also showed hormonal and behaviour responses indicating the want for acceptance. They found the pain of exclusion was so real that one could numb their brain to reduce the pain similar to when an individual ingests an 'aspirin' to ease the pain caused by a

physical injury. Such pain is because exclusion effects the same neural regions of the brain as physical injuries. De Wall and Bushman (2011) further noted that exclusion often prompted individuals to be drawn to faith-based affiliations perhaps to reduce aggression. Exclusion, therefore, has the same type of neurological effect as physical pain and both excluded, and physically injured individuals will attempt to ease the pain.

Other researchers viewed an impeded self-control due to having a stronger NTB rather than exclusion heightening the NTB. Leary, Kelly, Cottrell, and Schreindorfer (2013) found that the NTB was not related to perceived potential belonging but rather a stronger NTB that makes one more insecure and anxious about the security of their relationships. Further, they said that an individuals' NTB could vary in intensity and those who feel lonely or unaccepted might experience a heightened NTB. It is true that the BH suggested the NTB varies and some individuals were satisfied with fewer relationships than others and therefore were less concerned with acceptance by individuals outside their group. This variance in the NTB was explained as a difference in the *strength* of someone's NTB. Even for those individuals who have less of an NTB does not mean they will not be adversely affected by exclusion compared to those with a stronger NTB. Leary et al. (2013) however, said that individual differences in the NTB were not due to an unmet NTB and that it might be difficult to be strong in NTB without worrying about your relationships, in addition, most individuals with a weaker NTB had a moderately strong NTB. Verhagen et al. (2018) clarified this with their results on adolescents who had high levels of NTB who showed good levels of well-being if they had satisfying relationships.

In Verhagen et al.'s (2018) study with adolescents ($M=13.94$), the authors stressed that it was about the strength of the NTB that decreased well-being. The strong points of their study were the use of a large sample of adolescents and choosing a sensitive age range in which an

adolescent's various relationships with parents and peers go through changes. They found those who had a strong NTB and low relationship satisfaction expressed loneliness, depression, and low self-esteem. Those with a strong NTB and high relationship satisfaction had low depression, low loneliness, and high self-esteem. Thus, a bad combination was only when one had a high NTB and low relationship satisfaction. They concluded that some individuals might be fine even though they may not have much relationship satisfaction.

Vergagen et al. (2018) also discovered that a lack of satisfying relationships is not distressing for everyone, but rather negative outcomes differ. A low level of relationship satisfaction correlated with lower well-being among adolescents who wanted to be accepted by others, but not among adolescents who did not have a strong NTB. They also found that some individuals might do well by responding to a lack of belonging by lowering their needs rather than adjusting the fulfillment, though future research is necessary. However, how does one lower their fulfillment needs? In addition, the findings of those who had a strong NTB and low relationship satisfaction expressed loneliness, depression, and low self-esteem seems somewhat like a circular argument. Verhagen et al. (2018) further relied on the 'Need to Belong Scale' developed by Leary (2013), which assumed that individuals vary in how much they need to be accepted, but it did not consider that individuals may have different degrees of belongingness needs for different relationships. Verhagen et al. (2018) then found that unmet belongingness needs but not strong belongingness needs alone predict adverse well-being. Verhagen et al. (2018) said a lack of satisfying relationships varied for individuals and that depression, loneliness, and low self-esteem arose in connection with strongly desiring acceptance and it being unmet. Verhagen et al. (2018) found that if the NTB is met, little is gained by meeting the need more rather than sufficiently, which still made sense that an NTB can become heightened.

Nonetheless, individuals still must meet their NTB whether they have a stronger NTB or a weaker NTB, the bottom line is we still NTB and will be negatively affected if the need is not met.

It is suggested that online relationships can partially fulfill the NTB. In other words, it does not matter if the relationship is real or fantasy. A fantasy relationship is plausible if we refer to Williams et al.'s (2000) online Cyberball game where individuals were hurt when excluded. Such a fantasy relationship would mean that in our digital world individuals could find belonging with such devices that speak to one such as in online games, voice recognition systems, and robots. Baumeister and Leary (1995) however, viewed fantasy type relationships as lacking the regular contact and mutually caring interaction necessary to meet the NTB. On the other hand, if we evolved to belong, it might be possible that generations will evolve to find contact with robots as fully satisfying their sense of belonging. While that is out of the scope of this research study, it is an interesting thought.

3.8 How is Belonging Restored in the Outlaw Motorcycle Club

How is belonging restored in the OMC? It would seem obvious that belonging is accomplished in the OMC because the MC offers a group structure, in some ways similar to a family structure, thus individuals will feel they belong. Then why not join a NOMC to achieve belonging considering it is also a group structure that in some ways is similar to a family structure and is not a criminally stigmatized group, unlike the OMC. The present research study proposes it is because joining an OMC assists in coping with exclusion by regaining one's self-control and restoring belonging. Many might assume joining an OMC over a NOMC is due to deviance. However, the ideals promoted in the theoretical framework earlier in this chapter is

that exclusion impedes one's self-control and heightens their NTB to the point one might reject society and join a stigmatized group such as an OMC.

An impeded self-control can present itself through positive or negative behaviour. Such behaviour is an attempt to cope with exclusion, regain self-control and restore belonging. While some excluded individuals acted friendlier to restore belonging, especially if there was an immediate potential for belonging, others became aggressive to restore belonging especially if there was no other potential for belonging. However, even excluded individuals who became aggressive demonstrated motivation to connect when the opportunity presented. William et al.'s (2000) Cyberball experiment noted this when participants tried to conform to a new group when it was made available. Those excluded individuals were also more interested in finding belonging with new individuals, even those with less socially acceptable behaviour (OMCs) as opposed to those who excluded them (family, friends, community). The act of exclusion can also cause one to play its circumstances over and over in their head causing them to constantly relive the emotional pain and potentially further isolate themselves from others.

As such, the present research study predicts that members of OMCs experienced an accumulation of risk factors (exclusion) in multiple life domains during childhood compared to members of NOMCs. Such chronic exclusion caused members of OMCs to experience negative behaviour to the point they sought belonging outside of those who rejected them even with those less socially acceptable. Therefore, membership in an OMC is not just to belong but rather it is a means of *coping from exclusion, regaining self-control, and restoring belonging* whereas the NOMC is as a way to *maintain ones' self-control and belonging*.

The BH can demonstrate how the OMC assists in coping, regaining self-control and restoring belonging. Condition (a) of the BH said that *social bonds formed easily regardless of*

the circumstances and individuals were hesitant to break social bonds. If individuals have chosen to reject society, they still need to seek belonging and often it is with those outside of who rejected them. Individuals even form bonds with opponents and external threats appeared to foster individuals to form bonds (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). In this case an external threat could be an OMC given they separate themselves from mainstream society. Through their search to belong excluded individuals might become introduced to members of OMCs. This is especially convincing if they had access to OMCs. However, it is important to note that excluded individuals also became better at understanding social cues (Leary et al., 2013). Thus, it may become easier to find and approach outlaws. Meaning an excluded individual might better understand those who are or were also excluded (OMC members). Once meeting members of OMCs, the excluded individuals may feel it is a potential source for belonging.

Excluded individuals are also inclined to be drawn to those showing interest in them and may be susceptible to the negativity of stigmatized groups as such groups often prey on the vulnerable by offering the opportunity to *belong* and be *significant* (Williams & Nida, 2011). Baumeister and Leary further argued that even if there is potential danger, individuals might partake in aggression to demonstrate loyalty to peers so as not to be rejected from the group. Hence, the OMC prospecting phase is an example of this as they are at the mercy of the OMC, performing whatever activity is expected. Moreover, once an individual begins prospecting with an OMC, they begin to meet their minimum requirement of frequent, positive, and mutually caring relationships, especially since simply being in the presence of others can form bonds. When one becomes a member of the OMC, members have ample opportunities for several long-term relationships. Thus, it is not surprising that the allegedly dangerous life of the OMC might be appealing to an excluded individual.

Individuals are also as reluctant to break a social bond as they are to form a social bond. Reluctance to break a bond is evident in OMCs since they expect lifelong commitments to the MC. The OMCs also emphasize brotherhood and loyalty at all costs even above their own biological family and other relationships. Harris (2016) confirmed that group norms in OMCs take precedence in their members' lives over family, employment, and other social obligations. Such loyalty could be enticing to an excluded individual. Even group bonds, whether new or not, likely have the strength that individuals will be loyal to one another even if it concerned something that might go against their morality (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). In other words, individuals will go to great lengths to maintain the bonds. Such a drive to maintain a bond could explain the allegedly misogynistic attitude towards women who associate with OMCs such as gang bangs by OMC members on women. If the OMC has such as strong brotherhood, the women of the MC would be of less importance.

Further, the strong emphasis on brotherhood might also 'seal the deal' on exclusion not reoccurring in the future. Excluded individuals want to protect themselves from being excluded again (Maner et al., 2007). Verhagen et al. (2018) however, pointed out that some individuals restored the unmet NTB by adjusting their needs downward, which could be argued why one would choose a criminally stigmatized group such as an OMC. On the other hand, Baumeister and Leary (1995) said if belonging is a need, it is irrelevant to derive group and intimate bonds from other motives. Instead, joining a group does not serve some benefit - individuals just want to belong to groups. Therefore, they are not going to leave the group.

Stigmatized groups, however, might have a narrow group mentality, be intolerant, be radical, and display hostility towards fellow group members (Williams & Nida, 2011). Such adverse behaviour can suggest that those who joined based on a heightened NTB might continue

to experience the underlying effects of past exclusion regardless of belonging to a group, meaning they might not be regaining their self-control. DeWall et al. (2008) however, wrote when excluded individuals were presented the opportunity to prove themselves as socially desirable, it improved their self-control, which they assumed was in the hopes of being rewarded with acceptance. Regardless, prospecting for an OMC will assist in developing relationships, and once establishing full patch membership, members are expected to remain members for life.

Condition (b) explained *there were cognitive elements to the need to belong*. When individuals feel close with another, their thoughts begin to merge in which they include elements of their friends in their self-concept. Members of OMCs often call each other brothers meaning they see their fate as intertwined with others. They also share frequent interactions with their brothers, while riding, at events, and at their clubhouse. They care about one another by ensuring each will have the others back. In fact, the OMC maintains a lifestyle isolated from mainstream society which helps to enhance the members' experiences of belonging (Harris, 2016). Harris argued that the members' perception of belonging and the strong relationships within the group ensured club loyalty and commitment from the members to protect their club. Social bonds begin forming at the prospecting phase when full patch members are ingraining loyalty into the prospect. Once an individual earns a full patch – members accept that individual as 'one of them.' That individual now shares an identity and no longer stands out from the group. One would think an individual would not feel comfortable blending in and not having ones' individuality though, Beaumeister and Leary (1995) suggested individuals preferred achievements recognized by others over solitary achievements. Thus, to be a part of a group often means to put the group ahead of oneself. Group loyalty means taking on group values and beliefs. From an intellectual standpoint, the sense of belonging in an OMC likely entails an *us*

(OMC members) versus *them* (society) feeling, which allows members to view each other as one of the same further easing one's self-control and restoring belonging.

Condition (c), *the formation and separation of relationships impacts our emotions.*

Individuals would feel positive emotion when accepted into the OMC especially since OMCs engage in initiations such as presenting patches to a new member to solidify their bond. Even antisocial or aggressive behaviour can be demonstrated around fellow group members as it demonstrates acceptance and commitment to their group (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), which further solidifies the loyalty to the group. The BH even believed it was important that wedding vows often used 'till death do us part' to ensure the relationship would not end. Likewise, the OMCs have the same philosophy for leaving the MC. Hence the OMC term 'out bad,' meaning the member left the MC in bad honour and therefore are disowned or worse. As such, one would feel positive being accepted into an OMC and not want to leave as it would negatively impact ones' emotions.

In condition (d), *when individuals were fully or partially deprived of meaningful relationships, they suffered physically and emotionally.* If an OMC member somehow becomes disconnected from the OMC, the MC, as mentioned, will disown the member, assault the member, or worse. To avoid this, full patch members of OMCs attempt to instill a sense of loyalty in prospects and throughout the prospecting phase and the duration of their time as an OMC member. The notion of intense loyalty is a way to 'maintain' relationships, so members do not suffer physically or emotionally. Members of OMCs also spend considerable time with one another to ensure the forming of frequent, meaningful, and mutually caring relationships. In fact, criminal organization offenders had higher levels of emotional health (Stys & Ruddell, 2013). It

is likely then that OMCs ensure meaningful relationships are solidified to avoid any physical or emotional suffering.

In condition (e), *satiation and substitution* could explain partly why OMC members are content to make the OMC their life while leaving their biological family and friends behind. In fact, the BH stated that belonging to one group is fulfilling enough, even if one does not have family or intimate relationships, as a group can satisfy one's belonging need. In the OMC, members have enough friendships that they can satisfy the minimum requirement of long-term, frequent, positive, and mutually caring relationships within their brotherhood (*satiation*). In addition, relationships can be easily substituted. To illustrate, the females of the OMC seem to be easily *substituted* with another female if necessary - such as the willingness of OMC members to trade their 'old lady' for a bike (Giusto, 1997) with the intention they will easily find another 'old lady.'

On the other hand, the BH also mentioned there is no separate need for social contact and romantic contact; there is just an NTB. Therefore, trading ones 'old lady' for a bike is not that significant since you have enough meaningful bonds with fellow members. Meeting ones number of meaningful bonds could also explain why OMC members allegedly treat women negatively, i.e., prostituting them, trading them, or having them perform various sexual acts for their satisfaction. As such, the OMC fulfills the NTB enough that members might not look outside the OMC for relationships and not worry when some relationships with biological family and friends break.

In condition (f), the NTB was based in *innateness, universality, and evolution*. Individuals across the world have an innate motivation to form and maintain relationships. Individuals might even behave a certain way to be accepted (OMC prospecting phase). In a

sense then, we could predict how some individuals might behave (cooperation) to ensure they become accepted into a group such as an OMC. OMCs are also in various cultures across the world. In fact, while some might join a street gang or an OMC, others might join cults or radical groups to express and satisfy their NTB but also to cope with exclusion, regain self-control, and restore belonging.

The reasons how the OMC fulfills the NTB is understandable through the BH. Even though individuals may not be at a *vulnerable age* when they join an OMC, they may be in a *vulnerable way*. The OMC member might not need protection. However, there is the familial type support with military structure and rules within the OMC. The leaders of the OMC can also represent parents, and the other OMC members can represent siblings. The prospect is further expected to demonstrate respect to full patch members such as not interrupting them when they are speaking (like child and parent). There is also power, loyalty, identity, belonging, prestige, achievement, and a form of control in their life. Your fellow members are proud of you. This appreciation is often something children crave from their family. The OMC also demands that one's brothers have ones back. In a brotherhood, the member can finally capture the feeling they are never alone. It is like the saying 'blood is thicker than water,' but in this case, it is 'brotherhood is thicker than water.'

In a sense, one could argue it is a heightened need for the family as opposed to a heightened NTB for the reason individuals join OMCs. Though, it is arguable, especially since some individuals who experience exclusion from their biological family might find family satisfaction with a group of friends or co-workers. Others could argue, it is still a heightened need for the family because those who experience exclusion from biological family might establish a criminal intent and a heightened need for the family would not be satisfied with

friends or co-workers but would be satisfied within an OMC. However, this argument then places the reasons for joining an OMC as a deviant reason. In addition, the BH demonstrated that an impeded self-control does not necessarily lead one to criminality but rather, negative behaviour is a way to cope exclusion, regain self-control and restore belonging.

An excluded individual joining an OMC will also benefit from the power in numbers, which provide strength and determination – someone will be there for the member when the member requires back-up or protection. The OMC also offers an atmosphere of being with like-minded individuals – with members who experienced similar situations. The group dynamic of the OMC is more empowering than one-to-one relationships, and this power helps to ease the impeded self-control and provide assurance that exclusion is less likely. As such, if we rely on the BH, joining an OMC is not to fulfill deviance but to fulfill belonging.

3.9 Summary

Considering it is human nature to seek belonging, the research study proposed the idea of a *heightened* NTB as the reason for joining an OMC. The question was why choose, to join a stigmatized group such as an OMC rather than a NOMC. It would be easy to assume it is to engage in deviance. Deviance though can be an endeavour one does on their own and in fact, belonging to an OMC would only place an individual as a target for law enforcement. Subsequent, to reviewing the OMC literature it was evident much of it categorized OMC members as *outcasts* of society. Early theorists from the 1950s-1980s saw OMC membership as attracting those who learned traits of the lower-classes that surrounded them. Other theorists, however, indicated it was a reactive subculture meaning OMCs were looking to be the elite among their lower-class group. Some research also indicated that OMC members did not necessarily come from lower-class but rather lower-middle class. Studies further revealed signs

of alienation and low-self-esteem among OMC members and the females of OMCs and female street gang members. Further, a misogynistic attitude was also evident in OMCs and somewhat in NOMCs.

Quantitative data compiled in the 1980s of incarcerated OMC members were able to confirm some of the lower-class traits. Newer research in 2006 and 2013 also collected quantitative data from incarcerated OMC members that confirmed the presence of some lower-class traits but, also found more emotional and family stability compared to other incarcerated offenders. Moreover, research in 2008 found more similarities between OMC members and NOMC members even finding LEMCs comparable to OMCs. The 2008 studies also described edgework as an explanation for why non-outlaws would want to portray outlaws. Edgework was a way to seek excitement and relief on the weekends for busy professionals. The study comparing LEMCs to OMCs found it was a change in power and diversity in the workforce that caused law enforcement officers to join LEMCs. In LEMCs they regained brotherhood and tradition.

While many of these theories were dated, they were also convincing and informative in that they were able to confirm many traits. The issue is NOMC members shared those same traits. The studies also based OMCs as criminal organizations. In other words, they were basing studies on a predisposed notion that OMC members are offenders who are from the lower social classes. While we cannot ignore the potential deviance in OMCs, we cannot assume deviance does not occur in NOMCs. Further, most research studied OMC members as adults without little knowledge of their childhood backgrounds. Most importantly, much of the research labelled OMCs as *outcasts* and *losers* – indicating exclusion.

Street gang research offered insight because street gangs are also criminally stigmatized groups. As such, an accumulation of risk factors in multiple life domains was found to predict street gang membership. After reviewing the risk factors, they were also interpreted as consequences of *exclusion*. Some of the risk factors were explained as ways to cope with exclusion such as acting out and rejecting the society that rejected them. The exclusion was harmful to individuals as it interfered with ones NTB. When this happens individuals, self-control is impeded and causes negative emotions and behaviour. As such their NTB heightens to the point, they may reject society and join a less socially acceptable group such as an OMC. As the BH described the NTB as the most powerful human need, it would make sense excluded individuals would have difficulty coping and in turn, would reject society and instead seek to restore belonging in a stigmatized group that prioritized brotherhood and loyalty.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1 Overview

This research study attempted to recruit members of Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs (OMC) and Non-Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs (NOMC) across Canada and the United States. Interest was in understanding why some motorcyclists choose a criminally stigmatized motorcycle club (MC) over and non-criminally stigmatized MC. This choice is particularly interesting because researchers identified similar traits among both outlaw and non-outlaw motorcyclists. To be certain, law enforcement and the media categorized OMCs as criminal organizations and NOMCs as recreational MCs. The present research study questioned whether *OMC members experience more risk factors during childhood than NOMC members*. An accumulation of risk factors in multiple life domains is much like comparisons between street gang members and non-street gang members, which found that street gang members have more risk factors within multiple life domains. Since street gangs and OMCs are both considered criminally stigmatized groups, street gang research served as a model for this research study. As such, a comparative analysis examined the childhood backgrounds of OMC members and NOMC members for evidence of risk factors.

The previous chapter explained the reasoning for predicting that OMC members might have more risk factors in their childhood than NOMC members. It was also questioned whether *risk factors could motivate one to join a stigmatized group such as an OMC*. As explained earlier, risk factors are a product of broken social bonds (exclusion). For the purposes of this research study, the nomenclature used is exclusion. Experiencing exclusion can impede an individuals' self-control because it threatens the most powerful human need - the need to belong

(NTB). As such, exclusion impedes self-control and heightens the NTB. The Belongingness Hypothesis (BH) stated that individuals would go to great lengths to restore their NTB. The next question was *how is belonging restored in the OMC*. While many might believe the difference in OMC members and NOMC members is a deviant attitude, based on the analysis of these questions, it was suggested that compared to NOMC members, OMC members have a heightened NTB due to an impeded self-control based on more exclusion experienced in childhood. While the OMC participant sample was small, results revealed more risk factors (exclusion) across more life domains during the childhood of OMC members compared to NOMC members. Described below is the research design and data generation.

4.2 Research Design

This research study combined a *descriptive* and *exploratory quantitative* design. A structured survey with closed-ended questions invited participants to answer sensitive questions confidentially without the embarrassment of face-to-face interviews. The use of quantitative data also allowed for objective interpretation. The research design called for convenience sampling combined with voluntary and snowball sampling. Convenience sampling was necessary, as members of OMCs are not readily available nor necessarily willing to discuss their lives with outsiders. By comparison, there is a vast amount of NOMC members who are more accessible. Therefore, convenience sampling enabled the research study to focus mainly on OMCs and NOMCs that had websites with a ‘contact’ option and available email addresses. In some circumstances, email addresses for OMC members were located on OMC Facebook pages, work advertisements, book advertisements, various Motorcycle Confederation of Clubs in Canada and the United States, and through word of mouth. Overall, the research design allowed suggestions while also generating predictions and explaining the research study in greater depth.

This research study also conducted a comparative analysis of OMC and NOMC members. The idea of a comparison originated from a review of existing studies comparing street gang members and non-street gang members. In those studies, street gang members had an accumulation of risk factors within multiple life domains that predicted street gang membership. Since both street gangs and OMCs are considered criminally stigmatized, street gang research served as a model for the present research study. This research study, however, does not intend to prove either group as criminal groups. Following the street gang research model, this research study utilized some ideas from the Eurogang Youth Survey (Eurogang Project, 2010). The Eurogang Youth Project indicated that the Eurogang Youth Survey was pre-tested within the school environment and youth correctional facilities, as well as been applied in some of the following published studies.

Medina, Aldridge, Shute, and Ross' (2013) study implemented questions from the Eurogang Youth Survey with a few adjustments. Van Gemert and Weerman (n.d.) also discuss in their writing that questions from the Eurogang Youth Survey were implemented in studies by Weerman (2005) and Weerman (2012). Decker and Weerman (2005) and Van Gemert, Peterson, and Lien (2008) also employed the Eurogang Youth Survey in their studies (as cited in Van Gemert & Weerman, n.d.).

The questions from the Eurogang Youth Survey that helped to form some of the questions for the present research study had a childlike inflection considering it was designed for street gang members (mainly youth); therefore, the questions in the present research study were reconstructed to cater to an adult audience. Further, some questions in the present research study were utilized from Miller's (2000) 'Getting Into Gangs, One of the Guys: Girls, Gangs, and Gender' study however, some of the questions remained the same or were slightly altered. The

author from the present research study was also granted permission to utilize questions from both the Eurogang Youth Survey and Miller's (2000) study. Furthermore, this research study formulated several of its own questions to measure such things as belongingness experienced in the MC. The comparative analysis in the present research study was able to reach similar findings of those in street gang research.

4.3 Data Generation

The members of OMCs and NOMCs constituted the population of this research study. Participants received verbal, online, or email invitations to participate if they were over age 18. The author or research assistant (RA) explained to each participant that the purpose of the research study was to understand what differentiates one from joining an OMC and a NOMC. It was further described to potential participants that no questions pertained to their MC but only to their childhood. Participants were informed that it took approximately 7 minutes to complete the survey and they could withdraw at any time unless their survey was submitted as there was no way of identifying whom the surveys belonged to other than an OMC or NOMC participant. Each participant was also informed that answers, personal names, and recording devices would not be used, nor did they have to answer questions that made them uncomfortable. Participants also received appropriate contact information for the research study and notification that the University of Oklahoma Internal Review Board approved this research study.

After consenting to participate, participants received the Qualtrics survey link (Qualtrics, 2005) to complete the online survey. It is notable that this survey was also available to complete via telephone contact or through the mail. While surveys were identical for both OMC and NOMC participants, physical copies of surveys were coded separately for outlaws and non-outlaws however, participants were not made aware of that difference. Online surveys were also

coded separately for outlaws and non-outlaws though; the coding was not made available to participants.

4.3.1 Recruiting outlaw motorcycle club participants.

The RA conducted the data collection for OMC participants. The author's employer did not allow disclosure of the author's name to OMC members during the research study; thus, the reason for an RA. The RA is a male motorcycle enthusiast and had access to the motorcycle community, which allowed access to OMC members. The RA approached OMC members in Canada, which consisted of telephone contact, face-to-face contact while riding, and face-to-face contact at OMC clubhouses. During this time, the RA also utilized snowball sampling. It is notable that Support Clubs and Puppet Clubs to OMCs were also included in OMC status. Identifying members of OMCs depended on the MCs one-percenter status, Support Club status or Puppet Club status. The following criteria determined one-percenter status:

- Common knowledge the member was part of a One-Percenter MC; and
- The 1% diamond patch was visible on the member's club colours (vests).

The following criteria determined Support Club and Puppet Club status:

- Common knowledge it was a Support Club or Puppet Club; and
- Support Club or Puppet Club declaration worn on their club colours.

In addition, members were only approached if they were active full-patch members, former full patch members (out good and out bad), and prospects. Hang around's were not chosen for selection as there was no way to determine whether they were serious about joining an OMC. An advantage of approaching OMCs on rides or at their clubhouse was that they were in their natural environment. However, while the RA had some success recruiting outlaw participants with the face-to-face approach, many OMC members immediately declined

participation. The motorcycling season was also ending in some jurisdictions which further limited access to some OMCs.

As such, MC websites and emails were the most successful method for recruiting OMC members. Identifying members of OMCs online depended on the MCs one-percenter status, Support Club status, or Puppet Club status. The following criteria determined one-percenter status:

- Common knowledge it was a One-Percenter MC; and
- One-percenter status declaration on the OMCs website or Facebook page as well as uploaded pictures on their website of members wearing their club colours showing a visible 1% diamond patch.

The following criteria determined Support Clubs and Puppet Clubs:

- Common knowledge it was a Support Club or Puppet Club; and
- Support Club or Puppet Club declaration on the Support Clubs, Puppet Clubs, and OMCs websites or Facebook pages.

The RA submitted the Qualtrics survey link (Qualtrics, 2005) to OMC participants, which contained a study explanation and informed consent. The survey link was submitted to OMC websites' contact page and to available OMC emails (as noted under research design). Contact was attempted with 52 large to small scale OMCs, Support Clubs, and Puppet Clubs across Canada and the United States. To protect confidentiality of OMC participants, the names of the OMCs, Support Clubs, and Puppet Clubs in which contact was attempted are not disclosed. The intention was to end the recruitment process for OMC participants after obtaining 20 participants; however, the research study received ($n=12$).

4.3.2 Recruiting non-outlaw motorcycle club participants.

The author conducted the data collection for NOMC members. Identifying members of NOMCs depended on their MCs not being One-Percenter MCs, Support Clubs, or Puppet Clubs. The following criteria were used to determine that they were not One-Percenter MCs, Support Clubs, or Puppet Clubs:

- Common knowledge it was not a One-Percenter MC, Support Club, or Puppet Club; and
- A declaration on their website or Facebook pages as to their type of MC.

In some circumstances, confirmation through Canadian law enforcement was necessary to ensure specific NOMCs did not have one-percenter status, Support Club status, or Puppet Club status. It is notable, there are circumstances when some NOMCs engage in activities with OMCs, however, this does not imply an affiliation between NOMCs and OMCs. In addition, NOMC members were active full patch members.

Motorcycle club websites and emails were the most successful method for recruiting NOMC members. The NOMC members were located mainly through websites and Facebook pages, however, there was some email contact through snowball sampling. The author submitted the Qualtrics survey link (Qualtrics, 2005) to NOMC participants, which contained a study explanation and informed consent. The survey link was submitted to NOMC websites' contact page and available NOMC emails (as noted under research design). Contact was attempted with 25 large to small scale NOMCs across Canada and the United States. To protect confidentiality of NOMC participants, the names of the NOMCs in which contact was attempted are not disclosed. The recruitment process for NOMC participants ended after obtaining the desired number of participants ($n=40$).

Chapter 5

Results

5.1 Overview

Collection for the data of this research study occurred from October 2017 to May 2018. The research assistant approached 14 OMC members face-to-face and via telephone and contacted 151 OMC members online (17 postmaster undeliverable). The author contacted 813 NOMC members online (73 postmaster undeliverable). The survey responses are representative of various provinces in Canada and various states in the United States. The following number of surveys were returned for OMC participants ($n=12$) and NOMC participants ($n=49$) however, ($n=9$) OMC participants surveys were used as the other 3 contained no responses and ($n=44$) NOMC participant surveys were used as five contained no responses. The OMC sample consists of all men, and the NOMC sample consists of 3 women and 40 men (one participant did not disclose their gender). There was no way to know how many women or men were invited to participate although it is safe to assume out of all the OMC participants invited all were men considering one must be a male to become a full patch member of an OMC.

The categorical variables measured were *family background*, *neighbourhood and friends*, *childhood characteristics* and *as a motorcycle club member*. The following categorical variables examined whether risk factors existed within family (family background), individual (childhood characteristics), peer (neighbourhood and friends), school (neighbourhood and friends), and community (neighbourhood and friends) life domains prior to age 18. A fourth categorical variable *as a motorcycle club member* intended to understand the sense of *belonging* the participant felt as an adult in their MC. Each of the categorical variables were arranged into

subscales that comprised of anywhere from 3 to 10 questions to which participants were asked to answer on a 5-point Likert Scale with answers starting from:

- (1) Strongly agree;
- (2) Agree;
- (3) Neutral;
- (4) Disagree; or
- (5) Strongly disagree.

The lower scores represented risk factors.

Reliable Cronbach's alpha coefficients measured for internal consistency of the subscales. Considering the small OMC sample and the dataset is non-parametric, 'Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square' testing analyzed relationships between the categorical variables, followed by 'Cramer's V' measure of strength for the statistic. Due to the small OMC participant sample, the significance threshold was set at $p < .10$. Increasing the threshold is acceptable in some circumstances such as early testing (Palesch, 2014) and small samples. While the results revealed 5 statistically significant relationships, it cannot, however, be said for sure if OMC members and NOMC members answered the other questions similar to one another because of the small sample for the OMCs responses. Findings were not confirmable given the small OMC participant sample. However, it was possible to suggest OMC members experienced more risk factors in various life domains prior to age 18 than NOMC members did.

5.2 Family Background

Risk factors operationalized themselves through responses to questions centred on family relationships and activities in the participant's home prior to age 18. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Belongingness Hypothesis (BH) focussed on the fundamental need to

belong (NTB), which causes humans to seek and maintain long-term relationships that are frequent, positive, and mutually caring. Thus, each family member would likely attempt to maintain relationships with one another. Other researchers, however, believed the caregiver-child relationship to be the most important. For example, Bowlby (1969) believed the early attachments had an impact that lasted throughout life. In other words, early attachments can influence later relationships. The BH argued that early social bonds happened regardless of whether the interactions were with a biological caregiver, a caregiver, or strangers (Baumeister & Leary, 1959; Over, 2016). Thus, regardless of whether the social bond was with a caregiver, children that secured strong attachments as an infant tended to develop stronger self-esteem and self-control as they matured. These children will be likelier to obtain successful relationships and healthier emotions. Thus, it was worth examining the family unit in the present research study. The subscale indicated good internal reliability $\alpha=0.705$. A significantly higher portion of OMC participants than NOMC participants reported *there was regular illegal drug use in their home* $LR=9.709, p=.046, V=.461, p=.026$ and *there were motorcycle club members in their family* $LR=7.790, p=.100, V=.378, p=.114$. Although it was notable for the latter response, 1 OMC participant *strongly agreed*, and 1 OMC participant *agreed*, but 2 NOMC participants *agreed* (see Figures 1 and 2).

5.3 Neighbourhood and Friends

The 2nd subscale inquired: *you witnessed gang activity in your neighbourhood* (prior to age 18), *your friends were involved in a gang* (prior to age 18), and *your friends got you into difficulty with law enforcement* (prior to age 18). As children mature, they begin to spend less time with the family and more time with peers in the community. Thus, community conditions become a greater influence especially if the young people had weak family attachments. In other

words, they look for belonging with their peers' school, and community. If young people feel threatened among these life domains, the next step might be to find belonging within a street gang. A strong risk factor for street gang membership is also associating with peers who engage in criminal activity. Hennigan, Kolnick, Vindel, and Maxson (2015) noted that even in high gang neighbourhoods, many young people involved in criminality did not become involved with gangs and only a small majority of young people joined gangs. Obviously, there is more to joining a street gang than involvement in criminal activity. It could be suggested that street gang membership is likely assisting in meeting the NTB. For example, aggressive and antisocial youth might choose to affiliate in a street gang if they have not met their NTB in their social networks. Thus, it seemed relevant to explore this area among the OMC and NOMC participants.

The subscale indicated good internal reliability $\alpha=0.629$ however, out of the 3 questions asked, no statistically significant variation was found between OMC and NOMC participants. However, it is notable that 2 OMC participants agreed *you witnessed gang activity in your neighbourhood* (prior to age 18) compared to 2 NOMC participants who strongly agreed and 6 who agreed. Likewise, 1 OMC participant agreed that *your friends were involved in a gang* (prior to age 18), and 2 NOMC participants strongly agreed, and 2 agreed that *your friends were involved in a gang* (prior to age 18). Further, 2 OMC participants agreed that *your friends got you into difficulty with law enforcement* (prior to age 18), and 6 NOMC participants agreed that *your friends got you into difficulty with law enforcement* (prior to age 18).

For those who experienced exposure to deviance and gang activity and did not join an OMC might have had strong social connections in other life domains. Likewise, for those who did not experience exposure to deviance or gang activity and joined an OMC might have had less

meaningful connections in other life domains. Nonetheless, there is no statistically significant relationship between the two types of MC members, and due to the small OMC sample, there is no way to indicate if exposure to gang members, gang activity, and deviance, is comparable to street gang research.

5.4 Childhood Characteristics

The 3rd subscale *childhood characteristics* (prior to age 18) included 9 questions that examined individual attachments such as behaviour, feelings, and activities engaged in prior to age 18. Behaviours can include such things as aggression, delinquency, and alcohol or drug use. Feelings can involve anger or worthlessness. Activities are such things as recreation and socializing as well as negative life events. The overall subscale had good internal reliability $\alpha=0.612$. This subscale also had the most evidence of risk factors for OMC participants. Results showed that OMC participants *often defied adult requests or rules* more than NOMC participants $LR=9.607, p=.048, V=.436, p=.042$. In addition, the OMC participants *were involved in alcohol or illegal drugs* more than NOMC participants $LR=8.386, p=.078, V=.402, p=.078$. The OMC participants also *participated in criminal acts*, significantly more than what NOMC participants reported $LR=8.602, p=.072, V=.422, p=.054$ (see Tables 1, 2, and 3).

5.5 As a Motorcycle Club Member

The subscale *as a motorcycle club member* differed from the other 3 subscales as it did not measure if there were risk factors during childhood but rather, examined the sense of belonging the participant felt within their MC as an adult. The questions included *being in your MC makes/made you feel like you belong*, *being in your MC makes/made you feel respected*, and *your MC is/was like a family to you*. The subscale indicated good internal reliability $\alpha=0.780$. The ‘Likelihood Ratio, Chi-Square’ test, revealed uniformity among OMC members and NOMC

members in response to all 3 questions respectively $LR=4.810$ $p\text{-value}=.307$, $LR=4.846$ $p\text{-value}=.303$, and $LR=5.624$, $p\text{-value}=.229$. The statistical interpretation behind this finding is outlaws and non-outlaws are comparable in terms of the belonging, respect, and familial sense they acquire from their MCs.

5.6 Demographics

Whom did you reside with prior to age 18: No statistically significant relationship revealed itself between OMC participants and NOMC participants in terms of with whom they resided prior to age 18. All OMC participants reported residing with mother and most NOMC participants resided with mother $LR=1.153$, $p\text{-value}=.283$. Similarly, all OMC participants resided with father, and most NOMC participants resided with father $LR=2.385$, $p\text{-value}=.123$. Moreover, most OMC and NOMC participants resided with siblings $LR=.931$, $p\text{-value}=.335$. There was also no statistically significant relationship regarding OMC and NOMC participants residing with stepparents, with most not residing with stepparents $LR=.179$, $p\text{-value}=.672$. Although more OMC participants reported residing with foster parents $LR=3.643$, $p\text{-value}=.056$, $V=.307$, $p\text{-value}=.026$. Additionally, there were no statistically significant relationships concerning residing with relatives. Only a few OMC and NOMC participants reported residing with aunts/uncles and grandparents $LR=4.912$, $p\text{-value}=.296$.

What social class best describes your family prior to you turning age 18: Participants were asked whether they resided in working-class, middle-class, or upper-class families. Out of the OMC participants, 44.4% reported working-class families and 55.6% reported middle-class families. There was no difference among NOMC participants, 61.4% reported working-class families, 36.4% reported middle-class families, and 2.3% reported upper-class families $LR=1.398$, $p\text{-value}=.497$ (see Table 4).

What was the highest level of education you completed by age 18: Keeping aligned with prior outlaw research, 66.7 % OMC participants reported completing high school. It should be noted there was a statistically significant relationship between OMC and NOMC participants with more NOMC participants reported having completed high school $LR=8.473$, $p\text{-value}=.037$, $V=.458$, $p\text{-value}=.012$ (see Table 5).

What was the highest level of education your mother and father completed by the time you turned age 18: There were no statistically significant relationships between OMC and NOMC participants in terms of parental education prior to the participant turning age 18. Most reported their mother as having high school, and all the other participants reported their mother's education ranging from less than high school to a university degree $LR=11.797$, $p\text{-value}=.160$. Similarly, most reported their father as having high school or certification and all the other participants reported their father's education ranging from less than high school to a university degree $LR=11.635$, $p\text{-value}=.168$.

Gender: For OMC participants, 100% reported being male. Similarly, 93% NOMC participants reported being male and 7% female $LR=1.178$, $p\text{-value}=.278$.

Age group: Another statistically significant difference between OMC and NOMC participants is the younger age of those outlaw participants who completed the survey. There were 22.2% OMC participants (age 25-39) and 77.8% (age 40-60) whereas only 7.0% of NOMC participants (age 25-39), only 55.8% (age 40-60), and 37.2% (age 60 plus) indicating a younger portion of outlaws than non-outlaws $LR=8.068$, $p\text{-value}=.018$, $V=.333$, $p\text{-value}=.056$.

Ethnicity: After questioning the participants in this research study whether their ethnicity was Aboriginal, Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, White, or other, 100% of the

OMC participants reported their ethnicity White and comparable 90.7% of the NOMC participants reported their ethnicity White $LR=1.589$, $p\text{-value}=.662$.

Marital status: Prior research regarding *marital status* is somewhat the same in this research study with 66.7% OMC participants reporting presently being married/common-law, and 22.2% reported being single. Whereas 93% NOMC participants reporting presently being married/common-law and 0% reported being single. There was a statistically significant difference between the two groups $LR=8.473$, $p\text{-value}, .037$, $V=.458$, $p=.012$ (see Table 6).

Employment status: Prior outlaw research indicating OMC members have on and off employment might not be as relevant in this research study. The OMC participant's current employment status included 66.7% employed, 11.1% not employed, 11.1% retired, and 11.1% unable to work in addition the NOMC participant's current employment status included 52.4% employed, 7.1% not employed, and 40.5% retired.

The highest level of education you completed: It was worth noting if any participants progressed in their educational pursuits as they matured. Again, it was comparable between the OMC and the NOMC participants. Out of both types of motorcyclists some maintained some high school and certification however, most reported some college (25% OMC participants and 20.9% NOMC participants) college (0% OMC participants and 25.6% NOMC participants), some university (25% OMC participants and 9.3% NOMC participants), and university degree (12.5% OMC participants and 25.6% NOMC participants) $LR=9.453$, $p\text{-value}=.150$. Indicating a motivation towards education for both outlaws and non-outlaws.

Age entered MC: Statistically more OMC participants (44.4%) entered their MC between the ages 18-24 compared to NOMC participants (23.3%) who entered between the ages 25-39, $LR=8.085$, $p=.044$, $V=.413$, $p=.031$ (see Table 7).

Employed when entered the MC: There were 77.8% OMC participants who were *employed when entered their MC*. Likewise, there were 90.7% NOMC participants who were *employed when entered their MC* $LR=1.043, p\text{-value}=.307$. (see Table 8).

Chapter 6

Discussion

“Although it is cliché to say that “humans are social animals,” it is nonetheless true. Nothing threatens this fundamental aspect of our being more than being excluded and ignored by others”

(Williams & Nida, 2011, p. 73).

6.1 Overview

This chapter aims to gather the key findings and themes that occurred throughout the study and relate them to the relevant literature. The research study intended to understand what differentiated one from joining an Outlaw Motorcycle Club (OMC) and a Non-Outlaw Motorcycle Club (NOMC). Three questions directed the research study: (a) do Outlaw Motorcycle Club members experience more risk factors during childhood than Non-Outlaw Motorcycle Club members, (b) can risk factors motivate one to join a stigmatized group such as an Outlaw Motorcycle Club, and (c) how is belonging restored in the Outlaw Motorcycle Club. After reflecting on the findings, it is notable that given the small OMC sample it was not possible to formally prove the correctness or falsehood of this thesis. Instead, this thesis took a descriptive and exploratory approach, in addition, provided predictions and suggestions for its validity. As such, three contributions from the research study are:

- (a) The Outlaw Motorcycle Club participants had more risk factors in more life domains than the Non-Outlaw Motorcycle Club Members.
- (b) Exclusion disrupts self-control and heightens the need to belong and can potentially lead one to reject society and join a stigmatized group such as an Outlaw Motorcycle Club.

(c) Belonging is restored in an Outlaw Motorcycle Club as it provides the opportunity to cope by regaining self-control and obtaining enough frequent, positive and mutually caring relationships in addition to decreasing the chances of future exclusion.

It is these aspects combined that formulate an understanding of what might differentiate OMC members from NOMC members as well as how a stigmatized group such as an OMC can allow members to cope, regain a members' self-control, and restore a sense of belonging. Limitations of the methodology employed are acknowledged in Section 6.6.

6.2 Risk Factors in Members of Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs

One of the questions explored in Chapter 5 was: *do Outlaw Motorcycle Club members experience more risk factors during childhood than Non-Outlaw Motorcycle Club members.* Keeping in mind the smaller OMC sample, the present research study can suggest that *the Outlaw Motorcycle Club participants had more risk factors in more life domains than the Non-Outlaw Motorcycle Club participants.* Street gang research offered insight since street gangs, like OMCs, are also criminally stigmatized groups. Theorists found that compared to non-street gang members, street gang members had an accumulation of risk factors in multiple domains. Therefore, it was predicted that a higher amount of risk factors might be experienced in the childhood of OMC members compared to NOMC members.

As such, the subscales found the following risk factors (exclusion). In the *family background* (prior to age 18), more OMC participants than NOMC participants reported *there was regular illegal drug use in their home, and there were motorcycle club members in their family.* It is also worth noting that to the question *there were motorcycle club members in their family* 2 NOMC participants *agreed.*

Noteworthy was the absence of risk factors in the *neighbourhood and friend's* (prior to age 18) subscale. This subscale explored neighbourhood and friends because once children mature, they divert from family to explore the rest of their social environment. Young people also need strong relationships in other areas of their life to meet the Belongingness Hypothesis' (BH) minimum amount of satisfying relationships. This subscale found no significant findings between the outlaw and non-outlaw participants for *you witnessed gang activity in your neighbourhood, your friends were involved in a gang, and your friends got you into difficulty with law enforcement*. Though the findings indicate that some outlaw and non-outlaw participants had exposure to gang members, gang activity, and deviance, it should also be noted that street gang members often resided in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods in which there was little collective efficacy among residents. In the present research study, OMC and NOMC participants mostly reported being raised in working-class and middle-class families. Thus, the OMC and NOMC participants may not have experienced exposure to the same level of social disorganization as street gang members. While there are no statistically significant findings in this life domain, there was some exposure to gangs, gang activity, and deviance, however, it cannot be suggested that *neighbourhood and friends'* life domain played a role in choosing to join an OMC.

A theme that emerged in the present research study was the accumulation of risk factors in the *childhood characteristics* subscale. Considering OMC participants witnessed *regular illegal drug use in their home* in the *family background* subscale, it could speak to the outlaw participants' alcohol or illegal drug use. Outlaw participants were significantly different from non-outlaw participants in that more outlaw participants *were involved in alcohol or illegal drugs*, in addition *often defied adult requests or rules, and participated in criminal acts*.

6.3 Can Risk Factors Motivate One to Join an Outlaw Motorcycle Club

A question explored in Chapter 3 was: *can risk factors motivate one to join a stigmatized group such as an Outlaw Motorcycle Club*. As such, it can be demonstrated that *exclusion disrupts self-control and heightens the need to belong and can potentially lead one to reject society and join a stigmatized group such as an Outlaw Motorcycle Club*. A discussion in Chapter 3 also described how risk factors are a product of exclusion. Exclusion can impede an individuals' self-control and heighten the individual's fundamental need to belong (NTB) as described through the BH. Being that the NTB is the most powerful of the human needs, according to the BH, this research study can suggest individuals often coped with the unmet NTB by rejecting mainstream society and joining a stigmatized group such as an OMC. Joining an OMC assists the excluded individual in regaining their self-control and restoring their sense of belonging with a group of likeminded individuals. The idea was risk factors found in OMC members meant the individuals experienced exclusion during their childhood that eventually led to joining an OMC.

The family risk factors can represent signs of exclusion within the family unit due to or exacerbated by such things as family members' illegal drug use. Illegal drug use could also compromise a caregiver's ability to achieve child development responsibilities such as abuse or neglect. A child might even attempt to help the family member with the drug problem and neglect their own needs. Further, if the primary caregiver was an OMC member, they might have put the brotherhood before the child. The OMC is a priority over a member's biological family, employment and other social obligations (Harris, 2016).

On the other hand, an OMC member within the family unit might motivate a child to follow in the family footsteps. Although, street gang research indicated that poor family

structure (Howell & Egle, 2005) and the influence of gang-involved family members (Miller, 2000) could lead to street gang membership. Likewise, Gauthier, Stollak, Messe, and Aronoff (1996) found parental neglect during childhood could result in joining a street gang. Children also joined street gangs at an early age when they still lacked an understanding of relationships; however, joining a street gang at an early age to potentially fulfill social bonds missing within the family demonstrated the strength of the NTB.

Fulfilling social bonds is consistent with many of the OMC participants who joined their OMCs at the young ages between 18-24. It should be noted that OMC participants might have joined their OMCs at an older age compared to street gang members because OMC participants did not necessarily reside in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods as street gang members typically do. To put it another way, they may not have had as much access to street gangs or experience as much neighbourhood dysfunction as street gang members. While joining an OMC is not completely dependent on weak family attachments, family dysfunction can disrupt a young person's emotional wellbeing.

Accordingly, it seems that the family is the most important life domain. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argued that self-control development came from the family life domain whereas the other life domains had a subsidiary role (as cited in Lilly, Cullen, & Ball, 2010). To look at this another way, adolescents are sensitive to peer rejection and may experience the significant emotional effect in response to exclusion, and for children who did not learn healthy relationships in the family unit, peer rejection could be especially distressing. Nonetheless, it may not matter where exclusion started as the BH stated that belonging is required at any stage in life and exclusion is detrimental at any point in life (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Over, 2016). For instance, the impact of exclusion was detrimental when individuals were excluded by

strangers (Williams, Cheung, & Choi, 2000; De Wall, Twenge, Gitter, & Baumeister, 2009). Thus, while it cannot be certain if the family background life domain precedes other life domains it cannot be ignored that if we have healthy attachments in the family unit, we may be better equipped to cope exclusion in other areas of our childhood and adulthood.

The risk factors found in the *childhood characteristics* subscale (*often defied adult requests or rules, were involved in alcohol or illegal drugs, participated in criminal acts*) corresponds with the findings in street gang membership - in which *aggression, alcohol/drug use, and general delinquency* are risk factors for predicting street gang membership (Howell & Egle, 2005). These risk factors also demonstrate aggression and acting out. In addition, we know exclusion impedes one's self-control, resulting in emotional issues and destructive behaviour (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) such as the behaviour just mentioned. In fact, exclusion was so painful that individuals tried to regain their self-control by trying harder to belong or acting out (Williams & Nida, 2011). The same authors argued that acting out was an inability to cope with exclusion, thus they surrendered to being liked and often became aggressive, sad, and alienated. DeWall et al. (2009) even found that exclusion increased aggression towards individuals uninvolved in excluding them. Exclusion also affected neural responses (DeWall & Bushman, 2011) and that individuals could ease either emotional or physical pain by numbing their brain with an aspirin. Perhaps, these are reasons why OMC participants were involved in alcohol or illegal drugs. It could be suggested in this research study that the risk factors found in the *childhood characteristics* subscale were acts of coping exclusion.

When referring to the BH, negative behaviour resulting from exclusion is an act of resentment or a way to form or maintain relationships. In fact, Shamblin (1971) suggested that OMC members did not come from conventional backgrounds and experienced alienation as well

as felt hostility and resentment before joining the OMC. The present research study also revealed that the OMC participants experienced more exclusion during their childhood than NOMC participants. The exclusion likely impeded their self-control and to cope and regain self-control they rejected mainstream society and joined those more accepting of them such as OMCs. Such excluded individuals are also more interested in finding new individuals (OMCs) to belong with as opposed to those who excluded them (Maner, DeWall, Baumeister, & Schaller, 2007; Williams & Nida, 2011). In addition, Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, and Stucke (2001) suggested that when individuals were not immediately accepted; they behaved hostile to become noticed. It is often reported that OMC members behave in aggressive ways – it could be that excluded individuals displayed mimicking and aggression to become accepted within an OMC. Williams and Nida (2011) argued there is a tendency to display various behaviours to secure belonging with new groups - even stigmatized groups. In that case, individuals who felt resentful from exclusion might choose to reject the society that rejected them and look for acceptance in non-conforming groups such as OMCs. The BH argued that individuals must restore their NTB even if under adverse circumstances. An OMC could be considered adverse circumstances considering the allegedly difficult prospecting period and dangerous lifestyle.

As a reminder, excluded individuals also go through a 3-stage process: (a) initial act of exclusion, (b) coping, and (c) resignation (DeWall, Baumeister, & Vohs, 2008). Joining an OMC can be considered a form of coping from the initial act of exclusion. Further, exclusion can cause individuals to play the circumstances over and over in their head provoking them to constantly relive the emotional pain (Williams & Nida, 2011). Continually reliving the pain keeps them in a vulnerable state of coping. Those who experienced exclusion were also in a vulnerable state and would do whatever it took to belong (Williams & Nida, 2011). Such as

finding acceptance with those who experienced similar circumstances and if an opportunity to belong presented itself, excluded individuals who resigned to being liked, would take the opportunity to belong (De Wall & Bushman, 2011). An example of this is if access to an OMC presents itself to a vulnerable individual that individual might take the opportunity to seek belonging within the OMC.

Further, a vulnerable individual or members of OMCs might be drawn to one another due to similar experiences of exclusion. Rather than becoming resigned to belonging, it could be suggested that the OMC participants instead coped by rejecting society and restored belonging with likeminded individuals of OMCs. It is also worth noting that more risk factors in more domains (chronic exclusion) are not that imperative because according to BH one serious type of exclusion can be just as damning as chronic exclusion at any point in ones' life. The OMC participants did, however, have more risk factors in more life domains compared to NOMC participants.

As mentioned, exclusion can also happen at any point in life whether in childhood or adulthood and childhood are complex years and individual characteristics vary. An individual's self-control then can be impeded at any age and thus an individual might choose to reject society at any point in their life. Namely, we cannot confirm childhood risk factors caused individuals to join OMCs because it may not have been due to exclusion in childhood but rather exclusion in adulthood. Another explanation for why an individual might join an OMC is because the individual might not perceive the OMC as a stigmatized group. A vulnerable individual might not even be in control of joining an OMC if they have mental or addiction vulnerabilities or personality disorders. Particularly, Egan and Beadman (2011) found that extreme antisocial personality is a predictor for joining gangs. The strength of the NTB can also vary in individuals

(Verhagen, Lodder, & Baumeister, 2018) where some individuals are satisfied with a few relationships and do not worry about acceptance by individuals outside their group (Leary, Kelly, Cottrell & Schreindorfer, 2013). In other words, some individuals need fewer relationships than others.

Further, not every individual will respond the same to social exclusion, it can depend on how badly their self-control was affected. In fact, Verhagen et al. (2018) argued it is a matter of unmet belongingness needs rather than high belongingness needs that predict adverse well-being. Therefore, we cannot be certain if OMC participants had a greater impact by exclusion in childhood or adulthood nor can we account for individual characteristics and needs.

By contrast, regardless of individual characteristics or when exclusion occurred in an individual's life, exclusion still impedes self-control and heightens the NTB. Most outlaw participants entered their MC between the ages of 18-24, which is suggestive of exclusion in childhood. Childhood is also a time when our caregivers and others program our brains as well it is a time when we learn about relationships; thus; it is likely that the impact of exclusion has greater consequences during the formative years. Moreover, though we cannot understand if all potential OMC recruits perceive OMCs as stigmatized groups, law enforcement and the media report OMCs as criminal organizations. Thus, if individuals join OMCs between ages 18-24, they are likely aware of OMCs criminal stigmatization. Content on the OMC websites also state their OMCs are not criminal organizations, which demonstrates their awareness that their OMCs are negatively stigmatized.

Moreover, luring vulnerable individuals or not having control over joining an OMC can also speak to potential exclusion experienced by vulnerable individuals – meaning exclusion could have led to their vulnerability. Indeed, individuals with antisocial traits joining street

gangs only strengthens the BH especially since one would assume those with antisocial traits would prefer to be left alone as opposed to joining a street gang. The strength of an individual's NTB also does not mean that an individual will not be hurt from exclusion and experience an impeded self-control.

Furthermore, the BH indicated that excluded individuals will still seek a certain amount of relationships. It may be true that not everyone will respond the same to exclusion as this could depend on how well developed their self-control is, however, exclusion even has a detrimental impact when done by strangers. Lastly, it could be argued that unmet belonging needs or high belongingness needs mean the same thing – one either does not have enough belonging and one is seeking more belonging or one was excluded, and one is trying harder to belong. Despite these viewpoints, belongingness is a powerful human need and the risk factors revealed in the present research study can be suggestive of how a heightened NTB can be connected to joining an OMC.

There is also the idea of deviance within OMCs that cannot be ignored. If criminality is live within the OMC, we need to know if criminality begins in the individuals prior to membership within the OMC or after obtaining membership within the OMC. It can be argued that the MC is a tool to enhance criminal operations. Shields (2012) believed that OMC members are either conservative or radical. In fact, the conservative OMC members are not inherently deviant but rather individuals who seek the camaraderie and freedom of becoming an OMC member while the radical OMC members take part in criminal activity (Shields, 2012; Harris, 2016). According to Stys and Ruddell (2013), those with organized crime offenses who were incarcerated showed a late onset of criminality, which could mean that criminality occurred after joining the OMC. On the contrary, Shamblin (1971) noted the structure of the OMC had a

stabilizing effect on OMC members and provided belonging to the OMC members who felt that belonging was otherwise out of their reach. Seeking to restore their belonging could mean that they did not join to become involved in criminal activity.

We can also turn to street gang membership to understand if individuals join stigmatized groups to engage in criminality. Krohn and Thornberry (2008) relied on several longitudinal studies comparing street gangs and non-street gang members to determine whether deviant individuals join gangs, gangs facilitate delinquency, or it is a combination of both. They concluded the gang facilitated deviance and violence decreased upon exiting from the gang. While it might seem obvious that deviance would be higher while involved in a gang it also demonstrated that individuals might not be as deviant prior to entering the gang. The same could be true for members of OMCs. Nonetheless, it is too easy to suggest that OMC members are deviant individuals considering the criminal label attached to their OMCs. Thus, it is necessary to explore other reasons (such as the NTB) for joining a stigmatized group such as an OMC.

Other research suggested only a minority of OMC members engage in criminality. Dulaney (2006) argued that it is a minority of 1%ers who were involved in criminality. He also said to consider OMCs as gangs did not make sense as OMCs are structured democratically, electing officers while gangs are more autocratic, and leadership is based on charisma and earning abilities not abilities to run an organization. The author makes a valid point. However, it does not mean OMCs are not gangs – it could simply mean they are a highly structured group as opposed to a loosely structured group as seen with some street gangs. Further, OMCs consist of adults whereas street gangs consist mostly of youth, which could account for the varying levels of sophistication in terms of organizing a group. Dulaney (2006) also said that OMCs participate in charity work, while gangs do not, and he argued the charity work is not a façade but rather

some charities they support have affected their family members such as disabled veterans. He even says that for some, it is why they join OMCs.

On the other hand, why would an individual who engages in a criminal lifestyle want to enter an OMC knowing that, as an OMC member, law enforcement would highly monitor them? An individual in pursuit of criminal activity would likely want to fly under the radar. We also cannot say for certain that criminal activity does not happen within NOMCs. Another argument for the heightened NTB is individuals will do anything to restore belonging. Joining a group that is criminally stigmatized is taking an extra step or dangerous step to ensure they belong and further isolating themselves from those who rejected them (mainstream society). We know from the belongingness research that excluded individuals will do what they must to restore belonging even if it means engaging in what society might deem as immoral i.e. joining an OMC. It is reasonable to say that OMCs might attract those willing to participate in criminal activity however, we cannot say they are all inherently criminal. There are many theories on why individuals become involved in criminality. Given the myth that separated OMCs from NOMCs and the similarities between OMCs and NOMCs in addition the comparison of OMCs to street gang research and its predictive risk factors that were products of exclusion, the BH can be suggested as the most straightforward approach to why individuals join OMCs.

6.4 Belonging Can be Restored in the Outlaw Motorcycle Club

It is interesting that the present research study revealed that both OMC participants and NOMC participants feel a sense of belonging, respect, and family from their respective MCs. Another question explored in the present research study was *how is belonging restored in the OMC*. It is suggested that *belonging is restored in an Outlaw Motorcycle Club as it provides the opportunity to cope by regaining self-control and obtaining enough frequent, positive and*

mutually caring relationships in addition to decreasing the chances of future exclusion. In finding that OMC participants experienced more risk factors in more life domains during childhood than NOMC participants, it was expected they might report a higher sense of connection from their MCs than NOMC participants. On the other hand, it is not surprising; in fact, the theory behind the BH offers an understanding. The type of MC does not necessarily depend on whether one will feel accepted. They are both groups and humans evolved to seek and maintain long-term, frequent, positive and mutually caring relationships. What a better way to accomplish this but in a group where there are ample opportunities for interactions. As a reminder, Baumeister and Leary (1995) also argued that joining a group does not serve a benefit, but rather individuals just want to belong to groups. Nonetheless, belonging is more complex in the OMC than in the NOMC. This research study suggests that individuals join a stigmatized group such as an OMC over a non-stigmatized group such as a NOMC due to an *impeded self-control* and a *heightened NTB*.

When looking through the lens of the BH, we also know that individuals easily form and identify with their social bonds even within newly formed groups. As well the group dynamic of MCs serves individual identity and social identity, which is an important factor in supporting a members' sense of belonging. Belonging ties in with a sense of identity. An identity helps us to feel a part of something. As we learned in Chapter 2 the sense of identity appears to be deeply embedded within the MCs. The importance of feeling part of something makes sense since certain factors affect our identity. For example, individuals who retire often struggle with the concept of identity as they feel as though they have lost a part of their identity upon retirement. Librett (2008) suggested this was part of the reason law enforcement officers joined Law Enforcement Motorcycle Clubs (LEMC), to regain the brotherhood. Being a law enforcement

officer is ones' identity, and upon retiring, there may be a sense of loss of that identity. Losing ones sense of identity upon retirement is especially true since our profession monopolizes our identity and work absorbs most of our time. Some people may argue that individuals join the OMC for identity rather than belonging. However, belonging is closely related to identity.

Once we feel a sense of belonging, we will identify with whom we belong as is suggested by the BH and its cognitive condition in which our thoughts merge with those we identify. Moreover, one can identify as a doctor, however, have no close relationships with others. Thus, the doctor has an identity but feels no belonging. The workplace, like the OMC, also offers purpose, structure, and community. Individuals might feel loyalty and belonging in their workplace, but the difference is they may feel like they also belong outside of the workplace. This is where the OMC differs (they do not feel like they belong outside of the OMC). While the sense of identity within the OMC involves following a hierarchy, rules, wearing club colours, and driving similar motorcycles, these are meant to strengthen the brotherhood, which is belonging. Especially since the OMC members likely do not feel like they belong outside of the OMC. Hence, they see themselves as us (OMC) versus them (mainstream society). In other words, while one may be gaining an identity, the purpose is to feel a sense of belonging. While belonging is feeling a sense of acceptance with others, identity is who one is, what one's interests are, and whom one socializes. Overall, the NTB likely overpowers the need for identity.

Nurturing togetherness through frequent and positive interactions and motivating each other towards loyalty is also a powerful motivator to invest long-term in a OMC. Baumeister and Leary (1995) highlighted how investment in togetherness could strengthen a sense of belonging. A group atmosphere that can build on these factors allows members to reflect on being a team and appreciate what they have achieved together. Similarly, sports teams dress in

uniform and emphasize team spirit before the start of each game. Law enforcement is another example of fostering loyalty and brotherhood through teamwork and uniforms. In fact, these shared practices of belonging and social identity are evident in many groups and can be considered as a way of maintaining belonging. It is evident whether one is an outlaw or a non-outlaw, to feel a sense of belonging to one's MC follows the BHs theory that humans are driven to belong. The difference with the OMC is a member likely joins to regain self-control and restore belonging whereas with the NOMC a member likely joins to maintain belonging.

Restoring the sense of belonging in an OMC might be perceived as a surer deal. The OMCs are evidently more difficult to join and emphasize brotherhood and loyalty to a greater degree than some of the NOMCs. For example, one cannot simply pay entry dues and become a full patch member of the Hells Angels MC. Though the entry practices and structures of both OMC and NOMCs are similar, the prospecting period for an OMC is often longer and more intense than for a NOMC. For one, prospecting for an OMC requires loyalty to the MC 24 hours a day 7 days a week. One would not ordinarily engage in a lengthy prospecting period for an OMC to later *attempt* to transfer to another OMC or leave the OMC. There are also serious consequences for leaving an OMC. On the contrary, in one of the more lenient NOMCs if one chose to stop paying dues, one could transfer to another NOMC or leave the NOMC. The more exclusive nature and structure of the OMC can add to the sense of assurance to the excluded individual that once a member, there will be less likelihood of exclusion.

The messages on some of the OMC websites almost call to those seeking belonging. For instance, "Nobody will destroy our culture" (Hells Angels MC World, n.d.b), "One way...AOA – Biking & Brotherhood" (Outlaws World, 2019), and "Respect Few, Fear None" (Mongols M.C., 2017). These are strong messages indicating loyalty and could be perceived by excluded

individuals as an assurance to avoid further exclusion. In fact, Watson (1980) said: “One does not compete with or "put down" a fellow biker, for he is a "brother" (p.40). Some OMC websites also discuss the feeling of exclusion such as, “When we do right nobody remembers, when we do wrong nobody forgets...live Mongol, die Mongol!” (Mongols M.C., 2017). In a sense, these messages show how OMC members not only feel hostile towards others but threatened by society. Watson (1980) also argued that OMCs feel threatened by society and view society as hostile. The feelings and perceptions of hostility strengthens the argument that OMC members were potentially excluded and desired to escape mainstream and turn to those more accepting of them. DeWall et al. (2009) reminded us that excluded individuals had hostile thoughts that led to aggression even towards those who did not exclude them. Also, if an OMC member breaks the MC rules the security and loyalty is gone – the member is ‘out bad’ and loses his MC family. There were often terms used, “God forgives, Outlaws don’t” (Outlaws World, 2019) to ensure loyalty. The BH used the example of ‘till death do us part’ for wedding vows to indicate the need to maintain belonging. Vows such as this is similar to the lifelong commitment expected of OMC members. Such vows are not the unconditional love that one might expect with a family. On the other hand, the prospecting phase and OMC bylaws are there to ensure members maintain loyalty. Thus, it is acceptable members would feel a restored sense of belonging.

Whereas some of the messages on NOMCs websites could be perceived as more affable. “The World’s Greatest Motorcycle Riding Club” (Harley Owners Group, 2018), “We are first and foremost Christian” (Bondslaves MC, 2018b), and a patch reading “Blue Knights 99%, We’re the Good Guys” (Blue Knights New Jersey III, 2019). While most NOMCs emphasize brotherhood and loyalty like the OMCs, the NOMC, as suggested earlier, might not be their *life* but rather a *part of their life*. To members of OMCs however, the OMC is their *life*, and it

requires most of their time and loyalty. On some OMC websites, they have links to support and send donations to their incarcerated brothers, possibly as a message of support to their fellow brothers. Though such messages could be viewed as reminders, threats or a way to control the incarcerated brother. Meaning he should not forget he is an OMC before anything else. Regardless, the idea behind the OMC website messages creates the idea that one will be a protected member of a family.

It is no wonder that strong brotherhood messages behind the OMC might allure those who have experienced exclusion. When returning to some of the descriptive words used by past researchers and OMC members (introduced at the beginning of the 3rd chapter), they speak to an *us* (OMC members) versus *them* (mainstream society) mentality. Past descriptors included *ugly*, *repulsive*, *stupid*, *outsiders*, *losers*, *deviants*, and *dumb bikers*. Such classifications also speak to why we may see some of the *us versus them* type messages on some of the OMC website messages noted above. These words are obviously derogatory and symbolize exclusion. Thus such words could likely cause anger in some OMC members towards mainstream society and further strengthen their belonging within the OMC. DeWall and Bushman (2011) reminded us that excluded individuals are more likely than non-excluded individuals to belong to religious affiliations perhaps to reduce aggression, which could speak to the faith-based MCs and OMCs. Fostering a sense of belonging in an OMC then might be empowering to an excluded individual. Thus, the intense loyalty of an OMC and the perceived separation of OMCs from mainstream society would be appealing to an excluded individual in addition to restoring the NTB.

It is further notable that there might be a self-fulfilling prophecy occurring in OMCs that assist in reinforcing a sense of belonging. The OMCs indicated they want to be left alone from mainstream society. This helps to keep them separate from everyone else and further strengthens

the bond within the OMC. Further, if law enforcement and media continue to label OMCs as criminal organizations, OMC members might act like criminals and continue to strengthen their bonds. It also continues to feed the mystery of the OMCs. What is interesting about the criminal stigmatization of OMCs is it also serves a purpose for media to sell exciting stories. In some ways, it could be said the OMCs and law enforcement need each other to maintain the status quo. If law enforcement did not label OMCs as criminal organizations and if OMCs did not feel resentful towards law enforcement the public might lose interest in the OMC subculture. Could the loss of interest and criminal label of the OMCs weaken the brotherhood? Would excluded individuals who want to reject society feel as drawn to an OMC if it no longer had the criminal stigmatization?

6.5 Demographics

Demographic measures were included in the self-administered survey. Responses to 5 demographic questions were mostly comparable to the demographic composition of OMC members described in prior research. These included *ethnicity, age, gender, education, and social class*. Prior research on outlaws and the present research study described outlaws as White, young males, high school graduates, from working- and middle-class families. Some of the variables in the present research study however, differed from prior research on outlaws.

Prior research found outlaws as having on and off employment and having one or more marriages. In the present research study, most OMC participants were employed when they entered their MC and reported being currently employed. Although, we do not know their employment status between the time they entered the OMC and today. One could argue that if they are employed it might mean they are not involved in criminality; however, the present research study did not distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate employment. In the

present research study, most outlaws further reported being married/common-law, however, we do not know the number of marriages/common-law partners or the lengths of marriages/common-law relationships. Nonetheless, marriage can indicate a restored sense of belonging.

Another difference found in this research study is that some OMC participants studied past high school indicating a motivation towards education. Such motivation can strengthen the argument that OMC members feel enough of a sense of belonging that they are not engaged in criminality though it is not a guarantee. These differences could also speak to the changing nature and sophistication reported in OMCs. The 1960s and 1970s OMCs were described as loosely organized groups that represented toughness and excitement (Hopper & Moore, 1990) whereas today's OMCs are described as smart (Quinn, 2001) highly sophisticated criminal organizations (Quinn & Forsyth, 2009) utilizing public means to improve their image (Barker, 2005). As such, while current OMC demographic findings are like past OMC demographic findings, there were also a few significant differences.

It is important to consider the demographic findings of OMC participants described above were also comparable to the demographic findings for NOMC participants. For example, most NOMC participants reported being White males, high school graduates from working- and middle-class families. Most non-outlaw participants were also employed when they entered their MC and reported being currently employed. While more non-outlaws reported completing high school than outlaws, they were similar to outlaws in studying past high school. Most non-outlaw participants also reported being married/common-law though most had a higher percentage of marital status than OMC participants.

Additional demographic similarities between outlaws and non-outlaws included *whom the participants resided with prior to age 18*. Most OMC and NOMC participants reported residing with mother, father, and siblings; however, it was not certain if the participants resided with both parents in the same residence. It is also notable that there were no statistically significant relationships between OMC and NOMC members regarding whether they had a good relationship with their mothers and fathers. Most participants reported good relationships with both mother and father, which varies from earlier outlaw research. Further, most OMC and NOMC participants did not reside with relatives or stepparents, and only a few OMC participants resided with relatives and a foster parent. There were also no statistically significant relationships between OMC and NOMC participants regarding the *highest level of education your mother and father completed by the time you turned age 18*. Most reported their mother as having high school and all the other participants reported their mother's education ranging from less than high school to a university degree in addition most reported their father as having high school or certification and all the other participants reported their father's education ranging from less than high school to a university degree. The difference in parents education differs from past OMC literature in that parents were described as having high school education or less. It is to be noted; however, the similarities of some of the demographics are likely because the participants all belong to a MC and thus share the like-mindedness of brotherhood.

The likeness in responses between the two types of MC members speaks to two of the scholarly outlaw articles reported in Chapter 3. Thompson's (2008) research discussed the likeness of new bikers to outlaw bikers in terms of how the new bikers engaged in the façade and activities of OMC members. The present research study had similar findings to Thompson's in that both outlaws and non-outlaw participants came from working- and middle-classes. The

similarities also corresponded to Librett's (2008) research that deliberated the similarities between members of LEMCs and OMCs, particularly the us (LEMC/OMC) versus them (mainstream society) mentality. He suggested that law enforcement officers joined LEMCs to cope with the loss of brotherhood and power that was once recognized in law enforcement.

Analogous to Librett's (2008) article, this research study also found that both outlaw and non-outlaw participants were White male, young, and lower- to middle-class. Compared to non-outlaws however, the OMC participants reported entering their MC at a younger age. As there were several LEMC participants, this could partially be due to individuals entering law enforcement first and entering a LEMC later in life, for example upon retirement. On the other hand, this could provide strength to the present research study in that outlaws experienced more exclusion during childhood that impeded their self-control and heightened their NTB to the point they chose to reject mainstream society and join a stigmatized group such as an OMC. Further, as stated in Chapter 3, if OMC members and LEMC members are similar in terms of individual characteristics and the structure of the OMC and law enforcement services, why not join a career in law enforcement instead of an OMC. Again, it could be that OMC members had fewer opportunities for joining a career in law enforcement. If one examined why OMC members might have experienced less opportunity to join law enforcement; however, it could potentially expose that the reasons were due to exclusion in the family, individual, peer, school, or community life domains. Overall, considering the small OMC sample, there were more similarities in demographics between OMC and NOMC participants, which is comparable to prior research.

6.6 Limitations

The most obvious limitation was the small OMC sample. In addition, recruitment did not employ random selection. Convenience sampling was necessary; however, due to the difficulty in obtaining OMC participants. At the same time, this type of data collection was invaluable because it allowed for a wider representation of participants across Canada and the United States. Thus, drawing on multiple MCs in the data collection phase serves to counterbalance possible bias.

The use of mainly online self-report measures is also dependent on the cooperation and honesty of participants. As the survey deals with sensitive information participants may have responded in ways to make them appear favourable. The potential for dishonesty, however, did not seem likely considering many of the OMC and NOMC participant responses were similar, and the responses did not appear outrageous. Given that most recruitment was online, participants may not be whom they claimed to be. Still, in terms of the OMC participants, 5 can be confirmed. Online recruitment also limited the ability for rapport building; however, the data needed to be manageable and the lack of face-to-face interaction also allows participants to feel less concerned about their responses. Face-to-face interviews have the potential to elicit *transference* (as defined in Chapter 3) between the interviewer and interviewee.

Many of the available NOMC participants were mainly club officers (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, road captains, and sergeant at arms). For those reasons, those in leadership positions as opposed to other ranks might not be reflective of other participant's personalities and backgrounds. Fortunately, the face-to-face approach, telephone conversations, and some online recruitment utilized with outlaw participants allowed for the participation of various ranks of club officers. There was also some reliance on snowball sampling, which could

elicit recruitment of acquaintances with similar traits and like-mindedness; however, such sampling may have only occurred twice.

The author's employer also required the author's identity not be revealed during participant recruitment. Thus, it was necessary to utilize a research assistant to recruit OMC participants. A notification: *the research student's employer does not allow her to reveal her name during research* was provided to OMC participants, which might have wrongly alerted OMC participants that the author was a law enforcement officer and deterred some OMC participants. The notification was likely an obstacle and did not allow for rapport building or trust. Nonetheless, ($n=9$) OMC participants were obtained.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Is it important to feel like we belong? What happens to those who do not feel like they belong?

How do we come to belong?

7.1 Conclusion

It was the intent of this research study to understand what differentiates individuals who join Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs (OMC) from those who join Non-Outlaw Motorcycle Clubs (NOMC). The research study utilized a descriptive, exploratory, and quantitative methodology to investigate if childhood risk factors might differentiate an individual who joins an OMC over a NOMC. This research study also referred to street gang research and its identification of risk factors that predicted street gang membership especially since street gangs and OMCs are both considered criminally stigmatized groups.

An evolutionary psychological perspective along with the Belongingness Hypothesis (BH) provided the interpretation and analysis of what differentiates OMC members and NOMC members. As belonging is at the centre of our well-being the following questions maintained the vision for this study, *is it important to feel like we belong, what happens to those who do not feel like they belong, and how do we come to belong?* The BH demonstrated that belonging is the most powerful of the fundamental human needs. When one faces exclusion, it interferes with ones belonging. Because exclusion is considered a cruel and hostile act, this can cause unfavourable behaviour in the excluded individual especially because it disrupts ones' self-control. As ones' self-control remains in an impeded state, it heightens our need to belong (NTB) until such time our NTB is restored. Individuals will go to great lengths to restore belonging as it is a fundamental need. Consequently, some individuals *cope with exclusion* by

rejecting those who rejected them and instead opt to *regain their self-control* and *restore their belonging* in a less socially acceptable way such as negative behaviour or with less socially acceptable groups such as an OMC.

While this research study obtained a small OMC sample, it found more risk factors in more life domains in OMC members compared to NOMC members. As examined in this research study, risk factors are a product of exclusion. Therefore, this research study suggested that while many might believe it is deviance that differentiates one from joining an OMC over a NOMC it is likely exclusion during childhood that leads to an impeded self-control and a heightened NTB that causes one to reject society and join a stigmatized group such as an OMC. It was further suggested the OMC provides the opportunity to cope by *regaining self-control* and *restoring ones belonging* through the ability to obtain enough frequent, positive and mutually caring relationships. It was also suggested that those who join NOMCs are *maintaining* their self-control and belonging. Intense loyalty within the OMCs might also allure excluded individuals, as it can add assurance one will be less likely to face exclusion in the future.

In examining the OMC literature to understand what would differentiate one from joining an OMC and a NOMC, the literature is valuable in that it provides a description of OMC members however, the main difference between the OMC members and NOMC members appeared to be law-abiding versus non-law abiding respectively, which is a limited description. Most OMC literature is also based in examining outlaws from a criminal perspective. Further, much of the research focussed on OMC members during adulthood with little research examining their childhood backgrounds. There is also little quantitative data on OMC members. Much of the OMC literature is also outdated and the newer literature found similarities between

OMC members and NOMC members as opposed to differences. As such, the present research study contributed to these gaps in the literature.

The criminal stigmatization of the OMCs likely prevents many studies from occurring as well likely prompts many studies to view OMC members as non-law abiding. By studying OMC members through the lens of the BH, it removed the criminal element and focussed on what motivates human behaviour – the *need to belong*. The present research study suggested it is not only the NTB driving individuals to join stigmatized groups such as OMCs, but a *heightened need to belong*. Joining the OMC then is a coping method to regain self-control and restore belonging. The media romanticizes OMCs as mysterious in nature however, they may not be that mysterious at all.

7.2 Implications

Future research to determine if the heightened NTB is the strongest motivator for joining an OMC could be explored in greater depth; however, the present research study was able to contribute to the gaps in the literature. Even though the OMC sample was small, the research study collected quantitative data on OMC members and NOMC members childhood backgrounds that have not been collected before to the author's knowledge. It also offered updated data on demographic measures. To date, most of the outlaw research was regarding OMC members and NOMC members as adults. Further, most of the data is dated and the newer research focussed on the *similarities* between OMC members and NOMC members rather than *differentiating* factors.

The present research also introduced an evolutionary psychological perspective and a different theoretical framework (BH) to the field of criminology. The present data on Law

Enforcement Motorcycle Clubs may also have important implications for consideration in law enforcement.

DeWall and Bushman (2011) also suggested that research ought to consider how acceptance and exclusion within long-term relationships impacted an individual as most research focussed on acceptance and rejection from strangers. While this is a weak assumption, considering the present research study explored the childhood backgrounds of OMC members, it might provide clues at the effects of acceptance and exclusion in long-term relationships. Likewise, it might provide clues to the long-term effects of exclusion. Given the intense need for loyalty in OMCs – is this due to effects of exclusion from OMC members pasts.

The present research study may also have important implications for youth groups. Such as recognizing how the impact of exclusion could cause young people to act out to restore their belonging. Because exclusion is known to cause physical and emotional suffering, it should be addressed from an early age, especially within the family unit. Ensuring that young people feel involved within their community and school would be beneficial in improving their lifestyle and decreasing the risk of joining gangs or similar types of clubs. Perhaps a change in the community and school environment that increases engagement could assist in one feeling accepted. Also, programs could focus on at-risk families to become involved in their community and schools such as - full-service schools (Warren, 2005) and - empowerment plans (Taylor, 2005) that initiate stronger bonds between parents, community, and children. The BH brings a humanistic and realistic approach to studying why individuals might act the way they do. The present research study will also open knowledge on a subculture that we know little about – OMCs.

7.3 Future Research Directions

The findings of this research study suggest that a heightened NTB could be responsible for joining stigmatized groups such as OMCs. Therefore, a larger sample of OMC participants would be valuable. Further, allowing for face-to-face interviews could enhance the quantitative data. While the use of the street gang research model examined relevant variables from the various childhood life domains, there are additional variables that could be included. For instance, questioning if participants' parents resided together and the nature of their parent's relationship prior to the participant turning age 18. In addition, inquiring the length of participant's employment status. It would also be interesting to understand if OMC members had children prior to joining the OMC and if they had a close connection with their children prior to joining the OMC. As this research study presented a new research problem (what differentiates OMC members from NOMC members), it would be interesting to explore whether OMC members and NOMC members have more similarities like the prior OMC studies found. However, this would require a larger OMC participant sample. Further, the similar demographics found between OMC participants and NOMC participants in the present research study are likely because the participants all belong to an MC and share the like-mindedness of brotherhood. Again, further research and a larger sample for the OMC participants would assist in giving the dataset more variation and more room for further discussions and reflections.

It might also be beneficial to provide the 'Need to Belong Scale' (Leary, 2013) in addition to the present survey to understand the differences between a sense of belonging in OMC members and NOMC members childhood and adulthood. Furthermore, while OMC participants indicated that the MC provided them with a sense of belonging, respect, and family, participants might continue to have underlying feelings of resentment from exclusion, which

would be interesting to explore. In other words, is there any lingering effect with experiencing chronic exclusion. For example, some of the OMC websites also have links to support their incarcerated brothers. While this may be a message of support to their fellow brothers, it could also be a ‘warning’ to their fellow brothers that ‘you are still one of us,’ indicating the need to reinforce loyalty continually. “Although an ostracized group can provide its members with a sense of belonging, self-worth, control, and meaning, it can also set into motion intragroup narrowness, radicalism, and intolerance, as well as the propensity and means to accomplish intergroup hostility and violence” (Williams & Nida, 2011, p. 74). “This possibility serves to remind us that issues such as the nature of the group processes associated with extremism and the relationship between ostracism and gullibility are fruitful avenues for future research” (Williams & Nida, 2011, p. 74). Similarly, Verhagen, Lodder, and Baumeister (2018) requested to explore developmental changes in the NTB over time. In a previous study, belongingness needs decreased significantly with increasing age, although the effect was weak (Leary, Kelly, Cottrell, & Schreindorfer, 2013). What is interesting, is those with *less concern* regarding negative social evaluation were more inclined to seek new bonds after exclusion (Maner, DeWall, Baumeister, & Schaller, 2007). Perhaps that is something further to investigate, in other words, is that a trait.

Past outlaw research discussed the misogynistic nature in OMCs and NOMCs, and it was notably greater in OMCs. For example, OMC members were known to make requests to fellow members to trade their ‘old lady’ for a bike (Giusto, 1997). The same author also noted that females of OMCs were described using derogatory names and dominated by OMC members. Women of OMCs were also considered by the OMC members as objects of contempt (Watson, 1980) and OMC members were known to engage in ‘gang bangs’ where a female was forced to submit to all the OMC members (Montgomery, 1976). Montgomery described further that

women were disallowed from attending club meetings and treated disrespectfully in public by the OMC members. Similar to OMCs, some LEMC members ranked some females depending on their status as a groupie, friend, intimate partner, or wife (Librett, 2008). Likewise, Thompson (2008) noted that conventional female motorcyclists might be professionals during the week and engage in a subservient role on the weekends. Therefore, it would be important to understand where the misogynistic attitudes towards women originate. With this information, we can encompass an even greater understanding of both OMC members and NOMC members.

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Table 1

Childhood Characteristics - Often Defied Adult Requests or Rules < Age 18

MC members	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
OMC members					
count	3	2	3	1	0
%	33.3	22.2	33.3	11.1	.0
NOMC members					
count	2	12	8	13	8
%	4.7	27.9	18.6	30.2	18.6

Note. $p < .10$. Adapted from IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 19.0 (IBM Corp., 2010).

Table 2

Childhood Characteristics - Involved in Alcohol or Illegal Drugs < Age 18

MC members	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
OMC members					
count	2	3	2	0	2
%	22.2	33.3	22.2	.0	22.2
NOMC members					
count	1	11	5	9	17
%	2.3	25.6	11.6	20.9	39.5

Note. $p < .10$. Adapted from IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 19.0 (IBM Corp., 2010).

Table 3

Childhood Characteristics – Participated in Criminal Acts < Age 18

MC Members	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
OMC members					
count	2	2	2	2	1
%	22.2	22.2	22.2	22.2	11.1
NOMC members					
count	1	4	8	7	23
%	2.3	9.3	18.6	16.3	53.5

Note. $p < .10$. Adapted from IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 19.0 (IBM Corp., 2010).

Table 4
Demographics – Social Class of Family < Age 18

MC members	Working class	Middle class	Upper class
OMC members			
count	4	5	0
%	44.4	55.6	.0
NOMC members			
count	27	16	1
%	61.4	36.4	2.3

Note. $p < .10$. Adapted from IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 19.0 (IBM Corp., 2010).

Table 5
Demographics – Highest Level of Education < Age 18

MC Members	< high school	Some high school	High school/ GED	Other
OMC members				
count	2	1	6	0
%	22.2	11.1	66.7	.0
NOMC members				
count	0	2	40	1
%	.0	4.7	93.0	2.3

Note. $p < .10$. Adapted from IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 19.0 (IBM Corp., 2010).

Table 6
Demographics – Marital Status

MC Members	Single	Married/ common-law	Widowed	Divorced
OMC members				
count	2	6	0	1
%	22.2	66.7	.0	11.1
NOMC members				
count	0	40	1	2
%	.0	93.0	2.3	4.7

Note. $p < .10$. Adapted from IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 19.0 (IBM Corp., 2010).

Table 7

Demographics – Age Entered MC

MC members	18-24	25-39	40-60	60 plus
OMC members				
count	4	3	2	0
%	44.4	33.3	22.2	.0
NOMC members				
count	4	10	28	1
%	9.3	23.3	65.1	2.3

Note. $p < .10$. Adapted from IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 19.0 (IBM Corp., 2010).

Table 8

Demographics – Employed When Entered MC

MC members	Yes	No
OMC members		
count	7	2
%	77.8	22.2
NOMC members		
count	39	4
%	90.7	9.3

Note. $p < .10$. Adapted from IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 19.0 (IBM Corp., 2010).

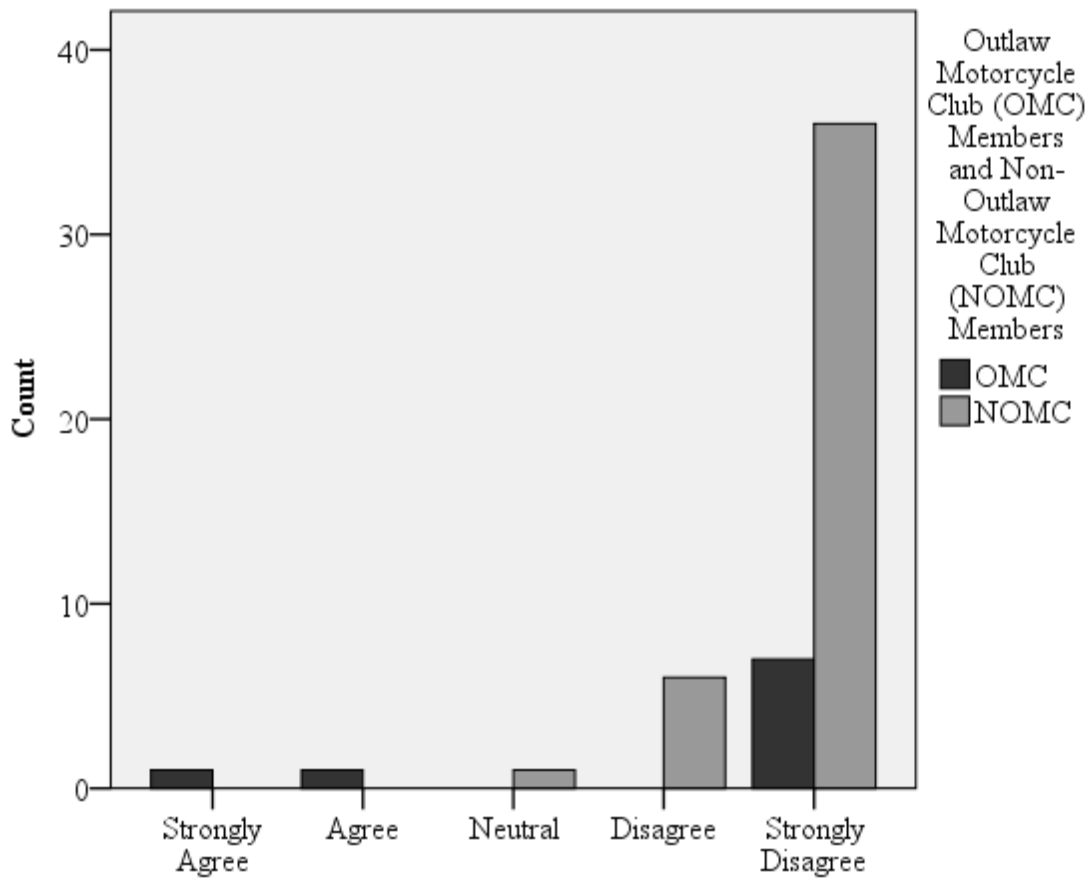


Figure 1. There was regular illegal drug use in home < to age 18 (family background). Reprinted from IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 19.0 (IBM Corp., 2010).

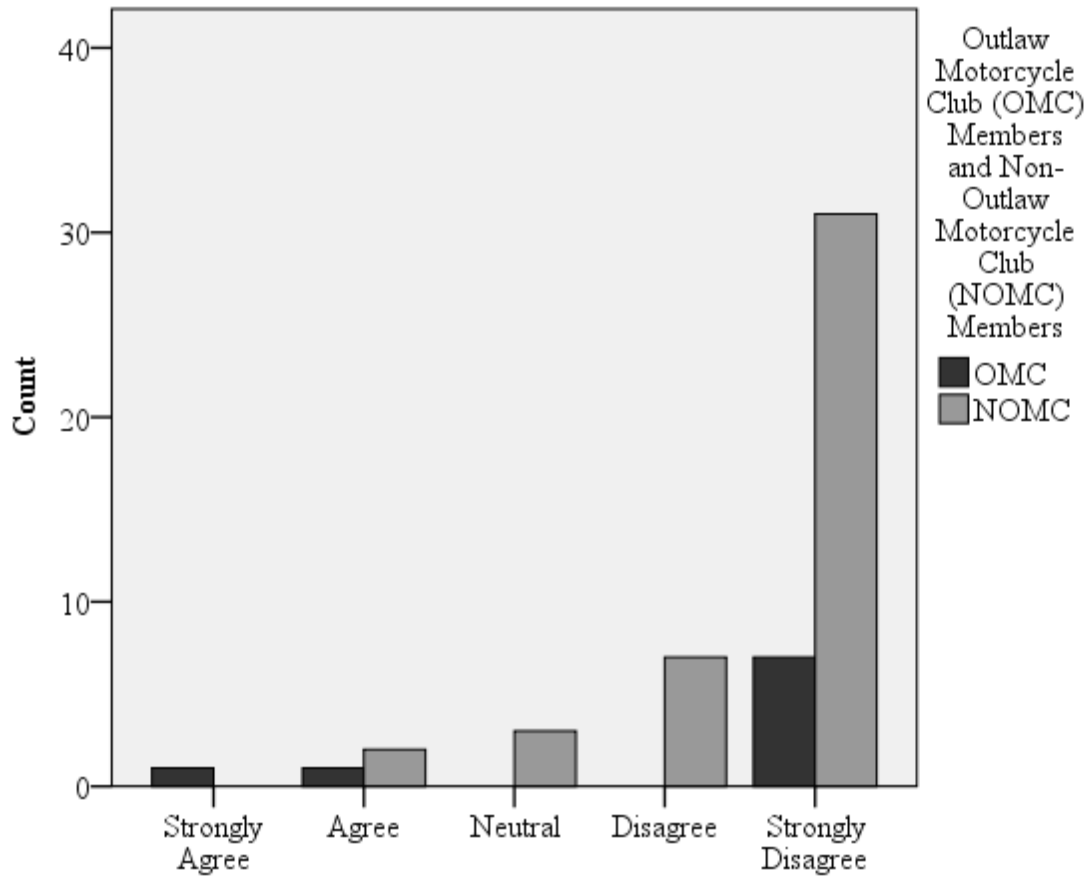


Figure 2. There were MC members in your family < to age 18 (family background). Reprinted from IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 19.0 (IBM Corp., 2010).