

Adapting CT Strategies to Combat Organized Crime Gangs

*MAJ Anders Westberg, Swedish
Special Operations Command*

LIKE THE EMERGING THREAT OF HYBRID WARFARE, WHICH BLURS THE lines between state-sponsored aggression and insurgency, the delineation between criminal organizations and terrorist organizations can be hard to distinguish. Networked organized crime organizations, such as criminal motorcycle gangs (CMGs), are more similar to terrorist organizations than they are different. The incentives for their activities are the main difference between CMGs and terrorists; for instance, biker gangs primarily want money and prestige, while terrorists want political change. Because of these similarities, an analytical model of the kind used by security analysts to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of terrorist groups can help explain how criminal organizations, law enforcement agencies, and other critical players interact.

Law enforcement agencies and military organizations also share many similarities. Both organizations can learn from each other: one Swedish criminal intelligence department, for example, used a combined approach with some success in one of Sweden's police counties.¹ In the end, the military and police both have the authority and responsibility to use violence as a last resort to protect their societies in this ambiguous hide-and-seek threat environment. The legality of using the military in a domestic situation varies from country to country, but with some minor adjustments and in collaboration with the rest of the community, law enforcement and military organizations can be strengthened to deal with present and future threats. This article explores Sweden's evolving efforts to combat CMGs with the help of military analytical tools and looks at whether Sweden's experience can serve as a model not only for other countries that are fighting organized crime but also for countering terrorist networks.

A New Threat Reaches Sweden

Twenty-five years ago, no one anticipated the startling level of organized criminal activity that would exist in Sweden today. As a result of the growth in organized crime, the police and civil authorities have to be continually reactive, focusing on crimes that have already been committed and on investigating and arresting individuals rather than taking the time to look into each criminal organization as a whole. The situation began in the early 1990s, when the so-called "1%" motorcycle gangs first took root in Sweden. (The gangs took the label "1%" to declare their outlaw status, as opposed to the "99%" of motorcycle riders who are law-abiding.) Today the CMGs lead by example and demonstrate the possibilities of networked organized crime for newer gangs.

Because Sweden had no criminal and police intelligence structures at the local or regional levels in the early 1990s (apart from the civilian security service), law enforcement authorities and policy makers had no tools for understanding this new type of crime network through situational awareness and intelligence development. Law enforcement is focused mainly on petty crimes, burglary, theft, narcotics, and robbery. An established criminal intelligence structure could

CRIMINAL
MOTORCYCLE
GANGS ARE
MORE SIMILAR
TO TERRORIST
ORGANIZA-
TIONS THAN
THEY ARE
DIFFERENT.





have anticipated the rise in criminal gang activity and helped Sweden address the problems before they grew out of hand. Sweden was not prepared to face this new threat when it first appeared, so authorities are still “playing catch up” and focusing on repressive strategies while public safety continues to decline.²

Characteristics of the Criminal Motorcycle Gang Hells Angels

Organized crime can be said to live off society by offering the public high-demand goods and services that the government wants to ban or regulate. These include alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, prostitution, pirated media, cheap or black market labor, real estate, and transport.³ Like other businesses, organized crime groups such as the CMGs do not prosper in a society in chaos. The gangs are not trying to break down society but work, instead, to undermine or disrupt its legal framework and shift economic activities in a direction that favors their interests and promotes their primary sources of income.⁴ The Hells Angels organization operates as a successful transnational and stateless network. It is composed of members who have made a pledge of loyalty to a certain “brand” and franchise and who share a set of beliefs and unity of purpose. The organization depends on status, loyalty, identity, and an alternate way of life; and it preserves its own internal social safety net. This self-contained structure can severely undermine a “host” nation’s legitimacy and authority, as well as the rule of law.⁵

In a 2014 study, crime analyst Alexandra Jones compared Europe’s CMGs with jihadist groups. She noted, “As it is the nature of street gangs and jihadists to strive for control over territory, they look to control not just hearts and minds but actual neighborhoods on which they will impose their own rules and where they can stave off fiscal and judicial intervention.”⁶ Hells Angels is known for its use of fear and intimidation to achieve its goals.⁷ New members undergo rigorous screening and indoctrination, and they have to work their way up in the organization by earning respect.⁸ Like many jihadist organizations, once someone is accepted into Hells Angels, he can almost never leave. The organization’s management philosophy is to centralize decision making and decentralize action. Hells Angels has several chapters, or “charters,” each of which has a small core leadership that controls an organizational structure along the lines of a business enterprise. On average, a charter needs to have at least six members, including a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, sergeant-at-arms (responsible for security), and road captain. The illicit income-making activities are conducted mainly by constellation cells, consisting of one or more members who work with people outside the group.⁹ There are often some supporters and followers connected to each cell who provide services such as logistical support, recruitment, various kinds of subject matter expertise, financial support, intelligence, manpower, and safe havens.

Because of the tight control that the Hells Angels leadership exerts over its members, it is harder for law enforcement officers to penetrate and gather incriminating evidence from the Hells Angels organization than it is to gather intelligence about them.¹⁰ The gang’s reputation for being fearless and violent is strengthened by a “noble outlaw” myth similar to Robin Hood and other underdog storylines. This myth is often enhanced by the media and the promotional efforts and marketing of the organization itself. Local affiliated CMG groups usually act in the name of the Hells Angels brand to bolster their own reputations. From this description, it becomes apparent that many features of the motorcycle gang are remarkably similar to those of a modern terrorist organization.

The Swedish Story

How did Hells Angels gain such a strong foothold in Sweden? Sweden is roughly the size of the state of California in area (450,296 square kilometers) and currently has a population of nearly 10 million people. When Hells Angels first took root in Sweden at the beginning of the 1990s, its members fought a violent turf war (known as the Nordic Biker War, 1992–1997) with the Bandidos motorcycle gang.¹¹ Hells Angels prevailed due to its tight organizational structure and its extensive network of contacts with similar gangs throughout Sweden and the world.¹² Eventually, however, the clubs struck an uneasy truce and divided the Swedish “market” by both geography and criminal domains. Hells Angels remains the top-tier organized crime operation in Sweden.¹³ There are now 14 Hells Angels charters and eight supporting charters, called the Red Devils, located along main highways and roads across Sweden. A step below the Red Devils are a number of support gangs named the Red & White Crew. Due to this hierarchical structure of proxies and supporters, the core members of a Hells Angels chapter do not need to be directly involved in criminal activities, and the chapters themselves have deniability. These lower-tier affiliates also offer alternative ways for new recruits to join a Hells Angels charter in the hopes of eventually becoming “full-patch” members.¹⁴

Today, shell companies controlled by the club launder money, and the organization has managed to intermingle the black market with the white market (for instance, through transportation and construction companies), which means that the normal citizen is often indirectly and unwittingly supporting criminal activity.¹⁵ The Swedish government loses about US\$8 billion each year in tax income because of the black market in Sweden, and Hells Angels controls a significant portion of that market.¹⁶

The Hells Angels have also created a system of executive control over other gangs. That is, if an ordinary motorcycle club wants to have its own patch and wear a vest, this first needs to be approved and sanctioned by the Hells Angels organization. Indirectly, Hells Angels controls the biker culture and some of the more than 300 ordinary motorcycle clubs in Sweden that don’t necessarily have anything to do with either criminality or the Hells Angels organization. These biker clubs, however, are a perfect recruitment source (although far from the only source) for Hells Angels and its affiliates. This system of oversight allows recruits, prospects, and hangers-on to be vetted several times before they become full-patch members.¹⁷ Today, there are nearly 170 full-patch members and 250 supporters of Hells Angels in Sweden.¹⁸

Further Diagnostics: The Current Situation

In a 2014 lecture, Professor Gordon McCormick of the US Naval Postgraduate School stated that “Sweden has become tolerable to the intolerable.”¹⁹ To a certain extent, this is true. The Hells Angels organization has acted as a vanguard of organized crime in Sweden by taking advantage of the weakness of Sweden’s legal system and the absence of anti-gang laws. Liberal democracies like Sweden can have difficulty turning to violent and repressive means to combat criminality and other societal disruptions, including civil unrest.²⁰ The CMGs’ activities have created a void in society because policy makers and law enforcement agencies have lost the initiative in controlling them. Sweden lacks a comprehensive “whole of society” strategy or approach to organized crime. In short, although gangs are





committing crimes that affect normal citizens, a judicial process and adequate laws for combating these gangs are still missing. This void is currently being exploited by new criminal gangs that have lowered the threshold for using violence and intimidation in their activities. Consequently, there have been increased incidences of shootings and other violent crimes in the cities of Gothenburg, Malmö, and Stockholm.²¹ The situation, as it is being reported in the media, has caused concern in Europe and elsewhere. Some German authorities have commented on the need to combat these criminal organizations and create strong laws to avoid becoming “like Sweden.”²²

Organized crime gangs pose a clear and present threat to Swedish society—a threat that has largely been overlooked due to compartmentalization within the country’s police and government agencies, inadequate criminal policies, lack of an intelligence structure, and fiscal austerity.²³ Just over 20,000 police officers are divided among 25 counties in Sweden.²⁴ Because of shift work, at the most, 8,000 uniformed police officers can be on the streets of the entire country at any given time. Sweden, with a population of 9.6 million, has, on average, 206 police officers per 100,000 residents.²⁵ By comparison, Germany fields 300, and the EU averages 350 officers per 100,000 people.²⁶

Sweden’s low ratio of police to citizens might be acceptable if a high percentage of the citizens were law abiding, but this may not be the case. Värmland County, for instance, constitutes 4.3 percent of Sweden’s territory, nearly the same size as New Jersey or Massachusetts. In 2006, roughly 420 police officers were assigned to Värmland County, which meant that, on average, five or six patrol cars, with two police officers in each car, were on patrol at night.²⁷ At the same time, the county’s Criminal Intelligence Department had just one analyst working less than full-time on all CMGs in Värmland County. By comparison, Hells Angels, its affiliates, and hangers-on had about 20 people directly involved in criminal activity in the county, apart from the activities of other gangs active in Värmland. Hells Angels and other criminal gangs operating in Sweden had a distinct advantage over law enforcement, not only in terms of numbers of members but also in their ability to choose the time and place for their

activities. The gangs can choose whether to concentrate their efforts in a given sector, such as bringing drugs into one area, or whether to spread out the activity to avoid detection, depending on the presence of law enforcement and the gang’s needs.

Hells Angels, along with other crime organizations, is considered by Sweden’s law enforcement agencies to be a “system-threatening organization.”²⁸ The Swedish judicial system is especially at risk. In 2003 and 2004, Swedish authorities took actions to combat serious crimes related to the motorcycle gangs and others. In response, the targeted gangs used tactics of intimidation, including the use of violence; blackmail; and the stalking of not only judges, police officers, lawyers, jurors, prosecutors, and witnesses but also family members and other relatives of the gangs’ targets.²⁹ In effect, the entire Swedish judicial system has been under threat from members or affiliates of these criminal organizations. Prosecutors and judges have been reluctant to present or decide cases. It has also become more difficult to gather useful evidence from witnesses, investigate crimes, and prosecute criminals. Intelligence by itself is rarely admissible in court, although intelligence can sometimes be turned into evidence if needed.

This means that a slower decision-making loop obstructs the judicial processes, which leads to confusion and insecurity. In this climate, there is potential for bribery and corruption, which historically have been hard to prove. These crimes against societal institutions, such as the judiciary, can drive a wedge through society and create even more space in which criminals can maneuver. In other words, the pressure gangs put on the judicial system can serve as a foundation for widespread corruption among public officials.³⁰

Sweden’s public and private organizations and entities, such as the police force, schools, local communities, social services, and commerce, are compartmentalized. That is, they work in a stove-piped manner and normally do not exchange strategy and information. Local institutions and political parties often support different law enforcement policies and goals, but the nation’s police force is commanded and controlled at the national level. These factors are hurdles to the development of a comprehensive strategy to combat crime.



Because Sweden's citizens enjoy the right to freedom of association, neither the state nor other authorities (such as employers) may either compel or prevent a citizen's association with a legitimate individual or entity of his or her choosing. The main policy argument against use of the judicial process to curtail gang activity is that, although members of a motorcycle gang may commit crimes, this does not make the whole club or association criminal. Thus freedom of association has precedence over law enforcement, which makes it hard to create laws that target these groups, or to argue against the establishment of new CMGs in Sweden. These legal obstacles also limit cooperation between law enforcement agencies and civilian authorities, and undermine the police's ability to operationalize any anti-gang strategy. In general, the civilian police do not want to comment on or discuss the criminal motorcycle clubs, which makes it difficult for the country to engage in an open debate about this criminal activity, collect intelligence, or conduct what the military calls information operations.³¹

Swedish law enforcement authorities did not have a criminal intelligence organization in the late 1990s when the biker gangs were spreading. Investigations were performed in an ad hoc manner. The first criminal intelligence units stood up nearly eight years after the start of the Nordic Biker Wars in 1992, but a domestic national intelligence model was not introduced until 2006. Sweden's military, like most others, has always had some intelligence apparatus and processes to develop estimates, so the police were able to adopt some processes and techniques from military intelligence doctrine.

“ FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION HAS PRECEDENCE OVER LAW ENFORCEMENT. ”

A Comparison of Sweden's Law Enforcement Organization and Its Military

In most democratic countries, the police forces and the military are symbols of government control and the guardians of civil society. While the two sectors support each other to some extent, there are some important differences between them, as shown in figure 1. Most significantly, law enforcement focuses on internal, domestic threats while the military focuses on external threats to the nation-state. A police officer can work his or her entire career in the same district, which imparts a profound situational understanding that military personnel rarely enjoy. In recent times, many countries' armed forces have been used in out-of-area roles (e.g., in Afghanistan) and thus have developed an expeditionary mindset. Moreover, the military is known for planning and for having contingencies, while law enforcement's core activity is responsive in nature. If there is no crime, then law enforcement does not need to respond beyond the routine activities of protecting and serving. The military necessarily has a large support and command and control structure, while law enforcement uses a rather static infrastructure.

One major structural difference is that law enforcement officers perform their duties in small teams, pairs, or even as individuals, while the military works in

much larger formations and units. Police units are more geographically focused and concentrate on their jurisdiction over a much longer period of time than military units. The military uses targeting practices that aim to defeat, destroy, or neutralize the enemy or a subsystem of targets. These targets can be individuals or organizations, or they may be material, structures, and equipment. Conversely, law enforcement focuses almost entirely on the individual perpetrator or a relatively small group (see figure 1). As they go about their ordinary lives, citizens may occasionally see or interact with the military, but law enforcement is an intentionally visible part of civil society.

The role of the judiciary and rules of evidence are quite different for law enforcement and military personnel. Police investigations must be careful, thorough, and detailed enough that their results can be presented in a court of law. Law enforcement officers may be required to testify publicly in a courtroom. In contrast, this level of constraint on detail and procedure does not normally apply to military personnel.

Analysis: Integrating It All

This section uses some common military analytical models, including Center of Gravity (CoG) analysis and Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunity, and Threat (SWOT) analysis, to produce a comprehensive theoretical description of the criminal biker organizations that are the subject of this article. Military assessment models like CoG analysis and SWOT analysis had not been invented at the time the gangs first became a serious threat, but they may be useful for controlling them in the future. It is vital for states and their security apparatus to be very clear about what law enforcement organizations and the judiciary can and cannot do within the law and still win the conviction of a criminal. When it comes to international criminal networks like the CMGs, the government’s alternatives and possibilities are even harder to define because different countries have different problems, laws, and approaches to security. Meanwhile, outlaw biker gangs continue to take advantage of this legal vacuum and disregard national borders.³²

Figure 1. Differences between Law Enforcement and Military Organizations

LAW ENFORCEMENT (LE)	MILITARY OPERATIONS	COMMENTS
Works locally, at municipal and county levels	Expeditionary, operates out of home region	Expeditionary warfare has been the norm of Western forces over the last few decades. Normally, the military is focused on external threats and LE domestic threats.
Generally supports domestic culture and norms	Operates in and supports foreign cultures	LE know the terrain they work in. More often than not, the terrain is unfamiliar in military operations.
Reactive, first responders to crises	Pre-planned strategies and operations	
Close to, works with emergency services	Operates in remote areas, relies on in-house medics on various levels	
Established communication structure	Expeditionary and adaptive	
Evidence and investigation-led, supports judicial processes	Intelligence-led/intelligence driven	
Rule of law	Laws of armed conflict, OP-plans and OP-orders with rules of engagements	
Small patrols (individuals/pairs/teams)	Larger formation-sized units	SOF usually operate in small numbers. Conventional forces tend to operate in platoon- or company-sized and even bigger formations. Support and sustainment requirements are enormous compared with LE.
Typically focused on individual criminals	Typically targets organizations and systems	Military organizations sometimes target individuals, and can also target other parts of a system, including communications, roads, power, infrastructure.
Criminal usually has an interest in money and/or power	Opponent has political and financial interests; military has security interest	
Role is to investigate, protect, arrest, and convict	Role is to destroy, defeat, degrade, and neutralize	Security and peacekeeping are important to LE. Fire power and armed response are important in military operations.

One of the chief contributions a military-style threat assessment can make to law enforcement is that the assessment considers both “Red” side (enemy) and “Blue” side (friendly) actions and capabilities, rather than focusing solely on the opponent. This Red-versus-Blue comparison is necessary for law enforcement personnel to confront organized criminal activity. The need for legitimacy in gathering evidence for prosecution and for various anti-gang laws, is also an important consideration when states are trying to deal with violent non-state actors.

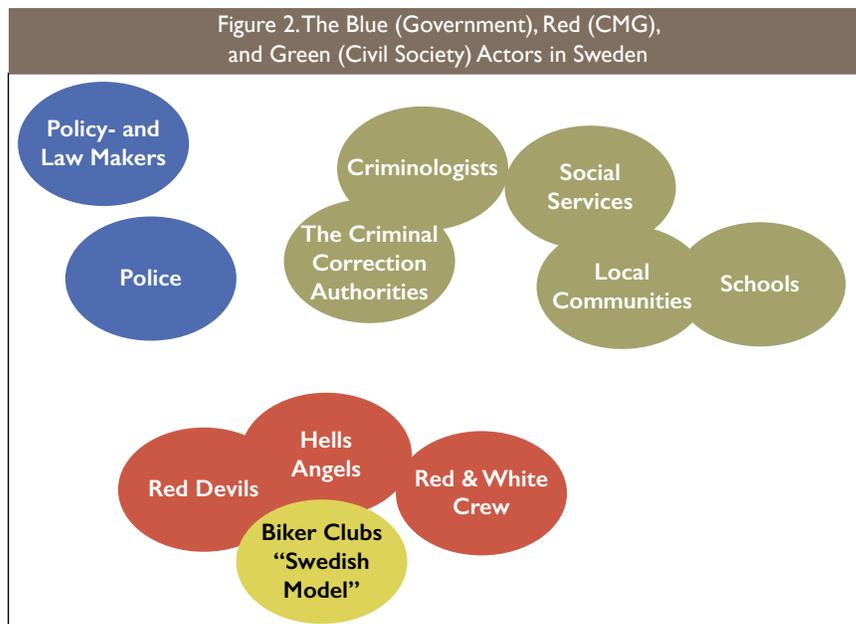
This analysis focuses more on areas of “relative power” such as mind-set, abilities, and views than would a typical military force-on-force comparison. The main goal is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the government’s legal and security structures and civil society groups and institutions. Once these values have been identified, they are compared against the strengths and weaknesses of the criminal gangs; the findings will give the Swedish government the information it needs to operationalize the most suitable and viable actions to combat these criminal organizations. Normally, law enforcement agencies and the military in Sweden do not work together against a domestic threat. The military’s analytical methods and experiences from policing operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, however, could readily support the Swedish police agencies through a military assistance program.³³

The problem for Sweden’s law enforcement community is not the typical law enforcement problem of simply finding the criminals; the police understand what the criminal networks are doing today and how they work.³⁴ Law enforcement generally takes three approaches to ensure community safety: education, prevention, and enforcement. All three approaches should be used in combating both criminal networks like the CMGs and terrorist networks. The criminal and police intelligence on gang activity is credible, and the motorcycle clubs, charters, members, and associates have already been well mapped-out through a social network approach. Several criminologists in Sweden have also sufficiently analyzed and explained the main underlying causes of the gangs’ spread.

Reliable information about the gangs’ future intentions, however, is the most difficult intelligence to collect and confirm. The biggest obstacle to prosecution, given Sweden’s legal environment, is finding the *evidence*—as compared to *intelligence*—that will win convictions in court. In law enforcement, intelligence is normally used to point to evidence, but because intelligence often lacks detail or sufficient proof, it often may not be used as evidence in a court of law. Moreover, the police continue to focus on the individuals and not the organization.³⁵ The underlying reasons why individuals join gangs and why gangs spread are complex and usually outside the responsibility of law enforcement. To develop a comprehensive “whole of society” approach to combating criminal or terrorist networks, analysts need to put more effort into considering and assessing not only the

“**RELIABLE INFORMATION ABOUT THE GANGS’ FUTURE INTENTIONS IS THE MOST DIFFICULT INTELLIGENCE TO COLLECT AND CONFIRM.**”

Figure 2. The Blue (Government), Red (CMG), and Green (Civil Society) Actors in Sweden



Blue side but also the “Green” side—social services, schools, local communities, and other societal/environmental factors. Figure 2 illustrates some of these relationships. The proximity of the ovals in the illustration reflects the relative, approximate, and estimated closeness of the various actors to one another.

An analysis of three key factors for each sector—in this example, foundation, characteristics, and organizational structure—reveals that there are some critical capabilities and requirements that are vital for the government to protect, such as free and independent elections and access to high-quality education (see figure 3). Normally, a military assessment is limited to the opponent and one’s own organization, for comparison. A law enforcement assessment, however, also needs to include the civil society and the impact it can have on developing a working comprehensive strategy.

Once an analysis has outlined the key factors for a sector/organization, the CoG model will help to identify both critical capabilities the sector/organization

Figure 3. Key Factors for Each Sector of Civil Society

	BLUE LAW ENFORCEMENT/POLICE	RED HELLS ANGELS	GREEN CIVIL SOCIETY
FOUNDATION	Engaged with community, available, lawful; requires legitimacy; works to protect, reduce crime, investigate and gather evidence; provides safety, service	Unlawful, money-driven, chartered, motorcycle-centered culture; promotes mythology, alternative lifestyle, active membership, freedom, pop culture, strong identity	Public service, official structures, education, local power and authority, rule of law
CHARACTERISTICS	Educated, trained, heterogeneous, visible, uniformed, cooperative, responsible, event driven, diverse, reactive, rule constrained; motivated by status and pride; locality-based	Homogenous, networked, adaptive, opportunistic, unafraid, resilient; depends on rapid and controlled expansion; motivated by status, loyalty, respect, and prestige; locality-based	Subject matter experts, knowledge-based, locality-based
ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE AND DESIGN	Hierarchical, networked, dispersed within locality, regulated, bureaucratic, career-oriented closed fraternal system; access to resources, regulated administration, multi-spectrum operations/responsibilities	Career-based, centralized decision-making, decentralized execution of operations, organized/structured hierarchy; seeks resources, supporters, opportunity, affiliates	Departmentalized structure, compartmentalized activities, administrative hierarchy
OTHER		Exploits gaps in legal system; defies society and judiciary indirectly and directly	

Figure 4. Center of Gravity Analysis: Blue and Red

	BLUE	RED
DESIRED END STATE	A prosperous and independent country	Independent and alternative lifestyle free from civil authority
CENTER OF GRAVITY	Democracy by election, supported by rule of law	“Brotherhood” and loyalty
CRITICAL CAPABILITIES	Law enforcement, independent judiciary, law-abiding citizens, rule-based honest governance, taxation, free elections, social security network, open independent media, mass access to education	Internal law enforcement, structure, property/territory, respect, freedom of choice, motivate and influence insiders/outside, decision making
CRITICAL REQUIREMENTS	Laws, professional educated police force and judicial system, workforce, commerce, jobs, various forms of media, educated population, ability to change and adapt, knowledge, shared values	Charters, minimum hierarchy, male-only membership, recruitment, inducements and control, indoctrination, contacts and support networks, shared values and identity, money, opportunity

needs in order to function and the critical requirements necessary to support those capabilities.³⁶ Using this sort of analysis to understand a CMG’s capabilities and requirements has been outside the police’s typical focus on individual gang members (see figure 4).³⁷ What is more, with the support of the CoG model, a law enforcement agency can learn critical information about the strengths and weaknesses of its own organization and the society it works within.

To thrive, Hells Angels needs the freedom of action to enforce its internal laws and continue to expand both its membership and the scope of its “business” enterprises. The club’s primary method for maintaining discipline and increasing membership is the “stick and carrot,” that is, a fluid combination of fear, loyalty, and money. Outlaw biker gangs also need to build and maintain a network for recruitment and to promote their criminal activity (see figure 4).

For an organization to develop a counter strategy, it needs to have a clear picture of the opponent’s vulnerabilities and strengths. One way to do this is by using a SWOT analysis once the CoG model has identified critical requirements and capabilities. In this example of the CMGs, the findings show that there are some opportunities for law enforcement to push back against the gangs, but there are also threats that need to be addressed. For example, figure 5 shows that the intimidation of officials by violent criminals can become a threat for both Blue and Green and must be taken into account for the future. The Blue side needs to protect itself from corruption and erosion of the rule of law. The Blue side must also overcome what can be characterized as a lack of political will and create strong criminal laws. The data in the row titled “Opportunity” show that the Blue side has yet to take advantage of opportunities to educate the public and make optimal use of available information and media platforms—credible information about the criminal gangs has to come through the authorities and not just through news stories. The media’s information channels, as well as the government’s, can be used to discredit CMGs, create a narrative of official fairness and civic lawfulness, and explicitly state what is at stake for the whole of society.

This example shows that use of the media and cooperation between Green and Blue should be exploited as an opportunity to combat CMGs. The lack of political will to change laws in Sweden, along with gray areas of responsibility and institutional stove-piping, make this kind of broad cross-sector cooperation difficult,

“**COOPERATION BETWEEN GREEN AND BLUE SHOULD BE EXPLOITED AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMBAT CMGS.**”

Figure 5. SWOT Analysis of Blue, Red, and Green Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

	BLUE	RED	GREEN
STRENGTH (INTERNAL)	Legitimacy, resources	Networks, fear, intimidation, loyalty	Subject matter experts, locally integrated
WEAKNESS (INTERNAL)	Compartmentalization, weak political will, poor cooperation, entrenched authorities, stymied lawmaking	Rigid core hierarchy, fragile internal mythology, money-driven, competitive	Administrative, weak management
OPPORTUNITY (EXTERNAL)	Education, media, intelligence sharing	Take advantage of the legal vacuum, low risk/moderate payoff, alliances, expansion	Cooperation, denial of insurance money, attrition, networking
THREATS (EXTERNAL)	Individualism, corruption, alternative living, undermining the law	Weak recruitment, other gangs, cooperation between Blue and Green	Intimidation, corruption

and the police rarely use media or other means of communication to influence or educate civil society. Political hesitancy, overstretched police forces, and slow decision making within law enforcement’s leadership are creating a security gap and interfering with the judicial process. Individuals feel insecure when the official strategies that are in place seem faulty or when they don’t understand why a disruptive event has taken place. If Red is exploiting weaknesses and undermining rule of law, then Sweden’s politicians must do what is necessary to create stronger laws and provide law enforcement with adequate resources to uphold the law.

Blue and Green together must continue to put pressure on the personnel of the Red’s core hierarchy. The treasurer and sergeant-at-arms, for example, could be the focus of leadership targeting rather than the president of the club. Normally, the presidents are investigated because they are the “shot callers”—the authorities in charge. The other two roles, however, can be seen as the glue that holds the charter or the club together. Many insights and opportunities for further exploitation can be gained by pressuring and eventually arresting the people in these positions.

Conclusion: Key Takeaways and Suggestions for a Way Forward

Both law enforcement agencies and the military can learn from each other. Using modeling and sharing lessons learned can improve each organization’s ability to combat criminal gangs and terrorist organizations respectively. The CoG model can help policy makers clarify a desired end state for their country’s civil society and law enforcement and then define the policies they must adopt to reduce the impact of CMGs on society. Aspects of the CoG and SWOT models, along with other military analytical tools, were used with some success in 2006 by a criminal intelligence department in Sweden to identify individuals and subjects for further targeting and investigations. This allowed the police to efficiently redirect needed resources and eventually win a conviction in court.³⁸ At the time, however, Sweden’s law enforcement community and its military did not have a common understanding or appreciation for one another. The application of the models in that case was possible because of the personal training and education of this author, not from institutional knowledge. Several years later, however, the author’s experiences from working with law enforcement from

2005 to 2006 were improved on and put into effect by the Swedish military.

Sweden now has a national counterterrorism board on which several organizations, including the military intelligence service, hold a seat. However, this working relationship needs further improvement: organizations need to shift their mind-set and recognize that there are analytical models and experiences that can be shared among the intelligence and security services to broaden their institutional knowledge. This will be particularly important in the future if potential and real adversaries erase the borders between terrorism, criminality, and low-level political/military aggression.

LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING FROM THE MILITARY AND VICE VERSA.

In Western democracies, there are differences and similarities in the methods governments use to combat terrorist organizations, insurgencies, and criminal organizations. For all of these countries, however, their security services, intelligence services, military organizations, law enforcement agencies, and civilian organizations can all benefit from sharing lessons learned and other information. In multinational military interventions, such as the operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan, the intro-

duction of fusion cells and centers is one useful example of operationalizing unity of effort. Several countries have also established similar centers for domestic security, and it would be wise to continue improving national and international cooperation through policies such as the exchange of law enforcement and military personnel and other governmental officials, multinational training and exercises, and professional education beyond a specific field of expertise. That is, law enforcement personnel should have access to education and training from the military and vice versa. Furthermore, from deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, Western militaries, especially special operations forces, have developed vast knowledge and experience in law enforcement techniques, such as the importance of site exploitation and biometrics.

For international interventions, the military is also beginning to understand the importance of social network analysis, which can be used with the CARVER (criticality, accessibility, recuperability, vulnerability, effect, and recognizability) targeting system to improve operational outcomes.³⁹ These methods should be further developed. Military planners should develop streamlined approaches for crisis response that will enable forces to react whenever needed. For example, a military unit should be able to go

after a criminal or terrorist target without the usual cumbersome planning and approval processes. This requires military leaders and personnel to develop the mind-set to face unknown situations, similar to the way a police patrol responds to a call of domestic disturbance without knowing the details of the situation or having planned its response ahead of time.

Sweden has taken great strides to combat terrorists. New legislation and directives allow the police to bring in military forces, including SOF, under the control of the law enforcement chain of command, whenever needed, to combat domestic terrorism.⁴⁰ With regard to organized crime and the CMGs, however, this is not the case. The inability of the Swedish judiciary and legislature to operationalize strategies and create bills and laws that adequately address organized crime is obvious not only with regard to the biker gangs; it has also contributed to ineffective efforts to combat Islamic radicalization in Sweden.⁴¹ A perception that the judicial process is not working leads people to ask whether the authorities have the ability to uphold law and order and ultimately challenges the state's capacity to exercise complete sovereignty.

This narrative of weakness can be countered, however, through improved job security, information and education campaigns that target the whole of society, and the use of police forces to combat criminals. A law that effectively criminalizes CMGs and outlaws gang membership is vital to this process. Canada and the United States both already have legislation (BILL C-51 [2015] and the RICO Act [1970], respectively) that can serve as models for developing Swedish laws against criminal gangs. If Sweden fails to act, the void can and will be further exploited by international criminal and terrorist organizations, which will not hesitate to use the differences between countries' legal systems to create safe havens and promote their activities. Sweden must have leadership at the national level and develop a national counter-gang strategy, preferably with broad international cooperation. If the sum of efforts is to be greater than its parts, the Swedish government must ensure unity of effort by clarifying the authority, mandates, and responsibilities of each agency or actor through carefully-crafted, comprehensive legislation and policy. Every agency and organization has something to offer and should be allowed to do so as part of a comprehensive government-wide response to a changing national and multinational security environment. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MAJ Anders Westberg is the Special Operations Command's SOF chair at the Swedish Defense University in Stockholm.

NOTES

- 1 This example is based on the author's own experience.
- 2 Nikolina Bucht, "Police about to Rescue Life Were Met by Stone Throwing" [in Swedish], *Svenska Dagbladet*, 4 August 2015: <http://www.svd.se/polis-skulle-radda-liv-mottes-av-stenar>
- 3 Therese Mattsson, "System-Threatening Criminality: A Threat against the Society?" [in Swedish], *Kkrvabt* 4 (2009): 21–32; Susanne Ohlin, "Cold Facts Has Investigated Hells Angels Expansion across Sweden" [in Swedish], TV4, 5 December 2012: <http://www.tv4.se/nyhetsmorgon/artiklar/kalla-fakta-har-granskat-hells-angels-utbredning-%C3%B6ver-sverige-50bf13b004bf721ab40000a>
- 4 Mattsson, "System-Threatening Criminality."
- 5 Hunter S. Thompson, *Hell's Angels: A Strange and Terrible Saga* (New York: Random House, 1996), Kindle edition.
- 6 Alexandra Jones, "Transformers: Motorcycle Gangs and Extremism," *Foreign Intrigue*, 28 August 2014: <http://foreign-intrigue.com/2014/08/transformers-motorcycle-gangs-and-extremism/>
- 7 Thompson, *Hell's Angels*; Mattsson, "System-Threatening Criminality."
- 8 Walter Roberts, *Biker Gangs: Hells Angels, Pagans, Outlaws, Bandidos, Bosozoku and Other World Gangs* (London: RW Press, 2012), Kindle edition.
- 9 Mattsson, "System-Threatening Criminality."

“ A MILITARY UNIT SHOULD BE ABLE TO GO AFTER A CRIMINAL OR TERRORIST TARGET WITHOUT THE USUAL CUMBERSOME PLANNING AND APPROVAL PROCESSES. ”

Copyright 2017, Anders Westberg. The US federal government is granted for itself and others acting on its behalf in perpetuity a paid-up, nonexclusive, irrevocable worldwide license in this work to reproduce, prepare derivative works, distribute copies to the public, and perform publicly and display publicly, by or on behalf of the US federal government. All other rights are reserved by the copyright owner(s). Foreign copyrights may apply.

- 10 Martin Mederyd Hårdh, “How the Police Will Combat Gang Crime” [in Swedish], *Svenska Dagbladet*, 29 July 2015: <http://www.svd.se/sa-ska-polisen-bekampa-gangbrottsligheten/om/sverige>
- 11 The Nordic Biker War, aka the Great Northern Biker War, took place across several Scandinavian countries in the mid-1990s. See, for example, Sarah Helm, “Biker Wars Dredge Up Something Rotten in the State of Denmark,” *Independent*, 11 May 1996: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/biker-wars-dredge-up-something-rotten-in-the-state-of-denmark-1346874.html>
- 12 Roberts, *Biker Gangs*.
- 13 Ohlin, “Cold Facts.”
- 14 Only full members of the club can wear a jacket or vest with patches that display the signature Hells Angels name and winged skull logo. It can take years for a prospective member to receive his patches. Full members have the right to vote in chapter meetings.
- 15 Katarina Lagerwall, “IRS: The Average Citizen Is Nurturing the Criminal Economy” [in Swedish], *Dagens Nyheter*, 29 July 2015: <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/skatteverket-svenssons-goder-den-grova-ekonomiska-brottsligheten/>
- 16 Lars Lindström, “The Swedish Mafia Is Making Billions on the Black Market” [in Swedish], *Expressen*, 21 January 2010: <http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/dokument/svenska-maffian-tjanar-miljarder-pa-svartjobben>
- 17 Roberts, *Biker Gangs*.
- 18 Ohlin, “Cold Facts.” Despite its relatively small numbers in Sweden, the Hells Angels’ organizational structure and its leverage over potential rivals enable it to exert economic power through the black and gray markets.
- 19 Gordon McCormick, lecture on social grievances in a seminar on guerilla warfare, US Naval Postgraduate School, July 2014.
- 20 Leo Blanken and Jason Lepore, “One Arm Tied Behind Our Backs? Assessing the Power of the United States to Combat Global Threats,” *CTX* 5, no. 3 (August 2015): <https://globalecco.org/one-arm-tied-behind-our-backs-assessing-the-power-of-the-united-states-to-combat-global-threats>
- 21 Brix Skis Blog, “A Low Intensity Urban War in Our Cities Is a Question of Policy—Homeland Security Policy” [in Swedish], 21 July 2015: <https://brixski.wordpress.com/2015/07/21/ett-lagintensivt-stadskrig-i-vara-stader-ar-en-fraga-om-politik-inrikes-sakerhetspolitik/>
- 22 Ohlin, “Cold Facts.”
- 23 Lars Korsell and Daniel Vesterhav, “The Development and Attributes of Organized Crime in Sweden” [in Swedish], in *Brottsutvecklingen i Sverige år 2008–2011* [The development of crime in Sweden: 2008–2011] (Brottförebyggande rådet [Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention], 2011), 330–57: <https://www.bra.se/download/18.22a7170813a0d141d21800052658/1371914741967/15+Framv%C3%A4xten+av+och+k%C3%A4nnetecken+hos+den+organiserade+brottsligheten+i+Sverige.pdf>; Riksrevisionen [Swedish National Audit Office], *The Police’s Preventive Measures—Have the Ambitions Been Met?* [in Swedish], RiR 2010:23 (Stockholm: Riksdagstryckeriet, 2010): http://www.riksrevisionen.se/PageFiles/8403/Anpassad%2010_23%20Polisens%20brottsf%C3%B6rebyggande%20arbete.pdf
- 24 The Swedish Police, *Yearbook 2014* [in Swedish] (Stockholm: Polismyndighetens Tryckeri, February 2015), ver. 1.
- 25 Erik Olsson, “Sweden Has the Most Police Officers per Capita in the Nordic Countries—but the Sweden Democrats Want More” [in Swedish], 29 September 2015: <https://kit.se/2015/09/29/12837/sverige-har-flest-poliser-per-invanare-i-norden-men-sd-vill-ha-fler/>
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 The figures for patrol cars at night come from the author’s personal experience. Värmland had 275,000 residents on 31 December 2015; see “Värmlands län: Fakta och perspective,” Regionfakta.com: <http://www.regionfakta.com/Varmlands-lan/Befolkning-och-hushall/Befolkning/Folkmangd-31-december-alder/>. In comparison, New Jersey had 389 police officers per 100,000 residents, according to Brian A. Reaves, in *Census of State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies*, 2008 (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, July 2011): <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cslea08.pdf>
- 28 Mattson, “System-Threatening Criminality.”
- 29 Thompson, *Hell’s Angels*; Mattson, “System-Threatening Criminality.”
- 30 Mattson, “System-Threatening Criminality.”
- 31 Ohlin, “Cold Facts.”
- 32 Patrik Micu, “Criminal Motorcycle Gangs Are Expanding in Europe” [in Swedish], *Expressen*, 8 August 2015: <http://www.expressen.se/kvallsposten/kriminella-mc-gangen-expanderar-i-europa/>
- 33 Military assistance, or MA, is a term used in NATO. In the US military, the equivalent would be security forces assistance or foreign internal defense, depending on the conflict and problem. In Sweden, there are no laws that prevent the military from supporting domestic law enforcement agencies. Moreover, there is a law that has been in effect since 2007 that expressly allows the police to request support from the military in response to terrorist acts. While this kind of cooperation is not allowed with regard to organized crime, the military could train and educate police officers and exchange ideas and experience with police agencies much more than they currently do.
- 34 David Tucker, “Intelligence: Police, Counterinsurgency and Organized Crime,” in *Gangs & Guerillas: Ideas from Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism*, ed. Michael Freeman and Hy Rothstein (New York: Guardian News and Media Ltd., 2010), 87–89.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 For more on CoG analysis, see Joe Strange, *Centers of Gravity & Critical Vulnerabilities: Building on the Clausewitzian Foundation So That We Can All Speak the Same Language* (Quantico, Va.: Marine Corps University, 2005): http://jpsc.ndu.edu/Portals/72/Documents/JC2IOS/Additional_Reading/3B_COG_and_Critical_Vulnerabilities.pdf
- 37 The author developed this model in 2006, while working in the Criminal Intelligence Department of Värmland County. The Center of Gravity (CoG) and CARVER models, although well-known to military analysts, had not been used by the police and were introduced to the county agency as well as the National Police Board at the time. The data shown in this article are only examples and not actual conclusions because investigations by the Swedish police are ongoing.
- 38 This example is based on the author’s own experience.
- 39 US Department of the Army, *Special Operations*, ADRP 3-05 (Washington, D.C.: HQ, Dept. of the Army, 31 August 2012), 4–6: http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/army/adrp/3-05/adrp3_05.pdf
- 40 Notisum, “Act (2006: 343) of the Armed Forces to Support the Police in Fighting Terrorism” [in Swedish], Rättsnätet [database], 2 March 2015: <https://www.notisum.se/rnp/sls/lag/20060343.htm>
- 41 Martin Mederyd Hårdh and Frida Svensson, “Sweden’s Efforts against Radicalization and Terrorism Lag Far Behind Denmark’s” [in Swedish], *Svenska Dagbladet*, 12 August 2015: <http://www.svd.se/sverige-pa-forskoleniva-i-arbetet-mot-radikalisering/om/svensk-terrorbekampning>