



Minnesota State University, Mankato

Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly and Creative Works for Minnesota State University, Mankato

All Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Other
Capstone Projects

Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Other
Capstone Projects

2013

Making Sense Of Motorcycle Brotherhood: Women, Branding, And Construction Of Self

Kimberly Michelle Maas
Minnesota State University - Mankato

Follow this and additional works at: <https://cornerstone.lib.mnsu.edu/etds>



Part of the [Social Psychology Commons](#), and the [Sociology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Maas, K. M. (2013). Making Sense Of Motorcycle Brotherhood: Women, Branding, And Construction Of Self [Master's thesis, Minnesota State University, Mankato]. Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly and Creative Works for Minnesota State University, Mankato. <https://cornerstone.lib.mnsu.edu/etds/238/>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Other Capstone Projects at Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly and Creative Works for Minnesota State University, Mankato. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Other Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly and Creative Works for Minnesota State University, Mankato.

MAKING SENSE OF MOTORCYCLE BROTHERHOOD:
WOMEN, BRANDING, AND CONSTRUCTION OF SELF

By: Kimberly Maas

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Sociology: Teaching Emphasis at
Minnesota State University, Mankato

June 2013

Date: _____

This thesis paper has been examined and approved by the following members of the thesis committee:

Dr. Emily Boyd, Chairperson

Dr. Paul Prew

Dr. Elizabeth Sandell

Maas, Kimberly. 2013. "Making Sense of Motorcycle Brotherhood: Women, Branding, and Construction of Self." Master's Thesis. Minnesota State University, Mankato.

This project focused on the motorcycle culture as evidenced in the definition of motorcycling brotherhood, the role of women in motorcycle culture, branding, and construction of self-identity. This study is intended to provide an in-depth analysis of these four areas for every-day bikers rather than outlaw motorcycle gangs. Previous research to date has focused on the culture and context of brotherhood among outlaw motorcycle gangs.

I use these four sections to determine what the everyday bikers understanding of brotherhood is, what women's current place is in motorcycle culture compared to men, the effects of branding and logos on motorcyclists, and how motorcyclists create their selfhood based upon these brands and logos. I attempt to determine if alienation is a prevalent theme or theory for the everyday biker. I found that out of 21 respondents interviewed, 10 Harley Riders and 11 non-Harley Riders, social psychology is a more prevalent explanation for why motorcyclists choose to ride.

Most of the bikers I interviewed stated that they ride because it provided a sense of adventure, it could free their mind temporarily, it felt like freedom, they felt like one with nature or the world, it was a great hobby, and most of all it allowed them to practice and share in social relationships. I also found that while women riders have grown in numbers over the years, patriarchy still exists and masculinity still dominates the motorcycling scene. Brotherhood is also found to be related to the biker code. Overall, motorcyclists still believed it is important to help out their fellow brother on two wheels rather than to worry about the brand of bike or type of bike they ride.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge those who have helped with the organization and development of this thesis: Dr. Emily Boyd (Chair), Dr. Paul Prew, and Dr. Elizabeth Sandell, of my thesis committee. Dr. Boyd, thank you for introducing me to qualitative methods. Your course has been life-altering and I appreciate all the advice, feedback, support, and encouragement throughout the years. Dr. Prew, thank you for encouraging me to examine sociology from a theoretical point of view. Your encouragement has enriched how I see, view, and react to the world. Dr. Sandell, thank you for the years and years of moral support, for sitting on my committee, and for finally getting me to Russia.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Vicki Hunter who helped get the first draft of my proposal to paper. Dr. Barbara Keating, thank you for your encouragement while I was your Graduate Assistant and for giving me the opportunity to serve as a Student Director for the Midwest Sociological Society. Your patience and understanding has allowed for me to truly work for and achieve everything I have. Gratitude also goes to Kato Vintage Cycle and ZeroGravity Empire for all the entertaining stories that kept me motivated and for the great insight into the history of motorcycle culture. Finally, thank you to my family as well. You have always been there for me no matter the decisions I make, have lifted me up when I was down, and have been there to keep things interesting as well.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Chapter 1: Introduction: | 1 |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review | 3 |
| Introduction: What is Brotherhood?..... | 3 |
| The Role of Women in Motorcycle Culture..... | 5 |
| Identification with Branding among Bikers | 11 |
| Self and Identity | 14 |
| Chapter 3 Research Design: | 18 |
| Sampling..... | 18 |
| Data Collection..... | 19 |
| Research Questions | 20 |
| Data Analysis | 22 |
| The Interview Process: | 22 |
| The Analysis Process..... | 22 |
| Protection of Human Subjects..... | 24 |
| Chapter 4: Results – Brotherhood..... | 25 |
| An Introduction to the Biker | 25 |
| Brotherhood, an Introduction | 28 |
| Defining Brotherhood | 28 |
| A Biker is a Biker No Matter What He Rides and Shared Interests..... | 29 |
| Good Friendship, Family, and Fellowship | 31 |
| Shared Values and Shared Language | 38 |
| In Summary | 39 |
| Breaking Down While Riding a Motorcycle and Brotherhood..... | 40 |
| Bikers Stop More than Cars..... | 40 |
| The Effect of Cell Phones on Aid and Faith Someone Will Stop | 42 |
| Biker Code to Stop | 43 |
| The Effect of Roadside Assistance..... | 44 |
| Have or Would have a Friend or Riding Group Stop | 45 |
| They Have Stopped Themselves | 46 |
| Summary..... | 48 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chapter 5: Results – Gender | 49 |
| Men View Their Interest in Riding as a "Deal Breaker" | 50 |
| Evidence of Possession or Focus on Masculine Pursuits or Interests | 54 |
| Men Are Instrumental in Women's Riding | 57 |
| Patriarchy Still Exists | 59 |
| Women's Equipment and Merchandise | 63 |
| Colored Apparel | 65 |
| Summary | 69 |
| Chapter 6: Results – Reflection of Self and Branding | 71 |
| Introduction | 71 |
| Constructing Identity | 72 |
| Masculine Image and Cool Factor | 79 |
| Symbols for Function versus Symbols for Meaning | 80 |
| Effect of Advertising | 81 |
| Tattoos and Identity Construction | 85 |
| Tattoos, Clothing, and Group Identity | 87 |
| Shared Experiences | 96 |
| Final Summary, Discussion | 98 |
| Conclusion | 100 |
| Suggestions for Future Research | 102 |
| Appendix A: Informed Consent Form | 106 |
| Appendix B: Sample Interview Script: | 110 |
| Appendix C: Application for the Conduct of Research Involving Human Subjects | 111 |
| References | 125 |

Chapter 1: Introduction:

In 1947, a three-day motorcycle rally at Hollister, California turned wild (Schembri 2009). Many of the 4000 individuals in attendance suffered injuries or were arrested. Even though there were attempts to stop the film *Wild Ones* from being produced they failed, and the film was made. The consciousness of the generation who had seen this film was influenced along with the ways in which biker gangs were perceived. A deviant image was defined. The outlaw genre began and Harley-Davidson, the motorcycle brand had a leading role (Schembri 2009: 1301; Quinones 1994). An individual's self is reflexive. It affects society and in society affects it. This study will use narrative analysis to respond to the research questions:

1. What is the meaning of brotherhood in motorcycle groups?
2. What is the role of women among the motorcycle culture?
3. How do men and women identify with various motorcycle brands?

Particularly, this study will evaluate the similarities and differences in meaning-making between men and women and in relation to the identification riders have with motorcycle brands. I will then examine the processes of self-construction in relation to dominant images or beliefs about what being a “biker” is all about within popular culture.

First, I review literature that discusses contexts of brotherhood. I do this through exploring previously conducted research in four sections. These four sections focus on what brotherhood is, on the role of women in motorcycle culture, on branding, and construction of selfhood in motorcycling. Next, I summarize my proposed methods of

study and analysis for this thesis project on the study of how Harley and non-Harley motorcycle riders make sense of brotherhood in motorcycling.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction: What is Brotherhood?

The mention of brothers and brotherhood is frequent in the literature on bikers and motorcycle culture (Hopper and Moore 1990; Quinn 1987, Reynolds 1967; Thompson 2009). However, there is not a lot of scholarly agreement about what brotherhood means. Quinn (1987) and Reynolds (1967) focused on the issue of brotherhood as brothers that rely on each other for day to day survival. Hopper and Moore (1990) defined the concept as brothers who will help each other out in cases of incarceration. Thompson (2009) focused on the idea that motorcyclists have each other's backs despite the brand of bike they ride. If the term *brotherhood* is ambiguous among male bikers, what could it really mean for women? Do men and women hold different meanings and understandings of *brotherhood*? The following section details uses of the terms throughout previous studies.

Quinn (1987) explains that much of an outlaw biker club member's time is spent with other members who are called "brothers" or "bros." He then explains that these men "value and depend" upon the comradeship of their brothers over time spent with women (Quinn 1987:52). He also describes that a common slogan used in these outlaw biker groups is "bros before bitches" (52). He details that members of these clubs feel their fellow 'brothers' are the only ones they can rely on for assured day-to-day survival (Quinn 1987: 52; Reynolds 1967:12-13, 31, 43-36).

Hopper and Moore (1990) use the term "brothers" to describe the feelings of outlaw toward going to prison. They explain that these outlaws seem to live a tribal-like

lifestyle with few restrictions. The liberation in their life is not only felt through riding their bikes, but also experienced through emotion. They defend this statement by explaining that most people would be scared to go to prison, but bikers are "confident that they had many brothers who would look out for them inside the walls" (370). They detail that the possibility that outlaw bikers could go to jail for their actions had little impact on their overall behavior, if any at all.

In the 1970's, according to Thompson (2009) the subculture of motorcycling was in a state of fragmentation. Outlaw bikers despise bikers who had long hair, smoked pot, and promoted peace over war. He argued that even if there was some hatred for "hippie" riders by outlaw bikers, feelings of brotherhood still exist among bikers. He goes on to explain that *brotherhood* suggests something more than participating in the same activity. It is the acknowledgment that those who ride treat each other with acceptance and that should something happen, they have each other's backs. While Thompson rides a Honda, he is told by two Harley-Davidson riders that it is the fact that he rides a motorcycle that mattered, not the fact that he owned a different brand of bike.

Even though these Harley riders joke that Japanese riders would have to ride in the back of the group, they still invite Thompson and his riding partner to go with them on a ride. This is an interesting sociological insight. It begs the question of whether or not rank in group motorcycle rides (whereby two or more bikes ride together in a group) establishes differences in the power and expectations of how gender and branding are enacted or conducted in motorcycle subculture.

Thompson (2009) continues to explain that today there are cell phones to use to call for help if a person gets stranded. While some in his study do not find help when they

break down, others do. He explains that riders today are members of AAA, roadside assistance groups, or riding associations that can provide them help. He concludes that "Most riders carry cell phones, and thus brotherhood or not, help is never far away" (98). Technology may be shaping the perceived dangers of riding and the camaraderie between riders may be less important today than it was in years past.

In this study, I seek to answer the question of how rank plays a role in the overall structure of motorcycle riding and gender. I explore conceptions of status through questioning both men and women on their preferred location within a group motorcycle ride. I ask riders what position they think men and women should have when they sit on motorcycles in the case of passenger riding. More specifically, I ask if they believe men or women should control the motorcycle while the other gender rides in the back.

Finally, I also seek to be able to locate whether or not the influence of having roadside assistance or cell phones impacts the way motorcyclists of all genders feel about brotherhood within this subculture. I did this by asking the motorcyclists in my study about personal experiences. These experiences were when they have either been abandoned on the road or assisted someone who was having difficulty with their machine. These experiences help to locate the power cell phones and roadside assistance have in the role of how motorcycle *brotherhood* is defined and interpreted in our society.

The Role of Women in Motorcycle Culture

Female bikers may have different perceptions or understandings of the subculture compared to those of men. Natalier (2001) studied risk and motorcycling. She noted that men and women describe the experience of motorcycling with similar terms and

language. She found that men did not use terms of dominance and aggression to describe their riding experiences, as had been reported by previous studies of sport culture.

Rather, she found that women as well as men described their motorcycling as a cooperative experience between the rider and the machine.

Since ideas and meanings are constructed at the base level (phenomenology), men and women may have different expectations and therefore different definitions. Especially when it comes to motorcycling, each gender will have socialized expectations specific to gender. Thus, if masculine expectations are generally more risky, they are likely to participate more often in actions that lead to more injuries, death, and hospitalization than woman experience (Natalier 2001, National Health and Medical Research Council 1997).

Historically, women have been viewed as inferior in status relative to men within motorcycle culture. Quinn (1987) argues that men in these clubs spend most of their time with their cohorts or performing club duties. They rely on women to be the provider of financial income. Often, women in these relationships do not have autonomy or individual control over their own finances, and are expected to give their men money on a daily basis. Since this amount may vary from around \$50 to a \$100, they often have to resort to prostitution to make ends meet. Should a woman choose to be deceptive and caught, she is often met with physical punishment such as rape or a beating. This limits her economic autonomy.

Therefore, for a motorcycle club to employ its women, it may acquire ownership of business such as massage parlors or topless bars. Women in these clubs have several statuses and positions within the club; from ol' ladies, to mamas, sweetbutts, and broads

(Librett 2008). Ol 'ladies are women who are in long-term committed relationships, such as wives or long-term girlfriends (Quinn 1987). They are protected by a property patch that they wear.

These patches are ones that their ol' men purchase for them. Mamas are women who may be discarded ol 'ladies or close companions to male club members (Quinn 1987). They are club property and protected by the club so long as they are willing to give their services to any club member. Often they are younger than ol' ladies and cannot compete with them in the prostitution market.

Quinn (1987) continues to describe the different labels and their statuses with sweetbutts. Sweetbutts are regular sex or income partners for male outlaw bikers. Unlike ol' ladies, they are not patched and are free game for any men of clubs to interact with. Sweetbutts are not owned by the club as a unit. Rather, they associate with one or a few members at a time rather than to the unit as a whole.

Finally, Librett describes the status label of women that he terms "broads." Broads are not united with the club in the ways mamas are (Librett 2008). They may be randomly put into subjugation or abuse by anyone within the club. Since definitions of these terms originate from Quinn (1987) and Librett (2008), it is unclear whether sweetbutts and broads refer to the same type of women with altering labels. Quinn is the only one who uses the term sweetbutts while Librett is the only one who uses the term broads.

Women in these clubs often stay in relationships with men for a short period to a few years. Due to the spurious economic conditions of the club and its mobility,

relationships face several challenges. For men, it takes more work to keep a relationship going than it does to sell off one woman for another.

Quinn (1987) explains that women may escape the harsh realities of prostitution by taking jobs with law enforcement agencies as informants. They may work as clerks or receptionists that can provide information or documents for the club. Clubhouses may be put into a state of infiltration by outlaw motorcycle gangs. Rivals may rape women in the presence of those in their clubhouse who vow to protect them. The goal of the rival gangs in these situations is not to have power over women, but to show psychological dominance over men (Quinn 1987). Opponents can overpower clubhouse members and place them into a state of embarrassment.

However, not all research on women in motorcycle subculture reports their role as characterized by patriarchal submission—some highlight women's autonomy and personal agency. Glamser (2003) explains that women riders often come to learn about bikes through interactions with men. In a study of 53 women motorcycle riders, 49 of them identified spouses, boyfriends, or fathers as the person who initiated them into the culture of motorcycle riding.

For the women who ride on their own, a little less than half of them reported that it was nothing special in comparison to men who ride (Glamser 2003). They felt that they were treated equally by men and that sex had nothing to do with the experience of motorcycle riding. A little over half of the women in this study found their riding experience to be special as a woman, saying they were able to be liberated from the role of a wife or mother or caregiver when they rode. Finally, for some women, motorcycling

provided them a sense of accomplishment. Due to restrictions of height and weight, they were able to accomplish conquering a large machine that is usually only handled by men.

Hopper and Moore (1990) studied the position of women in outlaw biker gangs for 17 years. They report that women had much more freedom in sexual expression in the 1960s than they did in the 1980s. They observe that there is a shift in organizational goals of motorcycle clubs. Bikers no longer focus on sex as being something fun or for gratification. Rather, sex has transformed into something that was about status and brotherhood. If men had sex with women in certain ways, being part of a train that was pulled (a group sexual act whereby multiple members of a motorcycle club have sex with the same woman to punish her), they showed their willingness and commitment to conform and obey the club's normative rules.

According to Hopper and Moore (1990), there is a transition of the amount of freedom and control women have both over their selves and over their wages from the 1960's to the 1980's. In the 1960's women's position of power, their roles within and outside of the club, and their overall control of their selves depended on the choice of each individual male partner they had. Women could have some control over their wages and their selves if their man let them.

There is a change to this by the end of the 1980's. A transformation occurred both in the role of sex in motorcycle gangs and in the focus of motorcycle gangs' organizational structure. Before the 1980's, sex was something that biker-men participated in with women for fun or gratification. By the late 1980's, sex became a means to an end and a way for one brother to show his status off to his other brothers within the gang. As motorcycle gangs became concerned with money, they became more

complex organizations with both illegal and legal sources of income (Hopper and Moore 1990; McGuire 1986). Through this shift, women no longer joked about sex. They lost all their power and say over their selves as men became preoccupied with their organization's success. Their position was solidified as inferior to men.

Mitchell Jr. and Kubein (2009) reflect upon Kubein's experience growing up with the Hell's Angels as her surrogate family. In contrast to Hopper and Moore's study and Glamser's findings, they show exceptions to how women are treated in outlaw motorcycle clubs. Kubein describes that she was treated with respect and love by the men of the club. She details that during the beginning of the 1970's, the Hell's Angels motorcycle club endured a transformation.

They transitioned from being a club that considered respect to be one of its fundamental philosophies to putting fear and violence first. The president of the club, who was a father-figure to her, suggested she leave before she got caught in the violence. In order to escape these conditions, Kubein exited the club along with her daughter in the late seventies. She went on to pursue other interests such as the start of a gardening business.

In this study, I locate the types of power that both women and men have in the subculture of motorcycling. I attempt to understand self and identity processes in relation to motorcycling for all respondents. I ask them questions that focus on their motivations for becoming interested in motorcycles in the first place, their desires to continue motorcycling throughout their lives, and their reasons for purchasing or riding the current bikes that they do. These questions serve to locate different times in respondent's life where aspects of their self were influenced or changed.

Identification with Branding among Bikers

The devotion that individuals have to a brand name or product may result in common interactions and strong social cohesion among individuals with similar devotions. Schouten and Alexander (1995) discussed consumption activities of Harley-Davidson motorcycle owners. They discovered that individuals come together through common ethos and commitment to common values surrounding the use and consumption of particular brands and objects. Some brands, such as Harley-Davidson, are regarded so highly that they are considered religious icons by those who value and display them. Each group or member who consumes a brand or product may share the same core values and interprets them in a way that fits their life factors. For example, according to Schouten and Alexander (1995), Harley-Davidson riders value the need for personal freedom and patriotism and a sense of heritage for America.

Librett (2008) argues that when a group of individuals comes together to consume a brand or product, they organize into tribes. He discusses the similarity between outlaw biker tribes and police motorcycle tribes. He explains that police who are motorcyclists share a lot in common with the outlaw bikers. Just like outlaw bikers, police groups such as the Iron Pigs or Untouchables do charity runs, cross-country trips, or even racing. Often, when police motorcycle groups ride together in an event down the street, it is difficult to tell them apart from outlaw bikers. They wear similar clothing and use similar nicknames such as Tiny or Crash as the outlaws do. Librett, who is of the police tribe, describes one event in the Bronx where he was riding in a charity run. His group dressed and acted in a manner so close to that of outlaws that the public panicked and claimed that outlaw bikers had taken over their city.

According to Schembri (2009) and Austin (2009), other terms for this consumer culture are neo-liberal or consumer tribes. Schembri (2009) suggests that Harley-Davidson has such a powerful image and form of consumerist culture, that it even catches attention in Australia, a country outside of the United States. The image of Harley and its symbolism is produced and reproduced through the use of its bikes in outlaw clubs as a deviant image, and through those consumers that buy Harleys.

Schembri (2009) argues that customers cannot be loyal to brands on their own. Rather, they first have to be loyal to the images and symbols that these brands project. Without symbolic meaning applied to these images of brands, the brands would simply be objects without meaning. Schembri concludes that we collectively ascribe meanings to brands, who identifies with them, and then take this into consideration when choosing to represent one brand or another in public.

Austin (2009) investigates BMW riders and finds that clothing is a significant difference between these riders and other groups or tribes. She explains that like motorcycle choice, clothing is another way to show the territory or choice of brand that an individual chooses to represent. She argues that clothing can be a sign of our membership to a culture, because the way we dress may be bound with emblems or symbols of one brand over another.

We may choose to wear icons or even sport different styles of riding pants that suit different types of bikes, from sport bikes to touring bikes. If different brands produce these certain styles of bikes, we are choosing to present ourselves and what we believe in a certain way to public. She explains that what we wear is a way to describe, identify, and define ourselves to others.

Quinn (2009) agrees with Austin in that the way consumer tribes reflect their devotion to the brand is through their clothing or dress. He explains that in the 1990s, new motorcycle groups formed, such as rich urban bikers. He believes that these clubs structure their attire according to some themes seen in outlaw motorcycle groups. An example of this is when he states that "Many new Harley riders adopt aspects of the biker imagery set by club riders, such as the display of the Harley-Davidson logos in a manner reminiscent of club colors" (Quinn 2009:238). He continues to explain that this increased interest in Harley leads to TV shows and the creation of new biker organizations that are structured similar to the Harley Owners Group. Unlike motorcycle gangs who have several membership requirements, the only requirement for membership in these clubs is to own a certain brand of bike.

Finally, some research suggests that when individuals are divided over the interpretation of rituals and practices, riders will be split off into separate groups (Austin 2009, Goodall 2004; Best 2006). They will join different loyalty groups according to brands and feel scorn for those who are not a part of their group. In some loyalty groups, there are converts who attempt to reach out and bring new members into the group. New members to the group are considered a victory to these converts. Austin argues that they may become the most vocalized "two wheeled apostles of their new creed" (2009:84). Not only do these bikers transform from being riders of one brand to another, but they become spokesman and leaders to publically argue and defend their brand's status against others.

In this study, I hope to be able to expand upon the research on brand loyalty and how it relates to how motorcyclists interpret *brotherhood*. I ask questions that focus on

the type of groups that my respondents ride in, as well as who they affiliate with in their free time. I also examine whether or not they wear brand-specific clothing or apparel. These questions will serve as a starter for further discussion on why these individuals either choose to ride in groups or not ride in groups, and why they either choose/do not choose to participate in the marketing of certain motorcycle brands. Finally, I question them about how they feel about individuals who either join or do not join a particular group they ride with. Through these questions, I hope to be able to answer whether new members are considered “converts or victories” to both the individual motorcyclist and his group (Austin 2009:84). This will help to locate just how powerful branding is not only in motorcycling, but also in the ways that brotherhood is accomplished and acted out within our culture.

Self and Identity

According to Charles Horton Cooley (McIntyre 2006), a person may come to understand the self and identity is through the looking-glass self. Cooley’s theory consists of three processes: the ability to imagine how others see us, the process of internalizing the judgments others have toward us, and the creation of our own self-concept based upon how we see ourselves. This process is a reflective process consisting of past selves, present selves, and future selves. Self-concept becomes self-identity, which is how one chooses to define oneself in society.

The data for this study shall reflect a methodological schema similar to Orend and Gagne (2009). Orend and Gagne (2009) studied corporate logo tattoos and people's motivations in obtaining them. The findings of their study are that corporate or brand

tattoos are a way in which brand loyalty and self-identity may be established and portrayed to society by those wearing them. These same tattoos are also a means in which corporations and companies portray those wearing them as advertisements and commodities for their products and brands. Similarly, I wish to explore the establishment of self within the motorcycle subculture. Particularly, I plan to focus on how branding and corporate logos are adopted, interpreted, and used by those within the subculture.

Adler and Adler (1989) study how master statuses form in a college basketball team. They explain that the gloried self forms when an individual is identified by the general public as a celebrity. When an individual acquires their celebrity status, they have multiple personas; their individual self and gloried self. They have a self that the public sees and a self that is private, or away from the public's eyes. Eventually, their private or back stage self takes on elements of the public personas.

While they may initially reject the way in which the public persona takes over with celebrity status, they may in turn feel more comfortable with this new self. In order to resolve detachment from their private self to their public self, they seek a resolution. This resolution is termed the gloried self. This self desires public attention and needs to be considered a powerful or meaningful subject in society. They spend so much time dramaturgically conducting themselves in this role as a public figure that the gloried state can become their master status. Aspects of their private self are washed out by new aspects of their gloried self.

An interest of this study is to locate whether individual motorcyclist's selves take on a gloried or "anti-gloried state." Individuals who undergo the gloried self transformation may struggle to hold on to past conceptions of their self (Adler and Adler

1989). As seen in descriptions of the movie *Wild Ones* and through the transformation of the Hell's Angels during the 1970's (and Mitchell and Kubein 2009), motorcyclists are often presented as being deviants in society who are involved in crime, drugs, and violence. However, this does not necessarily mean that the image of the motorcyclist from this time period is congruent with contemporary depictions of motorcyclists from twenty-first century.

Currently, media portrayals of bikers include characterization of them as hardcore rebels, outlaws, and as deviant criminals on television in the drama *Sons of Anarchy* and in the game *Grand Theft Auto: Lost and the Damned*. I desire to determine if the gloried state can function in a state of anti-thesis. In other words, I wonder if rather than motorcyclists experiencing glory in the context of being celebrities, I wonder if they experience a gloried state in the case of being an anti-hero. An anti-hero is someone who lives outside the norms of society and is idolized for doing so due to traits or characteristics that others may relate to (Learnhub.com 2013). Seemingly, they are idolized regardless of negative actions or criminal activities that they may be involved in.

I work to answer this question, if the motorcyclist experiences an anti-glory state, by asking in interviews if individual motorcycles ever feel their participation in the act of motorcycling has been glorified by the media, or others they run into in society. By asking such questions, and perhaps even attempting to place them along a chronological timeline, I can work to locate aspects where their self-concepts have evolved or changed over time. I can also work to locate who influenced them to change or revise their concept of self.

I want to be able to answer the question whether the motorcyclist's image is commoditized and marketed not only through the institution of media, but through the ways in which bikers themselves define and understand the term *brotherhood*. I accomplish this by asking the motorcyclists if they ever wear certain brand-identifiable clothing and how this all started, as well as what they believe it means to the overall conception of *brotherhood* itself. I will also ask them what type of bikes they ride and whether or not they decorate them a particular way in order to confirm brand-identity.

Chapter 3 Research Design:

Sampling

A purposive-criterion sampling method was used to locate potential respondents for this study. Respondents were located through gate-keepers at two local Harley-Davidson dealerships, a local vintage motorcycle shop, one local Honda dealer, one local Yamaha dealer, and two riding clubs. The gate-keepers were given a poster that contained information about the study, including contact information for the researcher. The dealerships displayed the poster in their stores. I also emailed the president of two riding clubs, my own and a sister chapter. I asked if the poster I made could be posted in their monthly newsletter.

Potential respondents were Harley riders or non-Harley riders. In order to be grouped among Harley riders (1) they must have owned, rented or have owned/rented a Harley-Davidson within the last two years, (2) they must not have had any other brand of motorcycle other than Harley-Davidson as their primary ride in the last two years, and (3) their motorcycles must have contained enough Harley-Davidson manufactured parts to be recognizable as a model that Harley-Davidson manufactured since its original inception in 1903.

The following criteria was used to define non-Harley riders: (1) they must own, rent or have owned/rented a non-Harley-Davidson motorcycle within the last two years, (2) they must not have had a Harley-Davidson as their primary ride in the past two years, and (3) their motorcycles must not have contained enough Harley-Davidson originally

manufactured parts to be instantly recognizable as a model that Harley has manufactured since its original inception in 1903. Once ten individuals were recruited in each group (Harley and non-Harley), the recruitment process ended.

Data Collection

The data for this was collected through twenty semi-structured interviews and through observations collected while I visited motorcycle shops/dealerships and motorcycle events in the area. Ten interviews were conducted with Harley owners, riders, or renters. Eleven interviews were conducted with non-Harley owners, riders, or renters. Interviews took place at a place chosen by the respondent. The interviews lasted on average between a half-hour to an hour.

A grounded qualitative methodology (Charmaz 2006; Glasser and Straus 1967) was used, whereby information collected throughout the interview process was used to code the data, and allow reflection on my interview guide and question focus. In the event I noticed that a particular theme was discussed often in later interviews but was not acknowledged with earlier cases, I conducted post-interviews. I contacted respondents who were interviewed at the beginning of the study to see if they were available for a follow-up interview. The themes that were left out in these interviews became a topic of the post-interviews. This allowed me to obtain data about these themes from all respondents rather than from just a few. Collection of data for this study was completed once ten interviews were obtained in each category, for a goal of twenty interviews total. Due to the amount of interest received for interviews, eleven interviews were conducted for non-Harley Davidson riders.

Like Orend and Gagne (2009), I conducted my data collection through a combination of ethnographic observation and twenty semi-structured interviews. While interviews took place, ethnographic observation that detailed the surroundings were documented in field notes. Data was also collected through ethnographic field notes that I made in the field when attending motorcycle events or visiting motorcycle shops or dealerships in the area.

Field notes were used to describe and explain the environment in which these two groups of motorcyclists embrace. I expected to describe in these notes the type of people bikers communicate with, the objects of value they surrounded themselves with, and even sights and sounds that proved qualitatively significant to how these individuals interact in their own social environment. Field observations were also be used to enhance topics and suggestions made in interviews in order to provide a sociological perspective on motorcycle brotherhood culture.

Research Questions

The interview guide used in this study included demographic questions, such as the brand a respondent drives as their primary vehicle. I also included questions that focus on the narrative history of where and how each respondent first constructed or identified with the meaning of motorcycle *brotherhood*. This included the decision-making process they used to either create their own definition of *brotherhood* or to use others' definitions for themselves.

Toward the end of the interview, questions surrounded the social acceptability of Harley -Davidson and non-Harley -Davidson bikes and whether or not the subjects had owned multiple different brands of bikes, or if they have remained loyal to just one brand over their riding careers. I asked these questions in order to see why motorcyclists may switch over time. I focused on discovering whether it was because of restraints on financial resources, peer pressure, or other factors. Following these questions, I focused further inquiries on whether or not the respondents wear brand-name icons or use brand-name icons to decorate their personal sphere (including their home, office, and forms of transportation), and what these brand-name icons mean to them.

In this study I hoped to be able to expand upon brand loyalty and how it related to how motorcyclists interpret *brotherhood*. I asked questions that focused on the type of groups that my respondents rode in, as well as who they affiliated with in their free time. I also asked whether or not they wore brand-specific clothing or apparel. These questions served as a starter for further discussion on why these individuals either chose to ride in groups or not ride in groups, and for why they either chose/did not chose to participate in the marketing of certain motorcycle brands. Finally, I asked them how they felt about individuals who either joined or did not join a particular group they rode with. Through this question, I hoped to be able to answer whether new members were considered “converts, or victories” to both the individual motorcyclist and his group (Austin 2009:84). This helped locate just how powerful branding is not only in motorcycling, but toward the way that brotherhood is accomplished and acted out in society.

Data Analysis

The Interview Process:

I wrote memos before I went into the field in order to document any thoughts and potential research bias I felt before I met the respondent. I recorded field notes during the interview only if the respondent requested for a recorder to be absent, as I did not want to take away from the interview by jotting down notes instead of focusing intently on the conversation. I planned to record my field notes immediately after leaving the field, documenting all thoughts, sights, sounds, feelings, and actions that occurred during the interview.

The Analysis Process

This was conducted using a grounded theory (Charmaz 1990) where data analysis occurred throughout the study. After each interview, I conducted the following process to analyze and interpret the data: (1) transcribing, (2) coding, and (3) memoing. I transcribed the data in full. After the transcription was completed, the audio recording was destroyed. The transcription process included any and all pauses and speech impediments. These were included in the transcript in case they provided potential significant meanings or emotions.

After the data was transcribed it was coded. I coding initially line by line for the first few interviews and eventually progress to focused coding using the Nvivo software program. Both the respondent's and researcher's comments were coded, so that any potential leading of questions may be documented. The codes were written in action

form. This allowed for me to take in both the context of what the respondent was thinking and what their thoughts meant to them.

Throughout the analysis process I wrote memo about any steps, thoughts, or patterns I noticed. Memoing was the process whereby I documented respondents' thoughts, observations of patterns, and areas that may have needed to be revised, added to, or removed from the interview guide (Loftland et al 2006). Memoing also took place after each interview was coded. This allowed me to connect any observations or patterns I felt were common throughout the current interview I was working on. It also allowed me to relate or connect ideas, thoughts, statements, or concepts I may have found in one interview to other ideas, thoughts, statements, or concepts discovered in previous interviews. Memos were used to categorize codes according to common themes found throughout the current interview. After these memos, a new memo was written to take the categories that have been found in one interview and add them to codes that have been discovered in all of the interviews. I have a separate folder on my hard drive for all of the coding categories that were compiled. This created a chronological time-line of memos that listed what new code categories have been added, taken away, or altered; to show how the data has shifted throughout the process of the study.

Finally, at the end of the interview process, I reviewed the chronological memos of coding categories. Using these categories I created new memos that documented which codes were altered, added, or deleted, and when this occurred. This allowed me to review both the coding process and the way in which meanings of the data have shifted. It allowed me to realign codes I reviewed and rewrite them in a way that fits how the data changed, or in ways that better fit what I believed the respondent meant. Once the data

analysis was completed, I recorded memos up until the point that working themes were fleshed out.

I took any suggestions; comments or critiques respondents suggested back to them one final time and reviewed the coding categories and chronological coding memo. I created new memos that realigned codes to fit respondent's suggestions. This process continued until both I and respondents felt the findings section memo fit the thoughts and meanings they attempted portray in their initial interview.

Protection of Human Subjects

This study posed minimal physical or professional risk to the respondents. Participation in this research was voluntary. There was a slight risk of emotional trauma related to past experiences the respondents may have experienced. However, this risk was minimal, as there were no direct questions about trauma or other emotionally-charged subjects. I identified the risks that may be associated to a participant further in Appendix A (The Informed Consent Form). Issues regarding safeguarding confidentiality are also described in more detail in Appendix A.

Chapter 4: Results – Brotherhood

An Introduction to the Biker

This research sought to describe various definitions of brotherhood. It was important to me to discover whether or not *brotherhood* is a concept specific to bikers and/or if it exists inside of the motorcycling community. The common use and term of *brotherhood* regarding bikers in the past has surrounded text that involves one-percenters, another term biker gangs refer to themselves as (Hopper and Moore 1990; Quinn 1987, Reynolds 1967; Thompson 2009). However, according to the results of this research project which follow, the types of individuals who ride have vastly changed since the early 1980's.

The dynamic of who rides motorcycles is important. It is important because the very definition of brotherhood and the context it is used in in this research project depends upon the particular social group that is in question. Without knowing just who motorcycle riders are now, there is no way to provide a concrete definition of what brotherhood is. For example, the very type of rider someone is can affect their perspective of riding, what *brotherhood* is, and their dualistic relationship with society. If the individual providing the definition of brotherhood is a hobby rider compared to the one-percenter this may change the perspective of what *brotherhood* means to the everyday biker. It may also affect how society has altered their view of “the motorcyclist” throughout the years.

In this project, grounded theory was used to locate ten Harley Davidson motorcyclists and eleven motorcyclists that ride bikes other than Harley. This approach was used in order to generate the potential for a wide-variety of participants to get involved. Other than the type of bike an individual may ride, the background and experience of the individual involved may vary. Our very life trajectory can be affected by the experiences we face throughout our life. Therefore, the hope for this project has been to include a vast variety of individuals with unique histories and stories to tell about how they got involved in motorcycling, what inspired them, why they keep riding, and most important, what *brotherhood* means to them. By providing this general overview of the motorcycling world rather than specifying whether or not they are outlaw bikers or hobby riders, I attempt to provide a composite to what *brotherhood* means to motorcyclists (regardless of their individual walk of life) today.

According to Joe, a respondent who is white, 39, and male, the perception of motorcyclists has changed over time. He states, “Hollywood had misinformation in “the 50’s and 60’s about how they [motorcyclists] are all outlaws, so everyone assumed they were, you know”. He goes on to explain that movies like *The Wild One* with Marlon Brando depicted motorcycle riots in Hollister, California as being “blown way out of proportion according to...to people that were there in other reports.” He explains that there were “just a ton of movies that came out depicting anybody on a custom bike and leather with a leather jacket has having been an outlaw.”

While the 1950’s demonstrated an era where leather meant a biker was an outlaw, this perception has changed today. George, a white male in his mid-twenties states that “Well, I think motorcycling is kind of a rebellion to myself, you know. It’s something

completely different, out of the blue.” This type of rebellion he speaks about seems to be that motorcycling in general is a rebellion. George is not rebelling against himself. While motorcycling may be a rebellious act in American culture and this is what draws him to it, he goes on to explain how things have changed throughout the years. He believes that, “I think that whole perception of Hell’s Angels and, you know, *Sons of Anarchy*, I think it’s more of a *myth* nowadays. I mean, I don’t... maybe back in, you know, like the 30’s and 40’s, you know, you got, you know, your gangs, but I think nowadays it’s... you see people wearing leather because it’s actually a safety feature to wear a leather on a motorcycle.” This shows that while there was the perception of gangs and one-percenters in the 1930’s and 1940’s, today there may be a different group of individuals who are bikers. This group consists of riders that wear leather not because leather symbolizes the status of outlaw. Rather, they wish to ride safely. George suggests, as do many of my respondents, that the idea that all bikers are outlaws is a myth rather than a fact.

It’s apparent that viewing motorcycling through the lens of outlaw bikers has changed over time. One of my respondents, Henry, a white male in his mid-eighties, discusses how he did not want to affiliate with motorcyclists in the early years when it was only teenagers riding in motordomes. He did not agree with the way they represented themselves. He thought they were too noisy and “ah, you know, they were pretty crude.” He goes on to explain that people were into noise because it was entertainment and it was exciting. He saw this attitude as something that “tended to leave something I didn’t want to be identified with or you know in the early years.”

Since the 1980’s this perception has changed. Henry states that in 1980 “there were more people in it that’s not in one particular type of application but a very broad

spectrum of humanity representing.” This seems to imply that the type of motorcyclist and the type of motorcycling available has changed since the early years when Henry did not want to ride. Rather than only representing teenagers in motordomes, there is a much larger and more general group of individuals who ride now. This has not only changed the demographics of who rides, but has encouraged for more individuals who may otherwise have been hesitant to get involved.

Brotherhood, an Introduction

Through data analysis, two major perspectives on *brotherhood* emerged, respondent’s definition of *brotherhood* and their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives about what happens when a biker gets stranded. While these were separate viewpoints expressed by the respondents, a common thread ties them together. I first address this unified relation between these two concepts. I will then explore the definition of *brotherhood* and respondent’s thoughts, feelings, perspectives about what happens when bikers get stranded below.

Defining Brotherhood

There are several different ideas of what *brotherhood* means to motorcyclists. Respondents explained their conceptions of *brotherhood* using several different themes in which I will address in the following section of this chapter. I grouped these themes based upon how often they were expressed by respondents. A theme is listed here only if it was expressed by two or more respondents. The themes are as follows:

1. A biker is a biker no matter what brand of bike s/he rides (12 of 21 respondents)

2. Shared or similar interests (14 of 21 interviews)
3. Good friendship (3 of 21 interviews)
4. Fellowship (8 of 21 interviews)
5. It is shared between anyone no matter their walk of life (3 of 21 interviews)
6. A group that is like family (2 of 21 interviews)
7. It's similar to the experience that exists between soldiers in the military (3 of 21 interviews)
8. It exists because it brings motorcyclists together (2 of 21 interviews)
9. Consists of language and values that are commonly used by motorcyclists (6 of 21 interviews)
10. You don't get it if you have to explain it (6 of 21 interviews)
11. It is complex with multiple levels and different forms (7 of 21 interviews)

With the eleven themes I have listed above I will demonstrate the multiple ways that respondents expressed what *brotherhood* means to them. Combined together these themes demonstrate a collective definition of how these respondents define *brotherhood* and how it relates to motorcycling. While some themes were expressed in more interviews than others, they each have something unique to say about brotherhood. I will start with why bikers feel it is more important to focus energy on helping someone because they ride rather than because of the brand of bike they ride. I conclude with explaining why defining brotherhood is complicated and how it can exist in several different forms or layers. This shows why it has been important to gather a collective definition of *brotherhood*. In order to understand why people ride and interact with one another the way they do it is important to peel back the layer of how and why they communicate with one another the way they do within their own subculture.

A Biker is a Biker No Matter What He Rides and Shared Interests

The idea that a biker is a biker no matter what he rides was described by 12 out of 21 respondents in this project. This means that 57.14% of participants believed that it did

not matter what type of bike a motorcyclist road. Rather, the very idea that they rode and participated in motorcycling is what made them a fellow brother.

Joshua, a Caucasian male in his sixties, states that it does not matter what type of motorcycle someone is riding when you see a fellow motorcyclist pulled over at the side of the road. Rather, “Real bike riders don’t care what you’re riding, they’ll just go ahead and see you riding something you know... You know, people will go, ‘Yah, there’s kinds of bikes out here, whatever you like to ride, you know.’ Long as you’re riding that’s all that counts.” This seems to infer that in order to be a real biker a motorcyclist should not care about what someone else rides. Rather, to show *brotherhood* is to accept that someone participates in the same activity as you do. They share an equal status because they, like you, are also a biker. This same feeling is also shared by Chloe, a Caucasian female in her mid-forties.

Q: Okay. (pause) Does that also go with the definition of brotherhood, or...?

Chloe: Yeah. To me, brotherhood has nothing to do with what kind of bike you ride.

Q: Okay.

Chloe: It’s just people that are passionate about riding, whatever brand they’re... they’re comfortable with or whatever.

This shows that the passion behind riding is the experience that is shared between motorcyclists. Therefore, it is not only that motorcyclists participate in the same *activity* that brings them together and causes them to call each other brothers. Rather, it is because they share the same *passion* for the activity they participate in that makes them brothers. They share the same interest and the same appreciation for this interest.

Clara, a Caucasian woman in her thirties, shows that there is more than a shared-passion that causes motorcyclists to be brothers. Rather, she explains that it is an idea of safety that brings motorcyclists together. She believes that “all motorcyclists understand

that they're somewhat in the category by themselves and that they're riding a vehicle without any, uh, walls on it and that you need to protect each other and yourself." This shows that not only is passion important for bringing people together as brothers, but the need for safety facilitates this shared identity as well. By appreciating the dangerousness that exists within motorcycling, motorcyclists can share an appreciation of the risk of their art together. They can appreciate that they do not have walls or four doors like a car to be protected from the elements. Their participation in this dangerous activity is exclusive. They need to respect the risk of motorcycling as well as protect themselves and others who participate in the same activity as them.

Maddog, a fifty-five year old Caucasian male provides an exception to this idea. He believes that it does not matter that you have a motorcycle. He states that some people "buy a Harley then they're like a biker all of a sudden. You know, trying to be all badass. It's not about the bike it's about the person who's on it you know." This shows that his perception is about the passion of riding. Just because someone owns a bike does not make them a real biker and does not define brotherhood. To him, *brotherhood* is about the people who ride and the passion they have for motorcycling. It is not about whether they do or do not possess a bike. The discussion about what constitutes a real biker shall be discussed later, but this gives an early highlight into the subject.

Good Friendship, Family, and Fellowship

Friendship and fellowship are two other areas that respondents mentioned when asked what their definition of *brotherhood* was. Fellowship is not being used to refer to a religious association or specific people that I interviewed. Rather, friendship and

fellowship are simply what some like Paige, a Caucasian female in her fifties refer to as “camaraderie.” For others like Alex, a mid-thirties Caucasian male from Britain, this camaraderie can be seen through “a close knit group with a common interest.”

Brotherhood can also take on the position of a person’s family. As Joe, a Caucasian male in his forties describes, “They’re the ones that will show up at my mom’s funeral when she does [pass]. You know what I mean? They’re the ones that will back you up when the chips are down, and, uh, it’s about motorcycling, but it’s not about motorcycling, if that makes any sense.” Therefore, motorcyclists take on the role of a family. They show up during important life events. They support each one morally. They connect to one another through the act of motorcycling but their relationship to one another is much more complicated than that.

Ted, a Caucasian male in his fifties is a great example of how motorcyclists spend time together and participate in other activities than motorcycling. He also believes that *brotherhood* is related to friendship. However, it is not friendship limited to riding. He explains that “we’ve partied together, we’ve, ah probably played cards together and you’d just go out and have a good afternoon or a good night of riding.” This shows that while he and his fellow motorcycle friends did ride together, they spent time together in other activities that firms their relationship with one another as well. They did not have to motorcycle with one another just to have fun or be friends. The motorcycle itself was just one element of their friendship.

Paige represents an additional example of how other activities brings motorcyclists together than riding itself. For her, being involved in Alcoholics Anonymous is a part of motorcycling. When asked what *brotherhood* was to her, she

immediately said “Fellowship.” She also tied *brotherhood* to the meaning behind the symbol of the AA patch that she wears on her vest. She explained that “People that are in the program, people that are in AA or NA know what that symbol [the patch] is. You know, it’s like it draws you together, you know.”

Paige suggests that her affiliation with AA draws people together because “they understand who one another is” and they are “going to connect with other sober people” or will have people ask about it [the patch] in order to acquire an understanding of who they are. Her patch allows her to acquire kinship with similar or likeminded people in society and/or for others in society to acquire an understanding about how she proclaims her self to be (an understanding they acquire when they ask about her patch). Similar kinships can be seen through the logos or brands a person may wear and the kinship/socialization they engage in because of these logos and brands (ex. Tom and Clara as seen in the logo/branding chapter of this document).

Kyden, a white Caucasian male in his late forties traveled on his motorcycle a lot during his younger years. Often, he would not know where he would sleep from one night to the next. The people that he rode with “Kinda stepped together and they were kinda like in the way of, you know, I don’t know, I guess you could say like in the family-type unit even though they weren’t immediate family and since my parents divorced when I was young.” Since he never had a sister or a brother, the family unit-structure became appealing. While he was a quiet person it was not hard for him to get accepted by the group or to meet strangers and soon make friends with them.

In addition to seeing family as a unit of brotherhood, there is an additional piece that Kyden believes is important. He believes that *brotherhood* and family is also about

trust. “It’s a, it’s a trust you know, trust and to be able to share with people, you know, things about you and about your life that maybe you’re not comfortable sharing with others. And just ugh, you know, being...friends and being family even though you’re not, you know that you’re not blood related.” So while motorcyclists may not be blood-related they still trust each other and treat each other like family. This would also align with Hailey, a Caucasian woman in her mid to late thirties, who comments on the bonds of brotherhood. While interviewing her she candidly stated that she used to be a member in a motorcycle club. And that, “for a little while and, you know, it’s like a second family, you know, and you all get together because you all like to ride, but it’s... It’s hard to explain but it’s like having a second family.” Therefore, *brotherhood* can also serve as an extension or an addition to the family someone may already have.

For some individuals like Ben, a Caucasian male in his thirties, the aspect of friendship is important to their everyday lives. To him, the motorcycle group that he has created, Zerogravity, is not only his baby, but also where all of his memories and his social friendships/relationships are formed. He explains that

“since, you know, it got goin’ it has been a part of my life. Every friend I have that rides motorcycles is a part of ZeroGravity. Everybody I hang out with is part of ZeroGravity. All the people I meet, um, all the things I do, all the memories that I have, uh, are in more or less one way or another related to ZeroGravity. Um, yeah. I mean I just every day, somehow I’m connected to it.”

This shows that the *brotherhood* for him is connected to friendship. However, this friendship is connected to a particular group of riders he chooses to affiliate with. He does not have to limit his connections to only this particular riding group, but he does. This shows that while friendship is important, that friendship to him has certain perimeters that surround it. These perimeters are that those he associates with have to be

a part of a certain group, attend activities with that group, and create memories for him as individuals with that group. This shows that while *brotherhood* relates to friendship, this friendship is not always open to a broad and general group of motorcyclists like George related to earlier.

While Ben's group is always expanding, changing, evolving, etc. his quote shows that those friendships he makes are still connected to the group. While a friend or relation he makes in his life may not necessarily be a member of ZeroGravity he may have met them because of some event or happenstance in his life that goes back to the group. This relates to his motorcycling life. However, one area Ben does not comment on is his professional life and the social relationships he makes at work or throughout his career. Therefore, it is not known whether his limitation to making friends, having memories, and meeting new people is really limited to just ZeroGravity. He may have made this comment in the interview because he was only thinking about ZeroGravity or motorcycling culture (and not his professional life) at the time.

While having a motorcycle can be a starting point for relationships, it's about more than owning a bike or relating to other riders and their interest for riding. than the passion for riding. It is about having a stable support and security network to fall back on; those relationships bikers can fall back on through thick and the thin.

Another important consideration is the gendered use of the term brotherhood. Clara agrees with the idea that *brotherhood* is about friendship and family. However, she clarifies that '*brotherhood*' is for women, too, by stating, "I would say there's a same thing except we're all girls. Then we're gonna call it sisterhood. It's the same thing. It's still being the family." This statement shows that she agrees with the idea of family being

connected to brotherhood. However, she believes that *brotherhood* does not have to be a masculine-specific term. Women can also share in a type of “brotherhood,” without the brothers involved. They can share in a family structure called sisterhood. While Clara may self-define and describe *brotherhood* as for everyone, and she and her friends may adapt the term “sisterhood” when riding with other women, the term ‘*brotherhood*’ still prevails as the dominant terminology for the bond between bikers. I further explore such gendered implications of riding and ‘brotherhood’ in chapter five.

Three of my respondents served in the military. Of these three, two reflected upon connections between the military and their ideas of brotherhood. David, a sixty year old Caucasian male explained that in his division, the Airborne, they had their “own unique *brotherhood*. Uhm, we have a common bond, so to me, the motorcycle is just an extension, uhm, you know of the bond that I’ve developed.” To him, the motorcycle was just another place where he experienced brotherhood. He did not necessarily ride with everyone he served with in the Airborne’s, but he did feel the same kind of connection to other motorcyclists as he did with fellow airmen in the military. David’s understanding of brotherhood relates to Louis’. Louis, a fifty-four year old Caucasian male states that “I was in the Marine Corps, okay, that’s brotherhood. Um, I was asked to prospect for you know National Cubs and it takes brotherhood.”

For both David and Louis they were able to feel *brotherhood* across several different groups in addition to motorcycling. The military served as a significant organization that influenced their understanding of what the values and expectations of brotherhood are. This shows that either their experience in the military created their idea of what *brotherhood* is or had an impact on what it means to them now. Having been in

the military has somehow impacted how they relate to other motorcyclists (like their fellow servicemen) and how or why they deem them to be brothers or sisters.

One theme that was brought up by six respondents was how motorcycling brought people closer together with friends they already had, or allowed them to make new friends. Alex, Ben, Paige, and Joe have all met people that have become friends because they motorcycle. They each stated that the experience is unique, and “if you have to explain it, you don’t get it.” In other words, it is an intangible feeling that comes with being connected to others, and if you haven’t felt that connection, you are not a legitimate member of the culture. Kyden elaborates, stating that when you share the same interest or passion you “go [to] the same place, you see the same things, and you feel the same thing.” You essentially share the same experience and feel the same way about it.

Joe goes on to elaborate more about how powerful the connection is between motorcycles and his friends. He states, “Somehow the motorcycle just ties us together... We spend more time together because we have motorcycles you know, because if I didn’t have a motorcycle all the time that we were riding, I wouldn’t be spending time with them.” This shows that motorcycling is important enough that without them, some people would not continue friendships they already had. Motorcyclists may not even have some of these friendships if it wasn’t for the shared appreciation for the sport that brought them together in the first place.

I have just demonstrated themes that were shared by multiple respondents in the interviews I had with them. These eleven themes showed the different yet unique aspects of how brotherhood ties into motorcycling. While *brotherhood* exists for some in multiple aspects of their life from the scouts, military, to motorcycling to others it exists

when you help out your fellow motorcyclists regardless of the brand of bike they ride. Others feel that motorcyclists cement relationships that they already had because they spend more time with their friends than they otherwise would have.

Regardless, of the way that motorcyclists felt brotherhood was shared it remains that it was shared in multiple ways. Brotherhood is a complex topic that exists in multiple situations and can be shown in multiple ways. The collective definition of *brotherhood* cannot be pinpointed to only one situation or experience where “brotherhood” was shared. Rather it is through a collection of insights and themes that brotherhood has been described and defined by these respondents. Now that I have reviewed the collective definition of brotherhood based upon reflections by my respondents I shall next discuss the symbols, gestures, and meanings that are collectively shared by them.

Shared Values and Shared Language

Motorcyclists also share similar symbols, gestures, values and use of language with one another. They share values that may be similar to what Chloe feels or experiences. Within her riding group of professionals there is “a medical person, an attorney, and a banker” and not a single outlaw. The similar values may be morals that they share. Henry believes that this may be “a degree of respectability and not being a nuisance to anybody else, you know, while we’re riding.” Finally, Maddog commented that some of the shared values are that motorcyclists can “just put down their drama from work [and drama] in other’s lives and just enjoy.”

Shared language can be experienced in the appreciation for the motorcycle as a machine. Tom, a retired Caucasian male in his seventies finds kinship with those that

“have a shared vocabulary and a shared knowledge of the motorcycling industry over the years.” These individuals ride and work [on fixing bikes], and they have an “understanding of the machine.” Sharing the same language may also come in the appreciation of an organization someone rides in. They may take part in buying merchandise and in representing and appropriating the symbols associated with biking. As Ben explains, “People want to support and promote and represent ZeroGravity um, every chance they get.” They have a hand in the type of merchandise that is available for the group and they make the organization what it is together. The organization “belongs to everybody.”

In Summary

The everyday biker is not the one-percenter (outlaw motorcycle gang member). They are also not always a weekend warrior either that only sees their bike when they are on vacation from work. Rather, they are a diverse group of people who have an appreciation for the same art. This art is just on two wheels instead of four.

Those who ride can be commercial bankers, sports bike riders, or bikers who appreciate old classic bikes the most because they are nostalgic and represent the history of the sport. They exist in as Cherish, a Caucasian woman in her mid to late forties explains, “People that ride— I find that if you talk with them, they are from every walk of life.” What separates them from the one-percenter is that according to Clara, the type of brotherhood one-percenters share is “a tighter *brotherhood* because they would um, do illegal things because of their brotherhood. Where we, not being on that side [of biking], would do a lot of things for somebody but probably not commit a crime.” The type of

everyday brotherhood compared to one-percenter brotherhood is not as tight. The type of *brotherhood* everyday bikers share is concerned with what is right or wrong. The type of brotherhood one percenters share is not about whether something is right and wrong. Rather it's about the feeling of family they have with their brothers. They will always "back you up and help you."

Breaking Down While Riding a Motorcycle and Brotherhood

When asked about how brotherhood relates to motorcycle break downs on the road, 19 of 21, or 90.48% of respondents commented on was in reference to what happens when a motorcyclist breaks down on the side of the road. This subject relates to the idea that a biker is a biker because no matter what brand or type of bike they ride, you should stop to help them if they are in trouble. I have broken down the general perspectives or norms/obligations associated with breakdowns offered by my respondents into categories below:

- Bikers stop more than cars
- The effect of cell phones on aid
- Faith someone will stop
- Biker Code to Stop
- The effect of Roadside assistance
- Have or would have a friend or riding group stop
- They have stopped themselves

Bikers Stop More than Cars

Out of my interviews, four respondents mentioned that they believed motorcycles would stop more often to help a fellow biker in need than a car would. These four were

Ben, Chloe, Hailey, and Louis. Hailey even went on to explain that she ended up in the ditch while driving a company truck one time. She “But, uh, you know, it’s just you know, I’ve been lying on the ground and nobody ever stopped, ever. But, uh, you know, if...somebody always stops with a motorcycle.” In agreement with Hailey’s statement, Ben states that “in cars you know that aren’t motorcycle riders driving by and they don’t stop...If you are a motorcycle rider and you come across somebody that’s, that’s broken down on the side of the road,...I think the majority of motorcycle riders stop.” This shows that motorcyclists look out for one another in situations where they need help. It does not matter what kind of bike they ride.

It does not matter what kind of bike they ride because all motorcyclists identify as riders. They do not identify as someone else when they get onto their bike and ride. They share a commitment to one another. Part of motorcycling culture is to follow a norm of reciprocity, whereby if one biker is broken down another will stop to help him/her and vice versa; you will stop to help someone if you need it. In another sense, to be a motorcyclist is to be a brother. You participate in brotherhood so long as you follow the expectations of the subculture. In this case, you participate in brotherhood so long as you stop when someone breaks down or someone stops to help you if you break down. As long as a person follows the rules and expectations of motorcycling they will not be questioned or second-guessed. Rather, they may very well be considered brothers and sisters because they choose not to act outside of the expected norms of motorcycling society.

Being or identifying as a rider means that a biker shares a commitment to helping other bikers out as well as agreeing to follow the norms/expectations of the sport. In

addition a biker must also agree to hold others up to the same standard they have been held to. It is a reciprocal relationship of commitment to helping other bikers and to following as well as upholding the norms of the subculture.

The Effect of Cell Phones on Aid and Faith Someone Will Stop

With the rapid expansion of communication and technology in our postmodern day culture some suggest that cell phones detract from face to face communication. While discussing brotherhood with my respondents, the impact of cell phones on *brotherhood* construction was mentioned by many of them. While some individuals like Chloe and Joshua explained that if they were broke down they would merely call for help, others looked at cell phones differently. For Chloe and Joshua they did not need to rely on the ties of brotherhood or the code of the rider (that someone would eventually stop to help them) to get out of their situation. Rather, through technology and not through social connections they were able to get out of their situations.

Kyden, who is a truck driver by trade, does not get to motorcycle as much as he would like to. However, he still takes the ethos of brotherhood with him on the road. If he sees someone stranded who he cannot stop to help due to his schedule he

“will use the phone and call the, you know, the local 911 number and give ‘em the location and, and give ‘em a description and if it hasn’t been called in then you know, they get somebody out there....It’s not the same as stopping as the face-to-face communication as it was in the past.”

Kyden is suggesting that helping another rider or brother hasn’t stopped; instead, it has been transformed through technology. Where it was once only possible to lend a hand personally, he can now do so in other ways. Maddog also agrees that cell phones have not detracted from aspects of *brotherhood*, rather, they have added a sense of safety.

He explains that “You’re not just stranded out there at the mercy of whoever comes along you know.”

Paige, Chloe, Vaughn (a Caucasian male in his mid-sixties,) and Kyden all believed that somebody would stop to help them out. They did not have any doubt that someone would and hoped that someone nearby would assist them if they broke down. Some were rather confident in how they stated this, such as Vaughn who replied “It seems like everybody will pull over and see what the...what the problem is you know, do you need help in any way?” Paige also states this with little to no second thoughts about whether someone would show up or not. She states simply that “Yeah, there’s always somebody out there.” This shows that while cell phones may limit some face-to-face communication, most riders believe brotherhood still exists when you’re stranded on the side of the road. They believe that even if there is technology like cell phones their needs will still be met. Since most people nowadays have cell phones no one would have to stop to help them, however because they still do this is a sign that brotherhood and what it represents still exists.

Biker Code to Stop

Brad, a white Caucasian male in his fifties, describes stopping to help out a fellow brother in need as “somewhat of an unwritten rule that a bike will always stop and help a biker.” Joe explains that he felt a true biker was someone that “looked after every biker, regardless of what they ride...I’ve heard a lot of times they say it doesn’t matter what you’re riding as long as you’re riding, you know.” Sometimes a part of breaking down is just to have someone to talk to. Both Clara and Paige reflected upon how important it was

to have someone to chat with while their bikes were broken down. Clara says that it is important “just to have somebody else sitting there with you while you’re waiting so you’re not waiting alone” and Paige exclaims that “nobody wants to sit outside on their own by themselves.”

This demonstrates a social aspect of breaking down. While it is a biker code to stop and help someone in need, an added benefit is that the person who stops to help you understands the predicament you are in. They most likely ride a motorcycle too and will share in communication or socializing with you. While most bikers believed that brotherhood still exists today, Alex reflects on how it does not. Alex believes that this biker code and appreciation for one another existed at least thirty years ago. A friend of his has commented on how “bikers always used to stop for each other.”

While Alex uses his friend’s quote to affirm his own belief that bikers no longer stop, he is but one perspective. Others such as Paige, Vaughn, and Chloe all have reflections about the biker code to stop. Alex’s perspective that the biker code and brotherhood has disintegrated over time may just be an exception to the rule (that brotherhood and the biker code still exists). However, the rule that bikers will still stop and that brotherhood still exists still exists through the projected realities of bikers other than Alex.

The Effect of Roadside Assistance

Similarly to the idea of cell phones, roadside assistance is another subject I questioned the respondents about. I wanted to know whether roadside assistance affected their interpretation of *brotherhood* and the biker code to stop and help somebody. Out of

21, nine (42.87%) have stated that they have had roadside assistance at some point such as membership to AAA or Progressive Roadside Assistance but have never used it. Four (19.05%) have stated that they do not nor have they have had it before.

Those that have had roadside assistance have gotten it as part of a deal for joining organizations like Abate, the Goldwing Riders Association, and the American Motorcycle Association. Chloe also had roadside assistance as it was one of the perks that came with the purchase of her new bike until it was two to three years old. Clara actually had three roadside assistances as she was a member of AAA, the AMA, and with the Goldwing Riders Association. She dropped AAA as they did not travel as far of a distance to help you as the other choices would. Finally, when asked whether or not he had roadside assistance Ben proudly exclaimed, “Nope. I’ve got a whole bunch of kinds of pick-up trucks and trailers.”

This shows that for some they would rather use their own equipment to haul their bikes home. For others, they may use cell phones to call for assistance. And finally, even more so dependence on friends or riding groups may get most out of predicaments they get into.

Have or Would have a Friend or Riding Group Stop

Out of the twenty-one who were interviewed, ten (47.62%) stated that they have had or would rely on a friend or riding group to help them get out of a predicament. Brad describes that “two years ago we learned to take the CMA, when you’ve got any problem, you’ve got a whole list of brothers and sisters in Christ that you’d call. And not that they directly will help you but they can contact somebody that’s close by that will.”

The expectation for brothers to help brothers or sisters to help sisters could be related to the philosophy of the religious organization Brad rides for. Otherwise, it also shows that Brad and his wife have learned it is important to network within their riding group. By networking they have been able to find assistance to get back on the road before. Clara explains that having someone with you is important because “having that, that buddy there is still part of brotherhood and um, showing that you care.” This shows that it is important to ride with someone or to be able to rely on a friend. They act as a support network and show brotherhood through helping each other out.

Not everyone has had quite a positive outlook on being able to rely on the biker code to help them out of predicaments. Mabel, a fifty year old Caucasian woman describes a time when she skidded with her bike after hitting a speed pump in a parking lot. Her kickstand would not stay up and the springs were knocked off. She ended up dropping it and could not ride it like that. She stayed outside the whole time while her husband “went off to get pliers or something.” As she waited, visible to the road, no one stopped. While this was not a public highway, her account highlights that no one stopped to help her. She had her husband there to assist her, but he could not be there as moral support as he had to go off and buy the tools to help her. It seems that there is an expectation behind the biker code to stop. Motorcyclists expect others of their trade to assist them when they break down. If no one stops this seems to go against the standard moral code to help out your brother.

They Have Stopped Themselves

Since I was interested in seeing how bikers felt about stopping to help one another

out, I also wanted to know how many of them have stopped before or would stop to help someone out. Out of 21 interviewed, 7 (33.33%) stated that they have stopped before or would stop. Clara states that if she saw somebody stranded “and they looked like they needed help, [she] would stop. But even without knowing” more about the stranger and their situation, she would assist them because she has a cell phone which she “could do something with.”

This shows that even though she may not know the entire story she is still willing to stop and provide some sort of assistance to a stranded biker. Maddog was in South Dakota when he noticed a guy stranded on the side of the road. This man was out of gas and it was in an area of the state where there was a large gap between gas stations. Therefore, in order to help, he “unhooked my gas line and we drug out the water bottle and got him enough gas to get him to the gas station. It’s just— it’s just things you do.” This shows that it’s not really questionable whether you would stop or not. He felt that he stopped because he had to. It was an obligation, not a question.

This shows that stopping is a cultural norm in motorcycling. When it is broken, motorcyclists like Mabel are left wondering why they did not receive assistance. Others, like Maddog, do not even second guess whether or not they should stop to help someone out. They stop because they felt it was the thing to do and that they are performing in accordance with group norms. It seems to stand as a tradition and when this tradition is broken it because a taboo for everyone involved. Therefore, it would seem that this tradition is a symbolic representation of *brotherhood*. It is a symbolic illustration of what is considered a *normal* activity associated with brotherhood (stopping to assist), and what is not (not stopping). This is but one example of the deep yet inherent beliefs, feelings,

and emotions that exist within the motorcycling subculture. I further explore norms regarding logos, color, and self in relation to branding in chapter six.

Summary

While motorcyclists may be diverse in their appearance and background, it is apparent that they share similar values. One of these values is their appreciation for the biker code. It is a code to stop for someone that has broken down. When this code is violated, a biker may ponder why they were not helped. It may be because they break down in a parking lot that is not a public highway. Or it may be that no one is there to help them and they have to help themselves. No matter the particular situation, at least 33% of those interviewed for this project have stated they have stopped or would stop to help someone. While 42.87% have had roadside assistance at some point in their riding careers, none of them have had to use it. This shows that while roadside assistance may be useful and offer piece of mind, most bikers rely on other means to get back on the road. After all, nearly half of my respondents stated that if they ran into trouble on the road they would depend on someone they know whether to get out of the situation.

Chapter 5: Results – Gender

Gender as a topic is both controversial yet enlightening. It presents its own challenges and social battles in society and with certain groups in society. Gender is also a topic for discussion to consider when reviewing motorcycle culture and the people that make up it. It was my challenge going into this project to see how gender was either conducted or demonstrated, in their everyday lives, by those I interviewed. I wanted to see if gender had an effect on how motorcyclists treat one another and how identities of motorcyclists are formed.

Gender can be viewed as a social structure (Lorber 1994, Martin 2004); a product of social interaction (West and Zimmerman 1987); and as a configuration of practice (Connell 2005). In this paper, I examine gender dynamics as they are experienced by men and women within contemporary motorcycling culture. As mentioned above, women's previous roles in biking culture included prostitution (Quinn 1987), sexual gratification for men, and as objects of conquest conferring status and power onto men within biking gangs (Hopper and Moore 1990). Just as the women's movement has changed the roles and opportunities available for women from the 1960s into the twenty-first century, gender dynamics have also changed within motorcycling culture over the years.

In the following sections I shall discuss how there is still a strong masculine influence in motorcycling. Men believe that their interests must be shared by potential dating partners, and some wish their current partners would provide support for their interest in riding if they currently do not. Even though strides have been made to allow

women more access to gear and accessories that suite them, there is still some room for improvement. According to the Motorcycling Industry Council (2009), the number of women motorcycle riders has increased to 12.3 percent since. Even though the number of women in motorcycling has increased, overall the following evidence is an example of how it is still a masculine-dominated discipline.

Men View Their Interest in Riding as a "Deal Breaker"

There is a rather patriarchal point of view that men's interests matter when it comes to dating or relationships in biker subculture. One of my respondents, Ben, actually saw it is a deal breaker in dating if a woman would not ride on the back of his bike at least sometimes or have an interest in motorcycling. He states that, "Because riding is just such a big part of my life and ZeroGravity is such a big part of my life, um, it just doesn't work. They have to have some, some interest in riding, whether it's their own or on the back, you know, it doesn't matter." Ben is but one example of how men feel about women

It may be normal for people who are dating to want to share the same interests and passions as one another. However, in the case of Ben, if a woman does not show an interest in riding whatsoever then he will not date her. What is missing here is what the woman's interests are that he may be dating. Ben states quite clearly what his guidelines and preferences for dating are: that a woman must share his interests in riding. What he does not do is mention concern for what a woman may feel or what her interests may be. He does not show a reciprocal interest in doing for the woman what she may do for her. He does not explain how he would try to partake in or enjoy her interests.

Ben is not the only respondent who commented on having common interests or experiences with women. Rather, Vaughn also did. In Vaughn's case he is married to a woman that does not care for motorcycling. He complains about how he spends a whole day out riding and his wife will kick him out for not being at home. According to him his wife "can actually laugh (about throwing him out). [She] wouldn't even get on a motorcycle." Vaughn seems genuinely frustrated because he does not know how he can share the experience with his wife when she is not interested. If he tries to share the experience with his partner she either laughs or passes his interest off with a "Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Right."

Kate seems to share a similar experience as Vaughn. She can relate with him because she has felt the same experience with her own boyfriend. She details how her boyfriend is missing out of the experience and states he does not get what she is talking about. This is because he has yet to "go on the same, you know... go on the same place, you see the same things, and you feel the same thing" as she has. He has not experienced her passion and her experience motorcycling. Since Vaughn and Kate do not have mates that share their experience like Kate says, they are not able to feel the same things with their mates. Rather, perhaps one way of dealing with this disconnection is for these riders to spend time with more people who are like them. Vaughn spends a lot of time riding with ZeroGravity and with like-minded people. He and others who are potentially in the same boat as him may do this so they feel accepted and appreciated rather than left out or ignored.

Maddog and Adam are two more motorcyclists who I interviewed for this project that experienced the same thing as Vaughn and Kate. Maddog "was married for almost

twenty-six years." He owns a bar because he "was gonna buy it before when [he] was married." Since his wife did not like that idea it seems they split up and he bought the bar anyway. While he was married for a really long time his comment seems to show he cares more about riding than being married or the interests of his wife. His interests in having a bar and being surrounded by the motorcycle social crowd were more important than being married to her. However, his comment is rather short and is only one statement about his marriage. There could have been other reasons why they broke up that were not brought up in the interview.

Adam's wife is not interested in motorcycle events unless they are local. He explains that this is because of safety. He explains that his parents were worried about him riding as well because they both know people who had crashed or been killed on motorcycles. His wife seems to share the same type of feelings as his parents because she "doesn't want [his] son to ride." While a lot of women are into the social side of motorcycling it would seem his wife is not. She does not want his son to ride because of how dangerous it is. From the context of how he wrote little (this was an interview on MSN) about his wife being interested in riding perhaps this is a touchy subject for him. However, taking into context that this was msn and he lives in Britain, perhaps he was just trying to keep the interview going so he could be done in time too. Another option is that he is the type of person who does not care to go into a lot of detail unless really probed to.

Either way, it remains that his wife does not really care for the same hobby as he does. Her disinterest has also lead into the way in which they parent their son. She has concerns over her son learning how to ride. Since she does not care for riding and thinks

it is dangerous their son should also not ride. This may imply that she does not care for motorcycling in general or that she does not approve of something about it that relates to her husband (and has yet to be mentioned). Since the interview was so short and on MSN Messenger there are some details missing here. The way that Adam saw it though was that yes, she only went to events if they were close by. This shows a genuine disinterest in motorcycling or she would be willing to commit to traveling farther for shows. Adam has experienced friction with his mate just like Kate and Vaughn have to. While his friction is not necessarily a lack of feeling or sharing the same experience with his mate, his wife's disinterest in motorcycling still has enough weight to affect how they raise their son.

Expressing the same or similar interests or passion for riding is something that has at least been shared by both genders in this project. While Kate may be the only female who has spoken up on the subject it remains that she did and at least one of the respondents shared an experience in disinterested mates that other respondents also did. This makes the importance for similar interests to be a phenomenon that is shared by more than one individual in a group. It makes it an experience that occurs in motorcycling regardless of what gender a person is.

This shows that even though Maddog and Vaughn had wives that were not interested in motorcycling that not all men in society care for it either. The prime example of that is Kate's boyfriend. If this was a gender-specific phenomenon Kate's experiences would be void. She may never have experienced them in the first place. Not it is possible that she is an exception to the rule and that most disinterest is shared by wives or other female influences on men. Since only five people or around 20% of my

respondents spoke on this subject it is too early to tell. This is perhaps research that can be conducted in the future.

Evidence of Possession or Focus on Masculine Pursuits or Interests

Patriarchy is not something that is always seen. At times it may be buried beneath subtleties such as words, phrases, or actions that are used to mask it. When it comes to motorcycling this potentially latent system of power still exists. Since women have become more integrated into motorcycling since the late 70's/early 80's there have been attempts made to reach out to them and make the sport appear more "equal." From 2003 to 2008 "female ownership of motorcycles crossed the 10-percent mark; increasing from 9.6 percent to 12.3 percent" (Motorcycle Industry Council 2009). However, since motorcycling at least used to be a male-dominated sport some still believes the system hasn't changed today. In this section I discuss evidence that some masculine respondents in these interviews still possessed or focused on masculine-based pursuits or interests when discussing their philosophical or antidotal thoughts about motorcycling.

Sometimes when reflecting about women's place in motorcycling men thought of one specific woman they know or one experience with a woman they had come across. Joshua is a prime example of this. When asked about his own reflections or experiences with gender in motorcycling he used his experience with one woman to explain that women can be good riders too besides men. He details that, "One of the people that I used to go south with every year, one of them is a woman. And she was a, she was a good rider. She got really good at it."

In an earlier comment Joshua commented that "There's a lot more women ridin' than there used to be." The way he refers to her as "good" as in a good rider sticks out. He may state that there are more women out there who motorcycle, yet his own experiences are based off of one rider he knew that fit these qualifications. Not necessarily every woman out there is good at riding or has the perseverance to ride. So while Joshua had respect for this woman's ability to ride he still seemed to think her ability to ride was an exception to the rule. She was a good rider because she was different from "other women." It is almost as if he is surprised that she can ride so well because she is a woman and that accepting that women ride is something new for him.

Tom has a similar experience as Joshua. He states that "Um, but you, you see uh, I see more and more women...not many because when I see a woman riding, I uh, I, it's unusual enough that I note it to myself. And I say, "Oh gosh that's a woman." This comment shows that women riding motorcycles does not happen that often. Tom seems to be surprised. His assumptions about women riders seem to have been challenged. It was a woman that was riding instead of a man. Kyden is another example of this. He is not challenged by women. Rather, he knows that they "do, you know they can do just a good of a job as a man, maybe even sometimes better. And I don't have a problem with that." While he does not have a problem with it he still has to address it. The question comes to mind though what his statement says about other men or men's reaction in general. Even if he does not have a problem with it others do. He has to bring it up because his statement exposes a pattern of feelings or reactions about how other men still feel. He may be genuine in his quest for equality between the others but that does not mean other men are.

It does appear that while some steps have been taken to improve women's status in motorcycling, that men still dominate or have feelings of possession over the direction of motorcycling. Ben seems to agree with this when he states that "Well, I definitely would say it's the male dominating you know or sport or activity. Um, I guess, you know, you start to see more and more women and people getting into it." While more women are getting into it he still has to say that it's a male-dominated sport. That he has to point this out seems to be a claim that men are still on the top and women have not yet reached a place of equality. Overall, motorcycling is a male dominated sport even though this perception primarily comes from Ben's influence in the group. They are not specific to just ZeroGravity. Even in ZeroGravity, Hailey commented that there are only a few women riders in the group. Vaughn thought Hailey should give them more credit and that they are good riders. This shows that even within these riders' groups women do not have the numbers needed to share an equal status with men.

Finally, Clara also agreed that motorcycling is male-dominated. She claims that "There's still a lot of men out there dominating the motorcyclin' scene. But in my circles, we do have either 50% to 80% to 90% women motorcyclists." This is because Clara rides in some groups that are geared specifically for women. Therefore, the numbers of women in those groups tend to be a higher percentage of the group's membership than say ZeroGravity which is an open group to everyone. It is not only geared or marketed toward women.

While Clara's view about motorcycling being male-dominated is based upon perceptions she has acquired through her experiences in riding groups, her overall assessment is that motorcycling is male-dominated. This seems to be a common theme

that was shown through respondent's outright mention of masculine possession or dominance. It is also a common theme that men's control over women is latent or not obvious right away. Rather, it may be hidden through the careful words men choose to use to describe women that are riders. Sometimes what someone does not say or hardly says is more powerful than what they outright admit.

Men Are Instrumental in Women's Riding

Since motorcycling is a male-dominated sport it would seem that men have an effect on women's ability to ride or participate in the sport. Actually, it was a question of mine whether or not women got inspired to motorcycle by a masculine influence. I thought this question was important to consider not only because this is the story I've heard most often in my own experiences, but because it shows a gateway for reaching women and bringing them into the motorcycling community. I did not ask this question as some researchers may, in an attempt to conduct marketing research where I want to know how to reach consumers and their needs. Rather, I see the answers to this question as a sign of power on men's part. If men influence women to ride even if it's not intentional, they may actually have an effect on changing the direction of their own sport (whether they want it to be challenged or not).

Paige and Brad have been married since they were 19 or 20 (they are now in their mid to late fifties). They like to vacation together while taking their bikes and going out riding. Their vacations are short, yet they choose to spend them on their bikes. Paige's interest in motorcycling started back to when they were originally dating. Brad, her husband got her into motorcycling and now she rides her own 2008 Sportster. In this

sense men are shepherds for women. They lead the way for women to get involved with the sport. This can be said for women who ride their own bikes and for those who choose to ride as passengers on their husband/boyfriend's. Men seem to have a great deal of influence on women's choice to ride.

Mary has ridden with Ted for the past several years. Before riding with him she rode with her brothers. They all had motorcycles. She finds riding with Ted to be fun. He cannot talk her into a bike of her own, which means it is not her idea essentially to get involved. Rather, she chooses to ride with him as a passenger. Her husband is very focused on watching safety, but sometimes checks other things out. She doesn't want to have to deal with the hassles of riding as these could be more "masculine" concerns. She explains that "I'm more content riding. I don't wanna have to watch traffic and worry about keeping up or anything like that and I'm not mechanical, so I'm just riding."

This is a stereotypically feminine reaction because she is taking a passive stance on the subject rather than an aggressive stance to just go out there and ride her own bike. While she wants to go along on the adventure of riding with her husband as a team to motorcycling events she does not want to take her own bike to the event. They ride together to events and have found a way of being able to be married yet enjoy their hobby together. Motorcycling is not separating them or driving them apart because they both have a passion for it. However, Ted is independent of anyone else when he partakes in motorcycling. He does not have to depend on others in his life to have the ability to ride. Rather, this is something that Mary has to do. She is dependent on men in her life. If her husband were not the driver of the motorcycle she could not ride. She could not ride because she has taken the feminine passive stance to choose to remain a passenger.

While those who chose to ride their own bikes were most often introduced to ride through men it remains that some women who are active in motorcycle culture do not ride their own bikes. Norms of femininity are maintained when women like Mary choose to participate passively as passengers rather than perhaps aggressively as riders of their own bikes. They do not challenge the system by taking the risks that female riders do. They play it safe and take on the same role women have been doing for years both in motorcycling and out; they are following behind men in submissive or subservient roles rather than as independent leaders or free-thinkers of their own destiny.

Patriarchy Still Exists

So far in this chapter I have discussed how women are affected by men and masculinity. I have done this through explaining men's need to share common interests with women, through a sense of ownership or focus on masculine pursuits, through describing how women have been inspired to ride by influences that are male, and by explaining how femininity remains in place when women stay in a passive role. These are all prime examples of how patriarchy still exists in motorcycling even if it is true that more women are starting to ride than they have before. It shows that those with the power to define the situation of motorcycling remain masculine influences and that some women who stay in passive roles allow it to remain this way when they avoid taking action against it. No matter the experience used to define or support patriarchy in motorcycles the data shows that it still does exist. In this section I discuss women and men in racing, men's feelings about women riding their own bikes, and the idea that women need help to ride a bike.

One of the areas that patriarchy can be seen in motorcycling is in sports bike racing. While most of the individuals I interviewed rode traditional cruiser (street-type) motorcycles I was also interested in expanding my demographic outlook. I wanted to reach Harley Davidson riders but also any other type of non-Harley rider I could reach. Out of my interviews I was able to contact three sports bike riders who rode from the same group that is centered in Minnesota. While the commentary from these three is of course not generalizable because their numbers are small, qualitatively their stories still have weight through the meaning they convey about gender. I will now explain how gender relates in terms of motorcycle racing and in terms of power and control according to these respondent's reflections from their time in ZeroGravity.

When interviewing Hailey and Vaughn I found out that it was a taboo for people within their riding group ZeroGravity to date one another. This "can't date" policy is not written in stone but is rather an expectation that exists behind the scenes. Hailey explains that if a girl is faster than a guy then "More just if the girl's faster than...he's... I don't know how you probably explain it, but he's not going to like that." Vaughn continues with his explanation that it's "macho stuff." I tried clarifying what this meant and Vaughn confirmed it was "macho stuff." This seems to show that it is not so much about dating that causes the friction between men and women in this riding club it is about more than that. It is about who has the power to win in a race and to lead that race. A woman cannot be faster than a man because if she is he will not like that. He will not approve of it and want to date her. Men may feel insecure about women's place in motorcycling and/or that she could perhaps "ride better" or be "faster" than them. So while there has been some progress for women in motorcycling there is still a ways to go in the future.

Along with racing competition patriarchy exists in other ways. It also exists through how women react to men and how men react to women. When a woman does not want to ride on the back of a man's bike this can cause friction. Ben discusses what happens when a potential dating partner or a woman who has ridden on the back of a man's bike no longer wants to do so. He explains that it has to do with a woman being independent and no longer needing a man. He believes though that a woman should do her own thing but explains this through stating he is "a whore man. Get your own bike, ride with me, go to your own thing, I don't care, that's cool, I mean. She should get her own bike."

He is a whore because he will take women any way he can get them, whether they ride their own bike or ride with them. He doesn't think the idea that men get upset for women abandoning them relates to safety or collisions. Rather, in his social reality he sees it that other men may see the woman as having something psychologically wrong with her. Men don't feel perhaps its right for women to ride (this wasn't clarified afterward or probed on). He does not think that safety or worrying about collisions is why a man would be angry. It's not the central point for most people. The central point is that the lady no longer needs her man. She is independent of him now and doing her own thing. A male may be so offended that women will not ride with them that they may think she has a mental or psychological condition.

Another area that shows masculine reflections about women is in the feeling men may have about women riding their own bikes. As Ben explained, some men do not like that women have taken the initiative to get out of the bitch seat (the passenger seat) of a bike and become the driver of their own. Rather, they can get quite offended or upset. A

female respondent who experienced some of this wrath is Kate. Kate first spoke to me about how she felt intimidated to one of only a few women in her motorcycle training course. There were cocky men at this course who were most likely only taking it to find the fastest and easiest way to pass the test.

Having this conversation first with Kate allowed me to open up our conversation to something deeper, does she still feel intimidated? Kate answers after a pause that "Yeah. I guess so. Actually just the other day, I was... I was riding, yeah, I was riding...A guy yelled at me 'Be careful!' I was going... going like, 20 miles an hour. I was like 'What's wrong with you?' You know. Jackass." Kate actually received catcalls because this person thought women cannot drive. If the man who yelled at her thought she could drive why would he have ever yelled the catcall at her in the first place? If the roles were reversed and it was a man who was walking to his bike it is doubtful that a woman would yell at him to be careful, that is unless perhaps she is his girlfriend. It is plausible then that Kate was harassed because she was a woman and the man who did this to her thought it was out of place for a woman to be able to ride and handle her own bike.

It is also apparent that women who are not riders have an effect on how women feel about themselves or how they are treated. Kate reflects upon feeling intimidated by other riders. Rather than continuously being intimidated by men Kate surprised me when she admitted to being intimidated by women as well.

Kate: I feel like other... other women are more intimidated by women who ride than people... women who aren't riders themselves are intimidating. Because I go to the store and I'm wearing leather, sometimes people look at me like, you know, like... "What do you think you're doing?"

This shows that Kate is also intimidated by women. She is intimidated by women because these women are not like her. They are not motorcycle riders and do not share in

the "experience" with her like other motorcycling women would. Rather, they look at her and wonder why she is in a place that is usually associated with men. So while women make headway into being one fourth of the riders on the road today that does not automatically make them accepted members of society. Women motorcyclists are but just a fraction of the overall population of riders. More so, women riders are but a small portion of all American women.

Those women who have negative feelings or thoughts about motorcycling have a better chance of badmouthing women. They may badmouth them because they have not been exposed to or had a reason to support gender equality in motorcycling, or perhaps they just do not approve of motorcycling itself either. The next area I talk about relates to this and that is how women are presented through the equipment and merchandise that is marketed to them. The question that I would like to keep stressing is, is women's place in motorcycling really fair and equal? Can it be fair when there continues to be signs of patriarchy and discrimination set against them (whether this is just through an interaction in the store or through what I shall now discuss, marketing)?

Women's Equipment and Merchandise

In a previous section I commented that as of 2009, studies show that one-fourth or 25% of riders are women (International Motorcycle Council 2009). That means that 75% are men. Since only 25% of riders are women that would seem to imply that marketing for women in motorcycling is an untapped market. As an untapped market perhaps women are starting to get involved more and more into the future and direction that motorcycling will take. If they are it would seem that companies who make safety and

riding gear for women would try to appeal to their needs. The following discussion will show that in some areas companies are fulfilling women's needs but not in all areas that they are asking for.

It was early 2012. I was at a Harley Davidson Women's Garage Party Meeting. I had been invited here because of my research into motorcycling brotherhood and my curiosity about how Harley Davidson appeals to women. The garage party is a basic introductory course that shows women four parts of motorcycling; gear, how to pick up a heavy bike, the types of Harley Davidson motorcycles that are customizable to them, and are given a basic introduction into motorcycle lingo to prepare you for the road. While it was slightly awkward to be at this meeting with my sister when I was not a Harley Rider, and I did feel nervous or out of place most of the time, I did not let that deter me from watching and observing what was not said as well as what was said.

I can still recall to this day one of the conversations about motorcycle gloves when some of the volunteer women at the party went over the gear they had available to women. There are different types of motorcycling gloves from those that have fingerless tips, those that are light, to those that are heavy, durable, or made for rain. While there were over forty styles of gloves available for men there were only half that if even available for women. The woman who was raising this point in the audience asked if the style of gloves she wanted would be available anytime soon. The best the volunteer could tell her is to go to the International Motorcycle Show that is held in the Twin Cities every year in January or February to see if she could find them. This showed that Harley Davidson did not have the style of gloves that this woman wanted. The conversation did not end there. Another topic about chaps came up. The volunteers were rather proud to

show off chaps of different styles with different layers and heating abilities in them. Just five years ago women had a hard time finding chaps that fit. They had to buy men's. The conversation about chaps was also shared by one of my respondents Mabel when she states that

Mabel: The reason why I like the chaps it's because of my body style. Tryin' to find pants regular textile pants. They don't really make them for my size.

Whereas chaps I can get those in my size. So, I have to have the gear so I buy what I can for that but...

Q: Yeah.

Mabel: ...I'd wear it. I mean I don't have any problem with other stuff. To me, I mean, it's just uh...

Q: They didn't have it available?

Mabel: Sometimes they don't, sometimes, you know. Jackets are pretty easy. Pants, you know how it's been [challenging.]

Mabel has a hard time finding chaps that fit her. She has a body style that makes it hard to find chaps that fit. They do not make chaps her size. She buys what she can get to fit and wears it, but pants are not as easy to get. So some items, some clothing she can get to fit her, others on the market are still in need of being sold and made like the textile pants that she mentions. These experiences with chaps and gloves makes it seem like there is some marketing available to women, but unless you go to some international motorcycle events and buy men's gloves/merchandise that are small enough to fit women (which this woman who was speaking had to do), it can be hard for women to get something that fits them.

Colored Apparel

Another area besides riding equipment or safety gear that women discussed wanting more options available to them in is the color of accessories or clothing that is available to them. Mabel explains that she is not like other women. She does not prefer

the same colors they do and grew up a tomboy because of the influence of her brothers. When she goes to a store she will be "looking for that something and it's like, it's like, is that everything has to have pink or purple on it because I'm, you know. It's something hip that some people like it." However, while she claims it is because these colors are hip that they are available it cannot be ignored that "pink" is often associated as a feminine color. Purple may very well be too.

Mabel states that she wishes there were more neutral colors available to her as there are with men. She is a hardcore rider out there every day (perhaps a "real" rider), why can't there be just as much apparel available to her? She doesn't like pink and doesn't want to be limited to purple. She wants other options and they are just not available to her. Marketers either do not know how to appeal to women like her because she does not fit the standard gender mold or tokenism exists and they simple do not want to expand their market beyond what they have already done.

Clara is similar to Mable in that she wants to have more clothing available to her besides black. She would like to have more colorful clothing. In the last three years she has seen more clothing for women become available along with more colors. However, she expands upon the color problem by explaining she would go into the racing section if she wanted more color.

Clara: The racers would have more colorful clothing. Um, but that wasn't really suited for cruising. You know, that was more suited for racing. Um, and still once again, it was all in boy's sizes. And you put on a pair of um, pants, um some textile pants, and their men's. Ah, men are your hip big now! You know, I've got those curves and our waist just a bit; our waist has to fit those hips (Laughs). So, that's it. So it's difficult."

So even in racing clothes were marketed for boys and in their sizes. She wants to have clothes that will fit curves because she has them and her waist won't fit in boys'

clothes! So while she has seen strides in the last three years to expand the amount and type of clothing available to women it is still not there yet in a way that meets her needs. Clothing for curvy women is not available.

Clara also puts things into perspective when she gives a statistical estimate on how many women ride now in comparison to five or ten years ago. She believes that, "you know, only, you know 10 and 5 years ago, only 10% of the motorcyclists were women. And then it's slowly been comin' up." There are not a lot of men riders in her circles because she rides in women's group, but there are still an overwhelming number of men who do ride (75% according to earlier statistics). This shows that women are asking for more clothes. They are asking the market to pay attention to them. She puts it into a statistic. She thinks that 1/3 about of motorcyclists are women. There are still a lot of men out there (perhaps why they seem to dominate the market of gear and clothing), but women now have a place too because they've *requested* to have a place. If they are asking dealerships to have clothes that are for them, they are reaching out to those that have the market. They are making a movement to mark their own place in the motorcycling world. Their mere growth in numbers may be a sign they are reaching out. But is the market reaching back? It is not the market or those that make clothing that started this growth and transformation in clothing and apparel; it is the customer base, the women themselves.

There is one final place where pink has its place and that is on the accessories of Harley Davidson motorcycles. During my participant observation at the garage party I can recall Harley Davidson making pink bikes and sparkly diamond accessories women can detail their bikes with. Harley is making these accessories to appeal to women, make

them feel accessible, and to bring them in as part of the Harley Davidson experience. It is also trying to recruit women through its private women-only garage sales too.

It seems hard that women are just hated because of what sits (or doesn't) between their legs. It seems to be that there is more of a cultural evolution in motorcycling and women's acceptance is growing. She is earning her place and her right to have gear. It is just a transformation phase that is far from being complete. There are women riding but not yet a number equitable to men. Thus this is why there is still less gear available to women than is available to men. The thing is male motorcyclists have been around longer. So marketers have more long-term data available to them to know how to appeal to men than perhaps they do to women.

Or is it? Is the place for women in motorcycling really becoming more equal or is this a sign of tokenism? While some growth may have taken place in the last three years like Clara suggests both her and Mable's stories tell that there is room for growth. It is obvious that women want more options available to them than sparkly "pink" stuff. Tokenism exists because while there are more options for advertisers and clothing companies to follow to reach women they are not doing this. Rather, they continue to make the same accessorized items and to limit the amount of options that are available to her.

It seems as if companies are making enough products available to women to make it appear as they are satisfying their [women's] needs, but in actually this may not actually be true. If it was true and enough items were being made to fit women's requests for better colors on clothing, for more options available of safety gear, and for better-

fitting clothing that fits all sizes of women's curves rather than a few; then these points would not have been brought up or mentioned by my respondents in the first place.

Summary

Experience and society can affect how someone views and identifies with their gender identity. In this chapter that was seen through several different forms; from influences by husbands and wives and friends, through clothing and the availability of that clothing for each gender, and through the types and colors of motorcycle accessories that are geared to men and women. It does not always quite matter how someone may be influenced to think about or construct their gender, it happens. What seems to be most important here is that women are affected by the opinions and perceptions of those that surround them in their lives as well as the media and what it has to represent. Some of the messages reflected by motorcyclists in these interviews are that women are not equal to men and they do not always have to be.

Patriarchy still exists today and can be evidenced through the sheer number of riders in the United States today, 75% are men to only 25% that are women. Women's inferior position of the 1980's, as described by Hopper and Moore (1990), does seem to have improved a little. However, men still dominate the motorcycling scene and have access to a broader range of safety gear and clothing accessories that fit them than do women. While there are more women that ride old ideas of masculinity and male power still exist. Finally, one last thing to consider is tokenism. Tokenism may exist through the marketing that is aimed at or geared toward women. It is possible that dealerships do not want to spend extra time and money on clients who do not fit the perfect mold of gender

stereotypes that already exist. Rather those companies that market clothing like Harley Davidson may only sell accessories and clothing that fit current gender stereotypes rather than taking the risk to venture into new ideas, styles, etc. (that may actually enhance what they are trying to do or may enhance outreach to new potential members).

Chapter 6: Results – Reflection of Self and Branding

Introduction

Originally, when I went into my thesis I was interested in Adler and Adler's (1989) concept of the gloried self. The gloried self forms when a person acquires a celebrity status and obtains at least two selves; the individual self and the gloried self. I thought that this self may apply to motorcycling not because motorcyclists themselves are celebrities, but their status in society makes them out to be "anti-heroes."

Anti-heroes are those who are idolized in society for living outside of norms and are idolized regardless of deviant or negative criminal activities they may be involved in (Learnhub.com 2013). When watching *Sons of Anarchy* or playing video games like *Grand Theft Auto: Lost and the Damned* the motorcyclist is portrayed as a hardcore rebel, an outlaw who may be involved with crime or in activities that are not sanctioned by law enforcement. Particularly in *Sons*, the motorcyclists are involved in criminal activities from drug deals, illegal gun trades, and gang violence. Since *Sons of Anarchy* is so popular and the image of the hard core rebel biker is also popular, I wondered if all motorcyclists are in a sense rebels or if society makes them out to be that way.

The identity construction of motorcyclists in today's culture may have changed since 1970's *Easy Rider* or the 1950's *Wild Ones* movies. Through the research I have conducted I have found that motorcyclists who ride today are not heavy partiers, criminals, or deviants. They may know some bikers who are, but they themselves may

have primary motorcycle interests in racing, weekend hobby riders, to enthusiasts that get out to ride whenever they can because they enjoy it.

Along with trying to determine the identity construction of what it means to be a motorcyclist I also wanted to see if branding had an effect on how motorcyclists formed or understood their own self-identity. I attempted to answer this question by dividing my respondents in half with 10 Harley Davidson riders and 10 riders who were not Harley Riders. By doing this I hoped to see if motorcyclists with different brand-affiliations had drastic differences in their feelings about motorcycling, motorcycles, or motorcyclists. The results that I found showed that some individuals are brand-enthusiasts as much as they are motorcycling enthusiasts. Other individuals do not put as much emphasis on the brand of bikes that motorcyclists ride, rather they put more emphasis on the fact that someone does ride on two or three wheels and shares in the same hobby they do.

Constructing Identity

Identity construction is a life-long process. It starts from the time a child is socialized to the time we die because our society is constantly changing, revolving. The effects of identity throughout our life cycle can be seen in motorcycling as well as in other areas of our culture. It is relevant in motorcycling because who a motorcyclist is and who they became may very well depend upon different experiences, people, and opportunities that are available to people throughout their life time. Particularly, in this research project identity shifts from the time a person is a child to the time they are inspired to ride to the moment that they do ride. It is always transforming. Along with

identity transformation is the transformation of a person's interests and perspectives. When a person's identity transforms, their interests do too.

Schembri (2009) explains that to recognize that brands are a part of identity is to recognize that they are functional beyond the product that they advertise. When users consume products or enjoy in the image of a brand such as Harley Davidson they are "co-constructing" the brand experience (Schembri 2009, Hackley 2001). The context and understanding of what branding means continues to change over time and evolve (Holt 2002). Brands can be more than a simple identification device. They may have their own unique personality or character traits assigned to them or may be aligned with social and political messages (McEnally and de Chernatony 1999). For brands to be able to acquire personality and character traits those who create them need to be able to interact with one another.

They may interact with one another in rallies or through consumer groups. Librett (2008) Motorcycle rallies are a place where riders can "interact and develop a sense of community and common identity" (Austin 2009; Maxwell 1998, Austin and Gagne 2008). Kidder (2006) agreed and determined that illegal bicycle races also served as a place where identities can be solidified as the meaning of the rituals is extended into the lifestyle of participants. Identity can also be formed through tribes and brands in addition to at places like motorcycle events or rallies. When a group of people come together to consume a brand or product they may organize into tribes around those brands (Librett 2008). Through their participation in tribes and events such as rallies where tribe behavior, such as the expectation to wear certain type of clothing, ride a certain way, or have certain nicknames that fit the image of that tribe; identities may be created,

transformed, or solidified. The image of Harley Davidson and other motorcycle brands, along with their symbolism, can be produced and reproduced through the use of their bikes in motorcycle groups and through those consumers that buy them.

The first example of how identity changes throughout time is with the respondent Joe. Joe explains that his interest in motorcycling came from the time that he was a youth. When he was a kid he thought it was funny because he saw "these hardcore bikers with the...jeans and all the patches and all that stuff and... That's who [he] wanted to be. That's how [he] wanted to look and it's like now that [he is] riding, [he] don't dress that way as much." This shows that when he was a kid he saw the rough rider look of patches, jackets, and leather. It intrigued him to want to become that type of rider, but later on once he became a rider he no longer dressed that way.

Joe explains that motorcycle leather and chained wallets go with riding a custom motorcycle. He thinks that this is much cooler than having a Harley Davidson logoed t-shirt. Now that time has changed (in comparison to when he first got interested in riding) he does not care so much about the leather and chained wallets. However, this is what got him into biking. He explains his interest into motorcycling as idolizing the culture is just like kids that idolize football stars. While this is what drew him into motorcycling I think the point with logos is that his primary interest when he started was in the leather and chained wallets look and custom bike look. He identifies himself as a custom motorcycle guy that seems to not care for everything it means to be into Harley.

While he does not really focus on clothes so much today he still, when looking at him and talking to him does not dress like a Harley rider. Rather, in person while talking to him outside of this project he has made comments toward my black chaps and black

leather that he does not like that kind of gear. He wears old brown chaps or jeans and a brown or denim vest. He also does not wear his helmet that often and prefers a bandana. His boots are not leather, black, and fancy. They are brown, sometimes worn, and look like the type of hiking/farm boots you can buy at Fleet Farm. He has the typical biker beard that has long since turned from blonde to gray (along with his long hair he wears back in a ponytail; that is also starting to turn). But a Harley rider with the flashy black expensive jackets adorned with the Harley logo (about 300-400 dollars a pop as I saw while doing participation observation), the double-thick chaps, heated gloves, helmets, all of that jazz? That is not him.

He continues to explain that the world of motorcycling is like a fantasy because, "a lot of people want to be somebody that they're not, if they'd have the opportunity." The point is they may not always have the opportunity because of their social class or because they just not be able to make themselves behave/act that way or be around people who are that way. Motorcycling is a part of Americana. When Joe was young he saw that brands are how he could affiliate or identity himself. He was interested in leather and chains, in actively following or believing in the biker image through the logos and clothing choices he saw (like the Harley Davidson emblem). However, his own identity has transformed throughout the years, it has become organic and is no longer based upon his original perception of branding and the meaning and symbolism that goes along with it.

While Joe is a clear example of how someone who has been impacted by logos at a young age may change later on in his years, the power of logos may not always be as easy to see or understand as through his personal narrative. Rather, for most

motorcyclists like my respondents, the power of logos on the self may impact them differently. They may not have an outright transformation of their self or identity at time due to logos and symbolism they were represented with at a time of childhood. They may connect with logos, patches, and their meaning and semiotics later on in life when a significant event happens to them.

The power of logos and brands can also create a fragmented identity, or an identity that is not solid or resolute, as seen by Thompson (2009). He claimed that biker subculture became fragmented between the norms and expectations of outlaw motorcycling and general every day motorcycling. I found that this idea of a fragmented identity can be seen in branding as well. Just like biker subculture has become strained between the outlaw bikers and everyday bikers, motorcyclists can also become strained between parts of their identities that are dependent upon certain brands or symbols. This can best be seen through the examples of Vaughn and his daughter.

Vaughn discussed in his interview how his daughter has gone through a phase of fragmented identities. She does this because "she got a Honda and had to have Honda clothes. And she bought a Yamaha, so she had to have Yamaha clothes. And when she got the Suzuki, she had to have Suzuki clothes. Like, "What's going on here?" (laugh) She hasn't even worn the stuff out yet. It still looks like new."

This makes it difficult to locate what type of identity his daughter is following when she wears all of these brands. It is hard to know as an outsider to the situation if she has the status of a Yamaha-lover or a Suzuki-lover if she has clothing for both. It would be interesting to know what she currently wears and why she wears it.

It would be great to know if she prefers one brand over another and if she rides different bikes for different occasions. Perhaps branding does not mean anything to her at all and she does not really have a fragmented identity. Perhaps she knows exactly who she is and she just has to wear the correct brand that fits her bike at the time so she fits in with certain social groups or sponsors if she is racing. However, if she is not wearing all of the attire perhaps she does not follow branding all the way to riding and wearing it, but just to the check-out aisle. This would mean she may not have a fragmented identity yet because she has not yet wore the clothing so she can represent it to society. Or perhaps it means that she is in the beginning stages of a fragmented identity because she does not know which identity based upon brand to take or act upon. She has not yet made her choice (or maybe she has and she is like her father Vaughn). There is simply not enough information about her to know the answers to all of these questions, but she presents interesting questions and considerations to ask when evaluating branding, identity, and motorcycles.

Vaughn, like his daughter may have a more difficult time finding clothing that suits him. He buys clothing mostly for its use and function. He cannot have brand-identifiable clothing as if he did that would be conflicting.

Vaughn: (laugh) Well, it's because I have different bikes, so... You know, today I rode here on the Harley. So if I had a, like... if I had a Kawasaki jacket, it wouldn't look good. (laugh) I mean, there is some style and statement to it, but I really try to, like, avoid it because I don't buy, uh, clothes that, uh... I buy clothes that... it's got to work for me. It's really got to be just functional. It's got to... it's got to work.

He has so many bikes of different brands that to wear one coat while riding a bike of a different brand would not work. He would be projecting a statement that would not make sense to him. If he wears a brand logo that shows support for one brand this limits

his choices. He rides different brands of bikes. If he shows different branded clothing when he rides different bikes this creates a fragmented identity for him. He cannot be himself because he is limited with his choices and the symbolism or image to society that wearing multiple branded-clothing projects.

Perhaps another way to look at this phenomenon is that they do not have fragmented identities. Rather, like Ben, they just choose to wear specific clothing based upon their audience. Vaughn and his daughter prefer to wear certain brand-name items when they ride that brand of bikes in races or other motorcycle events. While Ben is not matching the brand of his clothing to the brand of his bike he still does dress a certain way in relation to the audience that will see his clothes. Some days he wears “Flap bills and T-shirts. This is actually ZeroGravity T-shirt, part of the group that I’m on...Um, but I rock on anything from a Flap bill to you know business apparel, and dress suits and stuff. “At times he wears shirts that represent his group status. At other times he is in business apparel. He is participation in Goffman’s (1959) presentation of self here and with impression management. Portions of his overall self or identity are based upon who he is around at the time. He will wear work attire for professional settings and riding attire or ZeroGravity attire for motorcycling events. He is controlling the perceptions other people may have about him by regulating and controlling what types of clothes he wears in certain situations.

This shows that at times people will either wear brand clothing according to the setting they are in (such as Vaughn's daughter when she is racing) or they may have fragmented identities (i.e. Vaughn when he does not know which brand to wear because he has too many bikes). Perhaps dressing according to the setting also aligns with

fragmented identities, whereas Vaughn (who has a fragmented identity) would wear a certain brand in a certain situation if he felt it was suitable, that he could still be himself or represent himself truthfully to society.

Masculine Image and Cool Factor

The motorcyclist image is one that projects power, masculinity, and adventure. To become a motorcyclist is to become someone who is attractive and cool. This is the type of image that Joe discussed was popular in the media from the beginning. In the section about brotherhood, he speaks about a movie called *Wild Ones* that projects a story about a one-percenter incident in Hollister California. According to him the media blew the incident way out of proportion. He believed that "there was just a ton of movies that came out depicting anybody on a custom bike and leather... with a leather jacket has been at outlaw." Through this quote it can be seen that the media depicted motorcyclists as outlaws. It did not matter who motorcycles really were in the real world. The media was selling their image as bad guys to the rest of the public.

I only show this quote to show how the media has the power to blow things out of proportion or to create an image/illusion for the rest of society to follow. Perhaps this aligns with his idea that Harley Davidson clothes or the logo itself is also blown out of proportion. Then again Joe did idolize these outlaw bikers when he grew up watching these movies. So perhaps that is not the case. Perhaps the outlaw biker image was also blown out of proportion by the media. I would argue that it was blown out of proportion so much so that Joe himself would eventually come to want to be a motorcyclist (as his story earlier in the interview tells). Perhaps what is not being seen here is the power of

the media to make motorcycling appear alluring because to motorcycle is actually to be a part of a fantasy world. He thinks that the cool factor makes motorcycling out to be a fantasy world.

Tom, like Joe, felt that motorcycling was cool or alluring when he was a child. He explains that it is about masculinity. Motorcycling is thus a fantasy world that creates an illusion of something out there that is "independent and maybe uh, hyper masculine or something." He believes part of this image relates to the tone of the exhaust notes given off by Harley Davidsons.

When he was younger he was touched by that sense of illusion and masculinity. Now that he is older is no longer touched by it in the same way. He prefers to work on classic motorcycles from the 70's and 80's rather than on brand new motorcycles or Harley Davidsons. Therefore, it can be seen that the media has either blown the image of motorcyclists as outlaws out of proportion or has successfully sold their image to be one that projects power, a sense of adventure, and coolness. For some it is important to follow or project these stereotypes through their clothing or their loyalty for a certain brand/clothing styles, for others function is more important than the brand or logo they wear.

Symbols for Function versus Symbols for Meaning

Symbols are important in our culture because of the meaning that they represent. This meaning can often change based upon the definition of the situation, who is impacted by it, and who has the power to manipulate it. To represent or communicate

their interests to others in society motorcycles are left to communicate through symbols, gestures, or through other forms of communication.

A biker's interests may be communicated to others through the effect of advertising, memory, the placement of tattoos, group identity, and common affiliations. This chapter shall discuss how meaning relates to symbols of logos and imagery in motorcycling, who conveys meaning, and who reacts to it. The true power behind meaning, power, symbols, logos, and branding will be revealed through the way that respondents react to their surroundings, who is in them, and how they change over time if they change over time. Next, I will begin the conversation by covering the effects of advertising on motorcyclists, their self, and their identity.

Effect of Advertising

Advertisements, they are everywhere and they seem to creep into everything from radio to the books we read on our Nooks or Ipads. We cannot escape them. Their influence leads us to start diets, buy groceries, or perhaps even choose the next brand of or vehicle. Before I started this project I never really gave a thought to the impact of advertising, brands, and logos. I never looked or thought about how much the media influences our decisions in life. I found that my respondents were affected by advertising from the choices they made about whether or not they would wear logos to the type of clothing they would buy.

During a conversation with two of my respondents it can be seen just how powerful logos are. Hailey explains that it is hard to find clothing without logos because they are everywhere. Vaughan elaborates on this when he explains that he prefers to

avoid logos. He avoids them because he is not focused on the brand of the clothing he wears as much as the fit. Hailey differs in her approach to logos to Vaughan. Whereas Vaughan tries to avoid logos and brands, Hailey does not actually mind them all that much.

Vaughn: But some of it's kind of hard to avoid.

Hailey: Oh yes. When you go on out and buy jackets, like, they all have logos all over them, so it's hard to... hard to get one without it if you wanted to. You know, icon and...names all across. It's part of everything they make, but... I like them, so it doesn't... I don't mind it.

Q: How 'bout you?

Vaughn: I actually try to avoid it.

Q: Why do you try to avoid it?

Vaughn: (laugh) Well, it's because I have different bikes, so... You know, today I rode here on the Harley. So if I had a, like... if I had a Kawasaki jacket, it wouldn't look good. (laugh) I mean, there is some style and statement to it, but I really try to, like, avoid it because I don't buy, uh, clothes that, uh... I buy clothes that... it's got to work for me. It's really got to be just functional. It's got to... it's got to work.

Hailey does not really mind logos because she likes them. Therefore, even though logos are common she does not struggle in finding clothing. She is not as picky as Vaughan is when it comes to what kind of clothing to wear. Therefore, Vaughn may have a more difficult time finding clothing that suits him. He buys clothing mostly for its use and function. He cannot have brand-identifiable clothing as if he did that would be conflicting. He has so many bikes of different brands that to wear one coat while riding a bike of a different brand would not work. He would be projecting a statement that would not make sense to him. This shows that he has a fragmented identity as suggested in the previous section.

Some respondents choose what they wear based upon the quality of the item. They believe that certain brands of merchandise will be of higher quality than other brands. This can be seen with Chloe. Chloe likes to wear Harley Davidson logos. She

states that she doesn't know if "it necessarily defines (pause) me as a person or not. Um, I suppose maybe to some degree it's, you know, putting it out there that (pause) I'm, you know... I'm a Harley rider. I don't know." Chloe wears Harley Davidson logos because it is of better quality. She is not sure if her preference for Harley Davidson really impacts how she defines herself as a person. She thinks it may impact herself somewhat because she does identify as a Harley rider. She is not quite sure about this, though, and seems to continue to question the idea.

This shows that even if someone represents themselves as a Harley Davidson rider, they may not be sure just how much of an impact the brand has on them. They may openly admit to wearing logos or clothes from a corporate program like Harley Davidson. However, when asked how these clothes impact them, they may not be entirely sure what the consequences or result may be. Instead, because they are not able to see these connections they miss out on them. The corporation that is behind the brand continues to get away with latent advertising. They may remain successful as the symbolic value of their brand continues to get sold and transferred throughout society. But even with success this is no guarantee that the advertising will be successful. The only symbolic meaning a tattoo/corporate logo will have is dependent upon the very audience that will judge it.

David's shows that it is the price of what he buys not the logo that impacts his decision. He is looking for something to be reasonable rather than to buy one brand or another. He thinks that buying something for a "comfortable price" with "just kinda logo" will work and he will bring it with him. Mary and Todd also buy attire for comfort rather than for the image or name of the brand. The only Harley items they have are "chaps with

each cut leather jackets. Ah, we've got some fear-- first gear jackets that are the ventilated jackets." They also have different t-shirts from functions they have gone to. Some of these functions may have had the Harley logo on them, but they did not buy them for the logo. Rather they bought these items as memorabilia, a way to remember the event they went to together.

So in a way their clothes are more important for their use or what they represent in terms of shared memories together rather than a corporate image or corporate message they try to tell. They are a part of this memorabilia in the sense that they attached their own meaning to it. The memorabilia represents something personal to them not something symbolic to the larger population. The point to remember is, even if that's what it means to them, that's not necessarily how others understand it.

Clara is another individual who prefers to wear clothing for its function or its color rather than for its brand. However, she does wear certain patches that hold symbolic meaning to her. She chooses to wear "Christian motorcyclist Association patches and I choose to wear Women on Wheel clothing than patches." She wears these patches because they affiliate group status. Other than these patches the rest of her clothing is related to what is functional. So even though she does not wear corporate logos on t-shirts she is like Ben who has a tattoo to show group identity. Her patch shoes group identity to these two organizations. She may not be a brand person per say but she is definitely a group person.

Tattoos and Identity Construction

A portion of a person's self is based upon how they represent themselves or wish for themselves to be represented to the rest of society. This can be seen through motorcyclists' decisions to get tattoos, where they place them, and why they choose the certain tattoos that they do. Through the following examples of Mable's and Louis it can be seen how important personal individualization and the ability to acquire a unique identity is.

Mable explains that she has two interests; motorcycling and diving. Therefore, her tattoo has to represent her interests. She got a scuba diving tattoo because it's "something [she] also like[s] to do when [she] can." She doesn't do it as often as she used to because she rides her motorcycle more now.

She explains that her scuba diving tattoo is a hobby she likes to participate in. Because she spends so much time participating in her other hobby, motorcycling, she doesn't get to scuba dive as much as she would like to. However, her tattoo is still representative of something that is a part of her. It is personal and represents a part of her. This part of her shows to the world what she likes to do in her free time.

Mable also goes on to discuss a Harley Davidson tattoo that she has. When asked about it she explains that she had to make sure to have the tattoo in a visual place. If it was not in a place where others could see it she would not be able to remember its value and particular meaning to her. Even though for Mable, the tattoo does not have to be permanent it still has to be something that is personal and meaningful in her life. She states that "maybe I won't ride a Harley all my life, but at this point in my life, I do, 'cuz you know, you know." So she will remember it because she "just got it a few months

ago.” For her it was important that she didn’t forget what she got. She explains that with tattoos “there’s different style for everybody and I didn’t really, you know, I’m not a butterfly, flower type personality.” She chose the location of her tattoo so she could “see it.”

This shows that a tattoo is representative of how someone wishes to portray a part of them self. However, this part of their self does not have to be permanent (at least for Mable). It just has to be relative and important at the time someone decides to get a tattoo. It is also important for tattoos to be worn on a part of the body that can be seen. This shows that the location of a tattoo on a person's body has symbolic value as does the meaning the tattoo itself represents. Where a tattoo is located is important because both she herself can see the tattoo (to remember what it means to her) as well as the rest of society can see it to. She can have the reflection of self-shared in Cooley's looking glass self. She is able to see what others think of her tattoo, react to it, and choose how to present herself or her tattoo off to others because of it.

Another example of the personal meaning a tattoo has is Louis. Louis explains that he got a tattoo done in a town. He did not have the tattoo tested but he does have a similar emblem to it at home. He thinks his tattoo appears to be good but if he had to do the whole thing over again he would customize it. He explains that through customizing it he is able to make it unique. The important part of his statement is not about the tattoo he got itself. Rather, it is how he compares this tattoo to motorcycling.

Louis: It’s all custom and is unique, you know, I get to talk and think about bikes and comin’ out for action out there, you know. Every Harley comes out the same. You wanna make it different, too bad. Even if it got ordered from the factory it’s still is, pay it for all that, like it was shipped. And then pay it for all your upgrades. Well, not very many people leave their bikes the way the way, the way they come, right? You individualize them as best as you can or as best you

should care to watch it. And as far as I presume, you know I'd rather have custom at work from a good tattoo artist and that's why I'm hap—you know they can't draw shit.

Being unique in this case is important. Not only is Louis able to get a tattoo that describes him and a hobby he likes to participate in, but he is able to define himself as an individual separate from everyone else.

He uses the real world example of customizing a person's motorcycle to explain the importance of customizing a tattoo. He explains that most people change their bikes once they buy them. They then customize the bike and tailor it to their needs; the same can be said about a tattoo. He believes it is important to get work from a good tattoo artist rather than from someone who cannot really draw. In order to represent himself as different and unique his tattoo has to be original. Just like buying a motorcycle and stylizing that, Louis believes you have to be willing to stylize your tattoo as well. In order for your tattoo to correctly identify a part of yourself it also has to be identifiable through others, a skill fulfilled only by a qualified artist according to Louis. For Louis' tattoo to adequately represent a part of himself and to be unique, it has to be like a brand new bike. He needs to be able to add or take away things from the tattoo to make it his own.

Tattoos, Clothing, and Group Identity

Tattoos and clothing can represent the group identity that a person is affiliated with. A tattoo is much like a logo or patch in that it presents a message to society about a particular meaning or symbol. Both tattoos and clothing can show the dedication a person has to the group they ride in. A person shows dedication to their group when they take the time to acquire a tattoo or clothing/patches of that group. In the following section I

discuss how tattoos and patches became important to some of my respondents because of how it showed their identity and participation in certain groups they are affiliated with.

Some motorcyclists have even gotten themselves tattoos to represent a riding group they are a part of or that they have started themselves. Ben, who is an avid sports bike rider, started the group ZeroGravity. He explains that he got a tattoo of his riding group because his group is a large part of his life and has been for a long time. This would seem to show that not only is motorcycling important but a part of himself is tied directly to ZeroGravity. His identity, as being the originator or creator of the group can be identified through his tattoo. His tattoo is a corporate advertisement for his riding group as much as it is a personal symbol to himself of his own accomplishments (and group status).

Ben explains that he came up with the name of his riding group because he used to play Ping-Pong. He had a saying that he followed while playing Ping-Pong. He was then able to relate one hobby to another.

Ben: Um, and the reason I came up with the name ZeroGravity to ever begin with was uh, it meant more like to never letting anything hold you down, you know. Never, you know, allow anything to hold you back or keep you down coming back. And so that's kind of what ZeroGravity means. You know it sounds cool, you know.

This shows that even if he named the riding group after something that was personally meaningful to him, he got a tattoo of it for the same reason. By being able to have a tattoo of his riding group not only is he able to corporately advertise his group in public to others, he is able to establish himself as a member. He is also able to remember and look back at what his riding group means to him. Not only is he able to reflect on how much his riding group means to him and how much of a part of his life it is, he likes

the way the name sounds to. He is able to have a tattoo that has personal meaning and symbolic value to him, but also has a name that might appeal to others to.

His tattoo is able to do three things essentially: show group affiliation, present a reflection of a part of himself, and appeal and promote his riding group to others. What a tattoo to be able to do all of that, right? Yet is his tattoo really unique? I would argue it is not. He has so many people who ride in his group or know what ZeroGravity is they may not be able to see him as the creator if they did not know him right away. They would see the tattoo and realize that hey, he's a fellow sports bike rider. But they would have no idea he is THE creator of such a well-known riding group around Minnesota. He has created this image, this idea, this corporate name for his riding group.

So he states that at times he wears shirts that represent his group status. At other times he is in business apparel. He is not always one identity or the other. Ben also discusses how important motorcycling is to him and connects this to tattooing. He has decided to get a tattoo on his arm that will “more or less connect” him to the motorcycle. He is doing this because “the motorcycle is a part of him and this is why he has gone with the “biomechanical design. “ He carries his group identification status with him on a tattoo of “ZeroGravity across my chest and the words that say, um, ‘Live to ride and ride to live.’”

This statement would affirm the idea I stated above where in no matter what situation he is in, motorcycling is a part of his life. His throttle hand controls the bike, so he is almost taking control to show society that he is a rider in any situation (not just on days he decided to wear a t-shirt labeled with his group name). He is getting a tattoo that will be full sleeve or all the way down his arm. Depending on the type of business attire

he will then wear and where the tattoo ends, by the time it is done it may seep through when he's dressed up. He cannot escape his identity as a motorcyclist when he chooses to make it known to others. He, unlike Alex, wants to show that he believes in Live to ride and ride to live. He does not think it is a big deal that this saying is cliché. He appears to be a motorcyclist, a member of ZeroGravity, and very proud to do both and show it off to those in society!

The importance of patches is that motorcyclists choose which patches they are going to wear. She chooses to wear patches that affiliate group status. Other than these patches the rest of her clothing is related to what is functional. So even though she does not wear corporate logos on t-shirts she is like Ben who has a tattoo to show group identity. Her patch shows group identity to these two organizations. She may not be a brand person per se but she is definitely a group person.

Clara goes on to explain that she wears a patch and motorcyclists choose patches “because I know that they mean things to people, they mean things to my group, and they mean things to me.” They symbolize meaning that is important to both her and to her group. Because a patch like her Christian one is universal others recognize it. She is able to relate to others through wearing her patch because others will recognize her group status and reach out to her. What does this say about the power of the meaning behind a patch? It shows that what a patch symbolizes first, identifies group status and second, has a meaningful effect on people in society; so much so that it may draw them in and maybe even be a way to recruit them into a group (if she was successful in her evangelizing?)

Joshua, like David is another classic example of a motorcyclist that does not care about logos and tattoos. He cares more about the quality of the items he wears. He thinks

there are so many companies out there that make good stuff that that is what he seeks.

Names don't mean anything to him.

Q: One of the other questions that I have is about what corporate logos or tattoos. Do you wear like Honda merchandise at all?

Joshua: No, I try to wear stuff that don't have—it's it's got names on it but I don't buy it for the names, so, I just buy it whoever makes good stuff. There's so many who makes good stuff. That's mostly what I'm after. I don't care about the names.

That he does not care about names shows that even though Harley Davidson supposedly has good marketing behind it, not everyone falls for it or cares for them. The same thing could be said for other companies too since he is not falling into the marketing that they use either. Rather, perhaps he is like Joe and he likes a certain type of bike. Perhaps he doesn't identify with a brand because of this. Perhaps he truly does not let branding get to him. Maybe, he only cares about how well something is built and how functional it is. Not everyone has to fall for branding, or at least that is one perspective. The other is that branding is the rule. It would seem that with Joshua and Dave it may be the rule (if the majority of people do fall for it), but rather is the exception. Though it seems that motorcyclists overall do not let branding get to them unless it is in the case of patches and group identity. So perhaps the effects of branding are situational based depending on the type of rider a label/name like Harley Davidson identifies with.

I asked Kate if she wore anything with a brand label attached to it. She explained that, yes, she does own this stuff.

Kate: I've got some, uh, like, Yamaha stuff. So I'm not... I don't know. Like, my family, they're... they're all into Harley-Davidsons and I think it's mainly because they have money and it's like a status thing. But for me,... Nah. I don't really care. I just like to ride.

Her quote shows that her family is into Harley-Davidsons. For them everything is about money or status. But for her? She likes to ride. Her Harley-Davidson merchandise is a lot like the merchandise Mary and Ted had, it is just memorabilia. It symbolizes a connection to her grandpa, time with her family on vacations, or a souvenir of stopping at Harley stores. Personally she does not stand up for or believe in (identify with) any certain brand. She has the items because they hold personal meaning not because she supports a group or identifies with a larger meaning behind a brand name (or cult status). This ultimately seems to support the marketing dream. The Harley Davidson brand has become something bigger, it is more personal. It is no longer just an item that is bought for its use, it's a well-known name that is popular and has spread across the world.

Mable likes how things were when she bought her Honda. She can't explain why. But she would rather buy one piece of clothing and keep it rather than replace it with something new or with a brand. She also buys by what fit her shape. Her clothes that she does have (by the sounds of it they are Honda) fit her body shape which is hard to get clothes for. That's another reason she bought Honda attire.

Mable: I have one just here you know, you know, things but I got a lot of that when I was on my Honda but I don't know I just, I just like it. I don't know how to explain why. You know, it's like, I bought one piece and I keep it. It's not like I go out and buy a leather jacket, you know, once a year. My jacket's four years old or three years old. So, it's like, you know...

Kim: Just let you know.

Mabel: Yeah, I just—it, it fits me. I think a lot of us; they do have um a lot of their clothes do fit for me and my body shape. Uh, that's not always easy to find. So that's kinda of a plus right there.

This shows that while brand didn't matter in the terms of buying for labels, what the brand had to offer did. Honda had clothes that fit Mable; they marketed to her by having what she needs in stock. Therefore, she purchased through them rather than

through another company like Harley. When I asked if the brand of clothes she wore would affect how she would ride she explained that what she wore was just gear. It did not affect how she felt about the quality of her ride.

This shows that while the fit of her clothes matter to her overall decision to buy a certain brand, that how the clothes impact her ride does not. She seems to care more about riding than what she wears so long as it fits. Gear is gear, yet it needs to fit. Her ride or how she felt about the quality of the ride was not impacted by a pride for the type of clothes she wore. The gear itself doesn't matter because it doesn't relate to the quality of the ride (other than it may just save your life). The two things: quality of ride and brand of gear are not related. If this were statistics you would say that there were was no statistical significance between the two variables. While Mable sees it this way, it is but one example that people do not know or are not aware that advertising has an effect on them. The same can be seen with the following example given by Cherish.

Cherish states that she does wear corporate clothing. She has a Harley Davidson jacket that she wears but only because it's warm. It's not an obvious Harley item but she still likes it for the product. To Cherish it is more important that she like "[t]he product yeah, I like the jacket, I like the shirt, I like whatever." That Cherish likes the jacket for the product and not for the name shows that perhaps the name of Harley Davidson is not as powerful as I originally thought. While she likes the product and it is a Harley product she actually cared more that the shirt was warm. This shows that another person cares more about the quality of the product than its mere name. Naming of a product is not the only thing that inspires someone when they purchase a motorcycle product or choose it.

The other benefits a product has may impact a person's decision to get it or to keep wearing it.

Perhaps the same could be said about motorcycles. Perhaps someone chooses a bike for its feel or its size rather than for its name. Then again there could be so many factors for why someone chooses a bike it could get quite complicated (from color to brand to size). If someone chooses to wear a Harley Davidson shirt but not every day or not more than one shirt/jacket are they really a brand person? I would not say they are just because they have one piece of clothing with a brand's name on it.

Clara wears brand clothes but she is not able to define what a hip brand is in compared to a non-hip brand. She does not have anything with Harley Davidson on it but does have a BMW shirt with a quote that may reflect a part of her life "my heart doesn't beat, it revs." She struggles to answer why she chose that shirt. She explains that she wears "things because they're functional and because I like the color. "

To Clara it seems that the most important part of clothing is its function/color-what may appeal to her self, her identity. What we wear allows us to represent a part of ourselves to others. So while she may not be a "brand person" that wears brands all the time or swears by them, she still does wear them at times. Perhaps this is one thing to keep in mind. Even if someone does not really care about brands or doesn't intend to show them off they do. A part of themselves knows this too when the person heads out into public. Perhaps a latent affect or part of themselves is that they do want public feedback on what they are wearing. Maybe they don't realize the power branding really has on them. Would Clara have a BMW bike without outside influence affecting her perception of self?

Henry comments that any corporate logos on items he owns are only there because that's how he bought them. He isn't paid to advertise so he likes to remove any items/emblems of a company on the items he buys. He is only "proud of the brand because I've chosen it."

This is an interesting perspective. He is establishing independence and showing some free will in his ability to remove corporate brands from the items he wears. By not affiliating with free advertising he is making his own stand to only represent those companies/brands that he believes in—that he has chosen to believe in. Just how powerful is advertising really?

There are those individuals like Henry that will not go with the flow and support what the advertising company wants. Instead they choose to stand up for themselves and how they decide to represent their own self. They try hard not to let anyone else alter their selves or perception of self. It seems important that they are not influenced by anyone else because like Henry, they have chosen how they would like to be viewed/interpreted by society instead. They fight for control over how their self is viewed by others. Their self-expression and self-acceptance in society is based upon their choice to remain brand free and away from brand wars. They do not let anyone else interfere and determine how to define who they truly are. They or at least he (and they if there are others like him) do that for themselves.

Are they able to maintain agency for themselves and their acceptance of themselves? Are they really able to keep that kind of control over their selves and how they would be accepted by others in society? Or would society throw them a wrench that then allows them experience that they were wrong in the first place? Is it really that

simple to just cut yourself off from society and its pressures/effects on you? I would lean more toward the latter because there is no clear way to know how a person is going to act and if they will be able to maintain a certain kind of power.

There are no guarantees in life if a person were to be “realistic.” However, practically, society has a lot of power and pressure over who a person should be. There are norms and social expectations to follow. Even if Henry wants to make his OWN choice about what brands he will/will not wear and to avoid free advertising—that does not mean that he isn’t selling something else about himself to society. In fact the very idea that he hates/dislikes branding may be what he is telling others. He is letting them know he is an exception to the rule, that he is breaking the norm. He is an outsider, an outcast; or at least that may be how they view him if he chooses to rebel against the norm of choosing branding behavior.

Throughout this section it seems that it is quite common for my respondents to say that others like brands but they do not, they buy for quality. This seems to imply that brands equal quality. If brands indicate quality this means that they are receiving an item or a motorcycle from a good brand or manufacture. This still communicates on behalf of the corporation or company like Harley Davidson or Yamaha that is making or selling the products. Even if someone hates the concept or branding it seems they cannot escape it buy just arguing to have clothing or attire for function over the brand of the item.

Shared Experiences

One of the common themes that came up in motorcycle interviews was shared experiences based upon a person’s logo or brand identity. I never thought that the power

of a logo or brand could be so strong. However, I have experienced some appreciation for the Yamaha brand itself when walking around in stores wearing a hat with the brand on it. I would get pulled aside and asked whether or not I was into music or into motorcycles. I can now relate to Tom, Brad, Paige, and Clara who have all had a patch or been stopped by others because of a logo/brand on their clothing that they wear.

Tom talks about the type of person who would go overboard with Harley memorabilia. He is not the type of person himself who has to have Harley on everything he wears. He has a riding jacket that has Triumph on it and like Brad, Paige, Clara; he also wears a patch that represents the British motorcycle company. He explains that those who see his patch know what type of bikes he wears. He has been stopped because others have had a Norton bike like he has. He has a “Triumph patch and a BSA patch.” He has had “people stop if I’ve been wearing a Norton, a Norton sweatshirt, I’ve had people stop me and say, “Well, you, you, ride a Norton? I had a Norton once.” He explains similarly to Kyden that he has been able to feel a sense of kinship or create social relations with others because of his brand identification.

While Tom, like Maddog is not an avid BSA or Triumph person his choice is still clear. He is a Norton/BSA/Triumph (aka classic bike from the 60’s to 70’s) enthusiast. It would seem then that a person does not have to be an enthusiast to choose which brand they support. They can wear a few patches or piece of clothing but do not have to have the name of the brand everywhere in their home or on their truck.

Paige goes on to explain that she also has been pulled aside or stopped by others in public for her AA patch on her jacket. Other people know what it means and because of this, her and those people are on the same playing field. They know what to expect

from one another. “They see the AA symbol...it brings everything down, you know, to a level playing field because they now know, you know... they know you’re okay. But yeah, you know, the CMA patch is also bringing on a lot of conversation or a lot of people.”

Since both her AA and CMA symbols have the ability to create conversation it seems that a patch or logo can be something beyond free advertising. It does show group status but more importantly it is an open invitation for conversation. People that would never have conversed or gotten to know one another before will talk to one another or the shared interest of what the patch or brand name means. They can share in conversation and create social relationships because the door is already open. They share interests with one another without feeling threatened because a person is a stranger.

Final Summary, Discussion

In this section I have discussed how motorcycle identity is constructed, what the cool image factor is and how this may have changed over time, the impact of logos, branding, and tattoos on identity, and the impact of advertising. The identity of the motorcyclist seems to have shifted over time since the era of the *Wild Ones* and *Easy Rider* movies. While motorcyclists may still be seen as outlaws in media through television and entertainment like *Sons of Anarchy* the actual motorcyclists in this study stray far from the outlaw image. Their identity rather is affected by the hidden power and symbolic messages of advertising and how advertising can affect a person’s understanding and representation of themselves.

It can be seen that even though motorcyclists do not think branding affects them that it does, especially through the conversation of how some respondents choose function or quality over brand. The quality of an item actually may represent one brand over another anyway even if a respondent does not like or does not believe in the message and meaning that branding represents. Branding is thus inescapable and it seems all motorcyclists participate in it whether or not they want to.

Conclusion

In this study I wanted to use grounded theory in order to discover motorcyclists' definition of brotherhood, trends in gender in motorcycling, and how motorcyclist's reflection of self and identity are formed, created, and inspired. Overall, I found that motorcycling is not as the media makes it out to be, but rather varies dependent upon the rider, their preferences, and their surroundings. Those who ride motorcycle are as one of my respondents Clara stated, they come from every walk of life. While those who ride in outlaw motorcycle gangs have a tighter form of *brotherhood* because of their illegal activities, it seems to still be a biker code to consider someone else who rides on two wheels a fellow brother.

It was also apparent that the biker code still exists. Out of my respondents, 33% of them stated they have stopped to help someone that has broken down on the side of the road. Out of the 42.87% that have roadside assistance none have used it. While roadside assistance offers peace of mind, bikers may choose to rely on cell phones, their friends/family, or some other means to recover from being broke down. Nearly half of my respondents stated that if they broke down they would depend on someone they know to help get them out of it.

One of the messages that came out of my interviews was that women are not always equal to men in motorcycling and they don't always have to be. Their lower status from the 1980's, on the hierarchy of power (Hopper 1990) still exists albeit a slightly different form. According to the International Motorcycle Council (2009) only 25% of

riders are women. Men dominate the motorcycling scene and have the advantage over women of more safety gear and clothing accessories available to them.

From my perspective, I also found that the respondents in my interviews were not always comfortable discussing the topic of gender and motorcycling. Even when I attempted to probe them for more information they would try to avoid the question, offer little information or enough observations to maintain face, or would attempt to change the subject. Some of my respondents also seemed reluctant to share their own personal experiences and without additional probing they would not have willingly done so.

Tokenism may also be apparent at some motorcycle dealerships or throughout motorcycling culture over all. There are simply not enough clothing and safety gear options available for women. Rather than make new clothes and accessories for women manufacturers practice tokenism by only offering styles and accessories that fit current gender stereotypes rather than to challenge and create new ones. I also found that Glamser (2003) was right in his research. Respondents who are women were often shepherded by men to learn about and become interested in motorcycling.

Finally, I discussed how the identity of motorcyclists seems to have shifted over time. No longer is the everyday motorcyclist an outlaw wearing black leather and chains (if he/she was ever one to begin with in the first place that is.) I did not find evidence that an anti-gloried state similar to Adler and Adler's (1989) gloried state exists within motorcycling. Rather, the stereotypes may remain but the actual identity and image of the biker has since shifted. While bikers may appear as anti-heroes in a "gloried" state through the media the everyday biker consists of individuals from multiple walks of life and experiences. They cannot be put into a box. They may, however, be impacted by

advertising and not realize it. Even if they do not support the idea of branding they may follow conceptions of branding through their mere actions and reactions to advertising. Some motorcyclists who do not care about the brand of an item may care about its quality.

The quality of an item can depend upon its brand, or at least that is how others in society may view it. Therefore, branding equals quality. Those who only care about having functional clothing and gear may support branding just because the functional clothing they wear is from one brand or another. This fits Orend and Gagne's (2009) findings that a person's self-identity may be established and portrayed by the way in which someone either shows off logos or brands through tattoos or through clothing. It is also shown in how they prefer to have functional clothing that is of one brand over another (because they are still wearing that brand and showing it off to society even if they do not believe in branding)

While it seems like motorcyclists can remain independent from the effects of advertising, they actually are not. Advertising may send messages, ideals, and spur action from a group of people without them ever realizing it. They may then act on those messages and ideas to make choices or conceptions about motorcycle brands without ever having thought about it before. It seems that no matter how hard a motorcyclist may try to escape advertising, its powers, and its effects, they end up back underneath it.

Suggestions for Future Research

In this research I have touched on several areas of motorcycle subculture. However, I have not touched on every possible subject in minute detail. There are some

areas, especially in reference to branding and gender of motorcycle subculture that warrant further investigation. My suggestions for future areas of inquiry touch on further investigation into identity formation and branding and gender formation.

While I was able to study and acquire data on how motorcyclists relate to logos and ideas of branding, I did not get data that chronologically looked at how this happened. In order to understand just how deep and how powerful logos and branding affect motorcyclists it would be useful to ask future respondents when they first got involved in aspects of branding. While I did ask motorcyclists what their first bikes were it would be additionally useful to find out why they chose to either remain or switch brands of bikes.

From a marketing perspective for motorcycle brands, acquiring data on why someone chooses to stick with a particular brand of preference would provide insider data on how to keep current customers, create loyal ones, and appeal to new ones. So far in my research all I have acquired for brand loyalty is that some respondents would not dare wear certain brands at times because of situations with acquiring a fragmented identity or because it is “just not the thing to do” for them (because they are already too brand loyal to change).

In order to see why they are truly brand loyal, additional research needs to be done to locate why a sense of American pride is important to Harley enthusiasts or why a British Triumph is important to classic motorcycle enthusiasts. I believe looking into McDonaldization in relation to the name “Harley Davidson” would also be a profound research project. This would allow for further insight into how powerful the name Harley

Davidson, and its impact on consumer choices when purchasing a bike or allying with a brand.

I also admit that I did not do enough probing into areas of gender with my respondents. Often my questions were limited and so were the responses. Therefore, future research should look further into analyzing notions of equality in motorcycling between men and women. While I did manage to find that patriarchy still has a place in the motorcycling scene as well as it is still a male-dominated sport, I did not receive a good look into what motorcyclists think about equality. In order to truly understand the contexts of gender differences in motorcycling motorcyclists need to be asked about what they think about gender equality and how they have either seen it enacted or not enacted. Some of my respondents did not like to be probed about gender, seemed reluctant to discuss it in depth, or did not seem to have much interest in it other than a few observations. By pushing for more answers a better contextual idea of just how much masculine domination is left in motorcycling could be acquired.

Finally, while I initially went into this project thinking that alienation exists in motorcycling and that this is one main reason that people choose to motorcycle, I did not receive solid feedback on this. While 8 respondents did state that they rode to relieve stress the feedback they offered was minimal; from relieving stress, to not needing a therapist, to just getting away to having all that daily stuff go away; it was not enough evidence to support the theory of alienation. Rather, relieving stress or getting away from daily life seemed to be just one reason that respondents rode. Most decided to ride because; it provided a sense of adventure, it could free their mind temporarily, it felt like

freedom, they felt like one with nature or the world, it was a great hobby, and most of all it allowed them to practice social relationships.

I do suggest that more specific research be done in order to see if alienation brings people to motorcycle. I think that alienation does have a place in motorcycling culture, but only a minor one in drawing some people to ride. However, I would argue that a social-psychological influence has more of an effect on why someone would ride and keep on riding. Motorcycling provided bikers with an identity that is popular in our culture. Motorcyclists' identities along with their philosophies and understandings of life are linked and/or based with riding and being bikers. Without being bikers they may lose a sense of themselves and an idea of their place in society. I would argue that based upon the amount of information I gathered in my results chapter on; identifying concepts of brotherhood, gender, and branding, that a social-psychological connection between a motorcyclist' self and their identity was a more prevalent theme and theory that showed up in my overall findings over a theme of alienation.

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

“Making Sense of Motorcycle Brotherhood: Women, Branding, and Construction of Self”

You are invited to take part in research about the meaning of brotherhood in motorcycle cultures. You are expected to **provide up to one hour of your time** for this interview. Should a second interview take place, you are expected to provide up to one more hour of your time for your participation in this project.

You are a potential participant because you have chosen to participate based upon referral by a publically posted flyer in a local motorcycle dealership, through a posting in the local newsletter of a Christian Motorcyclist Association newsletter, or through word of mouth of someone who has seen or heard about this information. You are also a potential participant because you participate in the motorcycle subculture and you own or have owned a motorcycle in the past two years.

Purpose

This project focuses specifically on elements of branding within the motorcycle subculture between Harley Riders and Non-Harley riders. The goal of this project is to determine differences and similarities in definitions and understandings of brotherhood between these two groups.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this research, and sign this consent form, we ask that you

- Participate in a one-on-one interview
- Verify that you are at least eighteen years or older
- Acquire and provide any original pictures you may find meaningful to this project
- Participate in potential follow-up interviews to verify information you have already provided or to provide more material for this project
- **Allow audio recording of your interviews**

Note: *Photographs that are original in nature and not under copyright; will be included in this project with your permission. These photographs may be used in published articles about this project or in public presentations of this project upon your approval of them in the checkbox below. If you have photos of yourself taken by others (and not just photos of objects, things, or places), these photos shall only be included with your permission to have your self-image published. If you have photos of yourself published, your pseudonym will be used to refer to you in public presentations and articles, and not your real name.

A digital audio recorder will be present during interviews. The co-investigator will replay the information recorded after this interview session in order to create a

written transcript for further analysis. After the information has been transcribed and analyzed, the audio will be erased from the hard-drive of both investigators' computers one year after the meeting date. Only Dr. Emily Boyd and Kimberly Maas will access to information on the recordings. After the data of this project has been analyzed, the transcriptions of this interview shall be deleted from the co-investigator's hard-drive as she will be the only individual to have these transcripts on her computer.

Your Rights:

- Your participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study if you do not wish to be.
- You have the right to change your mind and leave the study at any time without giving any reason, and without any penalty.
- Any new information that may make you change your mind about being in this study will be given to you.
- You will be given a copy of this form to keep.
- **Your decision whether or not to participate in this research will not affect your relationship with Minnesota State University, Mankato.**
- You may be asked to conduct a second interview, but this is not a requirement to participate in this project
- You do not waive any of your legal rights by signing this consent form.
- Any images that you have given to the investigators may only be included in public presentations or published articles upon your initial review and approval of them

Guidelines for the Interview:

- If you have difficulty answering a question, you are asked to do your best to respond, but should not feel obligated to do so.
- You are feel free to elaborate on any question or concerns that you may have.

By signing this, you understand that my information will be kept confidential and that any information you wish to be omitted from the study or public information shall be upon your request. You understand that Dr. Emily Boyd and Kimberly Maas will have access to the data, and that they guarantee the preceding conditions in exchange for my agreement to participate in this study. This consent form will be kept on file in lock and key in Dr. Boyd's faculty office for three years and then destroyed in a shredder.

If you have any questions or concerns you can call Emily Boyd at: 507-389-1375 or email her at: emily.boyd@mnsu.edu. You may also mail her at: Department of Sociology and Corrections, 113 Armstrong Hall, Mankato MN, 56001. Or you can also contact Kimberly Maas at: Kimberly.maas@mnsu.edu, phone: 507-210-7783, email: Kimberly.maas@mnsu.edu. If you have further questions about the treatment of human subjects, you can contact the IRB Administrator, Dean Barry Ries at:

Dean Barry Ries
 IRB Administrator
 Minnesota State University, Mankato
 Institutional Review Board
 115 Alumni Foundation
 (507) 389-2321.

Benefits and Compensation

The risks of participating in this research are minimal, as the focus is on motorcycling interests and experiences and all information will remain confidential. The potential benefits in this study are self-satisfaction in having participated and contributed to the learning community. There are no forms of compensation, such as monetary or otherwise for this study. There may be the benefit of reflecting upon your hobby and sharing it with others.

By checking these boxes you:

- I agree to the audiotaping of this interview session**
- Have read and understand the attached interview guidelines
- Are 18+ years old
- Agree to be interviewed one-on one.
- Agree to have your interview(s) audiotaped.
- Agree to have original photos of objects and/or places used in this research project
- Agree to have photos of your self-image included in this project with the understanding that your real name shall not be attached to them, and instead a pseudonym will be
- Agree to have my consent forms kept under lock and key in Dr. Boyd's office for three years
- Understand that you may be asked to participate in a follow-up interview, but are not required to do so

By signing this, you verify that you have *read the above information and understand that this interview is voluntary and your participation may stop at any time. You consent to participate in this study.*

Participant Signature _____

Date: _____

Researcher signature: _____

Date: _____

Participant received a copy.

MSU IRB LOG #

Date of MSU IRB approval:

Appendix B: Sample Interview Script:

-Tell me about yourself. How do you describe yourself in terms of age, race, creed, and gender?

-Tell me about your first experiences in motorcycling? At what age did you acquire an interest in motorcycles? What experiences or memories were critical to the formation of such an interest? Who influenced your decision to ride? Were they male or female?

-How old were you when you had your first bike? When you first learned how to ride?

- Which gender should control a motorcycle? Who should ride in the back?

-What is brotherhood to you? How do you define it?

-Please reflect upon your own experiences to either being broken down along the road or having assisted someone who was. Did they have a cell phone? Roadside assistance? Why did you stop if you helped them? If you were the one who was broke down, did anyone stop to help you? Did you have to use a cell phone? If you helped a broke down motorcyclist, did they use their phone to try and acquire outside help to solve the problem?

-Do you ride a motorcycle right now? If so, why? If not, why did you choose to quit and what did you do with your bike?

-What type of bike do you ride now and why did you choose it?

-Do you wear any corporate logos either on your clothing or through tattoos? Do you decorate your bike a specific way? If you do, why have you chosen to do so? Where and when did these ideas start?

-Thank you for participating in this study. Please have a good day.

Appendix C: Application for the Conduct of Research Involving Human Subjects

University policy requires that all research involving human subjects be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). In completing the application, be aware that the persons reviewing it may be unfamiliar with the field of study involved. Present the request in typewritten form and in non-technical terms. Incomplete proposals will be returned without review. **Data collection may not begin until written approval is received from the IRB.**

After you complete this form, please upload and submit it on IRBNet.

I. General Information

- a. Principal Investigator (PI)** Any research under the auspices of Minnesota State University, Mankato must have an MSU faculty member or MSU professional employee designated as the responsible person.

PI Name: Dr. Emily Boyd

Department: Sociology and Corrections

Campus mail address: 113 Armstrong Hall, Minnesota State
University, Mankato, Mankato MN, 56001

Phone number: 507-389-1375

E-mail address: Emily.boyd@mnsu.edu

- b. Co- Principal Investigator (PI)**

PI Name: Kimberly Maas

Department: Sociology and Corrections

Campus mail address: 113 Armstrong Hall

Phone number: 507-210-7783

E-mail address: Kimberly.maas@mnsu.edu

- c. Sub-Principal Investigator(s)** Person(s) who will be collaborating with the primary investigator conducting the research (for example, collaborating faculty, MSU employees, or graduate students completing capstone projects/research).

If there is more than one CI, provide the information listed below for each CI. You can do this by copying and pasting the requested information

CI Name:

Department:

Mailing address:

Phone number:

E-mail address:

c. Project Title: Making Sense of Motorcycle Brotherhood: Women, Branding, and Construction of Self

d. Proposed dates during which data will be collected (indicate the anticipated timeframe during which data will be collected from human participants)

From (month-day-year): January 19, 2012 to (month-day-year)
August, 31, 2012

e. Location of data collection* (Identify the actual site where humans will be participating)

Data collection shall consist of participant observation at: two local Harley-Davidson dealerships and through a local vintage motorcycle shop, as well as Honda and Yamaha dealerships in the Southern MN area. Data collection will also consist of semi-structured interviews. Interviews shall take place primarily in Mankato, Minnesota at locations suggested by respondents. It will also take place via telephone or internet communication for respondents that are not located in Mankato, MN (these individuals may be a part of the sister chapter of the CMA which is located out of Kirksville, Missouri).

**If data will be collected off campus, upload with this application a signed letter indicating permission from the institution/organization (on official letterhead) to allow the data to be collected at that location.*

f. Source of funding (Include a description of funding that has been awarded or has been applied for associated with this particular study)

[x] No outside funding has been obtained to support this research

g. Previous human subject's approval:

Has this proposal been submitted to another human subjects committee?

yes no

Has this proposal been approved by another human subjects committee?

yes no

If the answer to either of the previous questions is yes, list the name of the agency/university:

If the proposal has been approved, attach a copy of the approval with this application.

II. General Purpose of the Research Project

Provide a brief overview (1-2 paragraphs, 500-750 words) of the research project that summarizes: (1) the research question(s) or hypothesis(es) investigated, (2) what you are seeking to understand, and (3) potential outlets through which the findings will be disseminated to the public.

In this study, we hope to be able to expand upon the research on brand loyalty and how it relates to how motorcyclists interpret brotherhood. Presently, there are few mentions of what "brotherhood" means to motorcyclists in the literature that we have reviewed. Therefore, in order to answer this question of what brotherhood means, and how motorcyclists define it themselves, the co-principle investigator (CI) will interview and conduct participant observation on motorcyclists in the Midwest.

We wish to be able to answer the question whether the motorcyclist's image is commoditized and marketed not only through the institution of media, but through the ways in which bikers themselves define and understand the term "brotherhood." We will accomplish this by asking the motorcyclists if they ever wear certain brand-identifiable clothing and how this all started, as well as what they believe it means to the overall conception of brotherhood itself. The CI will

also ask them what type of bikes they ride and whether or not they decorate them a particular way in order to confirm brand-identity.

This will help show how motorcycles construct an identity within the subculture of motorcycling. It will also show how significant the art of motorcycling is to establishing, portraying, and affirming their overall social identity and sense of self; and whether motorcycling is a significant aspect of the way they both describe and portray themselves to others.

The CI, who will conduct all interviews, will ask questions that focus on the type of groups that my respondents ride in, as well as who they affiliate with (in aspect to other types of motorcyclists) in their free time. We will also ask whether or not they wear brand-specific clothing or apparel. We will also take note of their gender in the interview process and question them about feelings of their position or rank within their riding group or riding groups in general.

These questions will serve as a basis for further discussion on why these individuals either choose to ride individually on their own or to ride in groups. It will also show why they either choose/do not choose to participate in the marketing of certain motorcycle brands. Finally, we will ask them how they feel about individuals who either join or do not join a particular group they ride with to see if there are particular characteristics or preferences that relate to “branding” when riding with others.

Through these questions, we hope to be able to answer the whether new members to riding groups are considered “converts or victories” particular branding cultures of motorcycle groups. This will help to locate just how powerful

branding is not only in motorcycling, but also in the ways that brotherhood is accomplished and acted out within our culture. At the same time, we will be examining self and identity, gender, as well as rank and hierarchy to see if they may be potential influences on how individual motorcyclists define what brotherhood means to them, and how it is acted out within the subculture of motorcycling.

The findings of this project may be disseminated to the public through the CI's thesis defense and through potential publication of data findings in professional scholarly journals, including Minnesota State University's Graduate Research Journal. Finally, current research progress may be presented to the public at the 2012 Midwest Sociology Society conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota in March 2012 upon approval of the IRB application.

III. Description of Participants, Sampling, and Recruitment Procedures

- a. **Anticipated ages of participants** (check all groups that are likely to participate)
 - 0-17 year olds (minors) 18-64 year olds 65+ year olds
- b. **Anticipated number of participants** (check one)
 - 1-10 11-25 26-50 51-100 101-200 200+
- c. **Describe briefly the demographic characteristics of the participants** (For example, the IRB is especially concerned if the study will purposefully recruit members of a vulnerable population – such as, minors, ethnic minorities, the elderly, prisoners, individuals of low socioeconomic status, individuals with cognitive or physical impairments, etc.)

The individuals included in this study shall consist of adults aged 18 and up.

They shall be divided into two groups: Harley riders and non-Harley riders. While there are other companies of American-made motorcycles out there such as Indian

and Buell, this study shall focus on Harley riders as they are the most accessible in the area for the time period expected of this study.

In order to locate potential respondents, the following criteria will be used to define Harley riders from non-Harley riders. The criteria of Harley riders will be: (1) they must own, rent or have owned/rented a Harley-Davidson within the last two years, (2) they must not have had as their primary ride any other brand of motorcycle other than Harley-Davidson in the last two years, and (3) their motorcycles must contain enough Harley-Davidson manufactured parts to be recognizable as a model that Harley-Davidson has manufactured since its original inception in 1903.

The following criteria will be used to define non-Harley riders: (1) they must own, rent or have owned/rented a non-Harley-Davidson motorcycle within the last two years, (2) they must not have had a Harley-Davidson as their primary ride in the past two years, and (3) their motorcycles must not contain enough Harley-Davidson originally manufactured parts to be instantly recognizable as a model that Harley has manufactured since its original inception in 1903. The quest for locating subjects shall be stopped once I have met the goal of ten individuals in each group.

Subjects may be of any race, creed, gender, or sex so long as they are over eighteen years of age, can provide their own legal consent to participate in interviews, and fulfill the above requirements to fit into either the non-Harley Davidson or Harley-Davidson rider groups. Those who do not fulfill these requirements will not be considered for participation in the project. The respondent will be asked to verify their age on the informed consent document.

While conducting participant observation, the student investigator will not write or include notes in public dissemination of findings of those who appear to be minors.

d. Describe how people will be recruited to participate in the study
(Provide attached copies of any/all recruitment scripts and printed materials)

A purposive-criterion sampling method will be used to locate potential respondents for this study. Respondents shall be located through gatekeepers at two local Harley-Davidson dealerships and through a local vintage motorcycle shop, as well as Honda and Yamaha dealerships. The gate-keepers shall be given a poster that contains information about the study along with my contact information. The CI shall also email the president of two riding clubs, her own and a sister chapter. She will ask if the poster she makes can be posted in their monthly newsletter. If permission is acquired, her email address, and phone number shall be included on the posters for respondents to refer to if they are interested in participating.

IV. Project Description

a. In a paragraph, broadly describe the methodological design used to gather data (e.g., experimental, questionnaire/survey, content analysis, observational, ethnographic)

Upon IRB approval, we will begin data collection using combination of ethnographic observation and twenty semi-structured interviews. The interviews shall consist of asking respondent's the questions included in the interview script. The ethnographic methodological design shall consist of photo-taking at the places where the respondent conducts interviews and at motorcycle events. They shall also consist of

participant observation that is conducted at motorcycle events with the approval of gatekeepers to be allowed access into such events.

b. More specifically, explain the study procedures in a detailed, chronological sequence by documenting the steps that occur after you have recruited people to participate. Including:

- (1) when and how you will obtain informed consent,
- (2) when/where/and for how long participants will participate,
- (3) exactly what participants will be asked to do,
- (4) the instrumentation, measurements, interview protocols, etc. used, and
- (5) how participants will know when the study has ended.

The data for this study shall be collected by the CI through twenty semi-structured interviews and through observations collected while visiting motorcycle shops, dealerships and events in the area. There will be ten interviews conducted for Harley owners, riders, or renters. There will be ten interviews conducted for non-Harley owners, riders, or renters. Interviews shall take place at a place of a respondent's choosing. The interviews are expected to last between one to two hours.

In the event we notice that a particular theme is discussed often in later interviews but was not acknowledged with earlier cases, the CI will conduct post-interviews upon the approval of a modified IRB program proposal. In the event that we have to conduct post-interviews, we will then contact respondents by calling those who were interviewed at the beginning of the study to see if they are available for a follow-up interview. At the start of the follow-up (or post) interview, the informed consent form will be re-read to them and they will be reminded that they are not required to participate in the follow-up interview if they do not wish to.

Any questions that were left out in the first interviews will become the main topic of the post-interviews. This will allow us to obtain data about these themes from all respondents rather than from just a few. Collection of data for this study will be completed once ten interviews have been obtained in each category, for a total of twenty interviews total.

All interviews that are to be **conducted will be recorded on a digital audio recorder. They will then be transcribed by the CI and then deleted from both the recorder and the CI's computer.** The CI will use pseudonyms on these transcripts, rather than the respondent's real name. Once the final section of the CI's thesis has been completed at the end of this project, all transcriptions used in this study will be deleted from her computer's hard drive. The informed consent forms that are collected in this study shall be the only place where the respondent's real name is used. These forms will be kept in lock and key in the PI (Emily Boyd's) office for three years under lock and key. They will then be destroyed in a shredder when the three year time has passed.

The CI will conduct data collection through a combination of ethnographic observation and twenty semi-structured interviews. While interviews take place, ethnographic observation that details the surroundings will be documented in field notes. Data will also be collected through ethnographic field notes that the CI makes in the field when attending motorcycle events or visiting motorcycle shops or dealerships in the area. This form of ethnography will take place through the method of participant observation.

Field notes will be used to describe and explain the environment in which the two groups of motorcyclists embrace. Field observations will also be used to enhance topics

and suggestions made in interviews in order to provide a sociological perspective on motorcycle brotherhood culture. While interviews take place, ethnographic observation that details the surroundings will be documented in field notes. Data will also be collected through ethnographic field notes that the CI makes in the field when attending motorcycle events or visiting motorcycle shops or dealerships in the area.

Field notes will be used to describe and explain the environment in which these two groups of motorcyclists embrace. In these notes the type of people bikers communicate with, the objects of value they surround themselves with, and even sights and sounds that prove qualitatively significant to how these individuals may interact in their own social environment will be recorded. Field observations shall also be used to enhance topics and suggestions made in interviews in order to provide a sociological perspective on motorcycle brotherhood culture.

Finally, respondents who are interviewed for this project will be asked to provide any original photos of their motorcycle hobby to be included in this project among their permission. These photos shall be used during presentations at conferences or in published journals of this study. The respondent's self-images will only be used if they agree to this on the informed consent form. Only the pseudonym of the respondent will be included to discuss their photos in published research articles or in conference presentations which will occur after this project is completed, not their real names. Photos will not be allowed to be included in this

study if they are not originally produced –such as those that are under copyright will not be allowed.

Upon the gate-keeper's approval the CI will also take photos of the locations where she conduct's participant observation. Only photos of the location will be included in this method. There shall be no photos taken of actual human beings. These photos will be used only to help the CI enhance the memo's that she takes in the field, so that she may remember the physical atmosphere of the places she has visited and the events she goes to. These photos will also be used in conference presentations or in scholarly journals to show the audience what certain places or locations look like when the CI refers to them. They will only be included in any format with the gate-keeper's permission.

- c. Discuss the potential risks participants may encounter by participating, and address how you will insure these risks are managed and minimized** (risks can include but are not limited to physical or mental harm, stress, discomfort, undesirable social, economic, and/or financial consequences)

There is minimal physical or professional risk to the respondents. This research is voluntary. There is a slight risk of emotional trauma related to past experiences the respondents may have had. However, this risk is minimal, as there are no direct questions about trauma or other emotionally charged subjects.

- d. Describe potential benefits for participating in the research** (first, list any potential benefits to the participants and then list potential benefits to society).

Potential benefits for respondents who participate in this study are the following. They get to tell stories of their own life experiences and share experiences, feelings, and ideas about a hobby that they enjoy and find to be a

crucial portion of how they identify themselves. The potential benefits to society that this project has is that first, it allows a deeper understanding of how subcultures create, sustain, and reaffirm meanings of ideas important to the overall structure and design of the subculture itself. It also allows on a scale large than just motorcycle groups, an understanding of what brotherhood may mean to individuals. This understanding in itself could open gateways to new research in how other subcultures, such as street gangs or other hobby groups form and structure their groups. It may show an insight into survival or coping techniques of mankind as a species, and to a larger extent how important or significant to oneself acquiring certain intimate relationships are to sustaining one's sanity or sense of comfort in life.

e. Describe any compensation to the participants

There are no types of compensation awarded to participants in this project other than the potential benefit that they may enjoy sharing their stories about a hobby that they enjoy.

V. Protection of Participants' Rights

- a. Have you attached the necessary consent form(s) required for use to conduct the proposed study?

yes no

When working with minors, or adults who are not able to read and complete a consent form of their own volition, it is required that you also prepare and use an assent form. Is an assent form necessary in this proposed study?

yes no

- b. Describe how participants will be informed of the intent of the study, potential risks to them, and their rights regarding participation.

Respondent's rights will be protected in the following ways. At the beginning of the interview process, the respondents will be made aware of the main focus of the research and will be allowed to ask any questions or make any comments that may concern them. The respondents of this study shall be informed that this research is voluntary. Anything that they wish not to be included shall not be included in the study. After the student investigator who is conducting the interviews explains this, the respondents shall be introduced to the informed consent form. This shall be read to them verbally and it shall be explained that they can refuse to participate in this research project at any time during any stage. They will be made aware details of the interviews may be used in professional research. However, they

will also be made aware that on any publically disseminated information pseudonyms rather than their real names shall be used.

- c. Describe how and where consent documents will be maintained. (Note: consent records must be retained for at least 3 years in a locked location at Minnesota State University, Mankato under the control of the Principal Investigator).

The only location respondent's real names will exist is on the informed consent forms which will be under lock in key in the principal investigator's office for three years and on a respondent contact information document, that includes their pseudonym along with their phone number. Privacy and confidentiality will thus be ensured and protected throughout the study as the primary and secondary investigators shall be the only one who has access to the informed consent forms. The consent forms will also be kept on file under lock and key in the PI's (Dr. Boyd's) faculty office for three years and then destroyed in a shredder.

- d. Describe how the privacy, confidentiality, and/or anonymity of participants will be protected.

Privacy shall also be maintained by in that, once transcriptions have been typed up, the original recordings will be destroyed by deletion of the digital files from both investigator's computers. Transcripts shall also be kept only on the CI's hard drive of her computer, which requires a login and password to access (Kimberly Maas). These transcripts shall be deleted from her hard drive once all data has been analyzed and the findings section of her thesis has been finalized. The contact form that lists the respondent's pseudonym's and connected phone number, will also only be accessible on the CI's hard drive, and will not be stored in any other location.

Photos shall also be taken via a digital camera. In order to protect them, the CI will immediately transfer them to her computer (and delete them from her camera) once the interview or participant-observation event is over. This will thus be protected as her computer is secured with a username and password in order to access her user account or any files on the hard drive.

After explaining the informed consent to them, the interviewer will ask them one more time before beginning the interview if they still wish to participate. If they do, they shall be asked to sign the form. The interviewer will sign it after them, and give them one copy to keep with the written guidelines of the interview included with it. Should they have any concerns or ideas about the treatment of human subjects involved in research they can contact:

IRB Administrator, Dean Barry Ries,
Minnesota State University, Mankato

Institutional Review Board
115 Alumni Foundation
(507) 389-2321.

Finally, respondents will be given the option to participate in post-interviews throughout the research process. If the researcher feels that more clarity is needed on a particular subject or response given to a question in the first interview, respondents may be asked to be interviewed again if they are interested. They will be told that they may be asked to conduct a follow-up interview in the original informed consent document. It will be explained to them that a secondary interview, just like the first, is also voluntary and they are not required to participate in it. They are able to withdraw their participation in this research project at any time. Follow-up interviews will be handled like first interviews that the CI conducts, in that the interviews will be transcribed immediately after they take place. Only the CI investigator will have access to the transcripts on the hard drive of her computer.

All respondents will also be given the option to see the final thesis paper and discussion/findings section of this study to determine if they agree/or do not agree with the student investigator's coding of the interview and participant observation results.

VI. Signatures

By electronically signing the IRBNet proposal, I agree to the following:

“In making this application, I certify that I have read and understand the Policies and Procedures for Projects that Involve Human Subjects, and that I intend to comply with the letter and spirit of the University Policy. Changes in the protocol will be submitted to the IRB for approval prior to these changes being put into practice. Informed consent/assent records of the participants will be kept by the Principal Investigator in a secure location at Minnesota State University, Mankato for at least three years after the completion of the research.”

A member of the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities System. MSU is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity University. This document is available in alternative format to individuals with disabilities by calling the College of Graduate Studies and Research at 507-389-2321 (V), 800- 627-3529 or 711 (MRS/TTY).

References

- Adler, Patricia A. and Peter Adler. 1989. "The Glorified Self: The Aggrandizement and the Constriction of Self." *Social Psychology Quarterly*: 52(4):299-310.
- Austin, D. Mark and Patricia Gagne. 2008. "Community in a Mobile Subculture: The World of the Touring Motorcyclist." *Studies in Symbolic Interaction* 30: 411-437.
- Austin, D. Mark. 2009, "Ritual and Boundary Distinction in a Recreational Community: A Case Study of Motorcycle Rallies and Riders." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 5(2): 70-93.
- Becker, Howard. 2001. "Outsiders." Pp. 92-95 in *Deviance and Social Control: A Reader*, edited by R. Weizer. McGraw Hill Companies.
- Best, Amy. 2006. *Fast Cars, Cool Rides*. New York: New York University Press.
- Charmaz, Kathy. 1990. "'Discovering' Chronic Illness: Using Grounded Theory." *Social Science Medicine* 30(11): 1161-1172.
- Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. *Review: Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis (Introducing Qualitative Methods series)*." Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Connell, R.W. 2005. *Masculinities, Second Edition*. University of California Press.
- Glamser, Francis. 2003. "Women Motorcyclists: Childhood Foundations and Adult Pathways." *Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology* 1:183-193.
- Glaser, Barney G. and Strauss, Anselm L. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Anchor Books.
- Goffman, Erving. 1976. "Gender Display." *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication* 3:69-77.
- Goodall, Harold L., Jr. 2004. "Deep play in a poker rally: A Sunday among the Ferraristi of Long Island." *Qualitative Inquiry* 10:731-766.
- Hackley, CE. 2001. "Marketing and social construction: exploring the rhetorics of managed consumption." New York: Rutledge.
- Holt, DB. 2002. "Why do brands cause trouble? A dialectical theory of consumer culture and branding." *Journal of Consumer Resource* 29 (1): 70-90.

- Hopper, Columbus and Johnny Moore. 1990. "Women in Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 18(4): 363-387.
- Kidder, Jeffrey L. 2006. "Bike Messengers and the Really Real: Effervescence, Reflexivity, and Postmodern Identity." *Symbolic Interaction* 29: 349-371.
- Learnhub. 2013. "Anti-Heroes in Literature." Retrieved March 31, 2013 (<http://english.learnhub.com/lesson/7614-anti-heroes-in-literature>).
- Librett, Mitch. 2008. "'Wild pigs and outlaws' The kindred worlds of policing and outlaw bikers." *Crime Media Culture* 4(2):257-269.
- Loftland, et al. 2006. *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Lorber, Judith. 1994. *Paradoxes of Gender*. Yale University Press.
- Lyng, Stephen. 2005. *Edgework: The Sociology of Risk-Taking*. New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis.
- Martin, Patricia Yancey. 2004. "Gender as Social Institution." *Social Forces* 82(4):1249-1273.
- Maxwell, Andrew H. 1998. "Motorcyclists and Community in Post-Industrial Urban America." *Urban Anthropology* 27: 263-299.
- McEnally M. de Chernatony L. 1999. "The evolving nature of branding : consumer and managerial considerations." *Academic Marketing Science Review* 2: 1-26.
- McGuire, P. 1986. "Outlaw motorcycle gangs: organized crime on wheels." *National Sheriff* 38: 68-75.
- McIntyre, Lisa. *The Practical Skeptic: Core Concepts in Sociology*. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw Hill, 2006.
- Mitchell, Richard Jr. G., and Adele Kubein. 2009. "Coming of Age in a Time of Motorcycles." Pp. 253-258 in *The Cultures of Alternative Mobilities: Routes Less Traveled*, edited by P. Vannini. Great Britain: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Motorcycle Industry Council. 2009. "Motorcycling in America Goes Mainstream Says 2008 Motorcycle Industry Council Owner Survey 'The industry's census' shows more riders, more households, more women, and more youth." Retrieved May 21st, 2013 (<http://www.mic.org/news051809.cfm>).

- Natalier, Kristin. "Motorcyclists' Interpretations of Risk and Hazard." *Journal of Sociology* 37(1):65-80.
- National Health and Medical Research Council. 1997. *Unintentional Injury In Young Males 15-29 Years*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.
- Orend, Angela and Patricia Gagne. 2009. "Corporate Logo Tattoos and the Commodification of the Body." Pp. 137-147 in *Readings in Sociological Psychology and Microsociology*, edited by S. Cahill and K Sandstrom. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Quinn, James. 1987. "Sex Roles and Hedonism Among Members of 'Outlaw' Motorcycle Clubs." *Deviant Behavior* 8(1): 47-63.
- Quinn, James. 2009. "Leathers and Rolex: The Symbolism and Values of the Motorcycle Club." *Deviant Behavior* 30(3):235-265.
- Quinones, L. 1994. "Rebel image of motorcyclists set in 1950s." *Borderlands* 12(16).
- Reynolds, F. 1967. *Freewheelin in Frank (as told to M. McClure)*. London, England: New English Library.
- Schembri, Sharon. 2009. "Reframing brand experience: The experimental meaning of Harley-Davidson." *Journal of Business Research* 62: 1299-1310.
- Schouten, John W. and James H. McAlexander. 1995. "Subcultures of Consumption: Ethnography of New Bikers." *Journal of Consumer Research* 22: 43-61.
- Thompson, William E. 2009. "Pseudo-Deviance and the 'New Biker' Subculture: Hogs, Blogs, and Lattes." *Deviant Behavior* 30(1):89-114.
- Thorne, Barrie. 1980. "Gender...How Is it Best Conceptualized?" Unpublished Manuscript.
- West, Candace and Don H. Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender and Society* 1(2): 125-151.