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Why Gender Matters: A Partial Test of Travis Hirschi's Element of Attachment

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WHY GENDER MATTERS: A PARTIAL TEST OF TRAVIS HIRSCHI'S ELEMENT OF
ATTACHMENT

by

Danielle Ashley Rios

B.A., Southern Illinois University, 2010

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts

Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

WHY GENDER MATTERS: A PARTIAL TEST OF TRAVIS HIRSCHI'S ELEMENT OF
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A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Masters of Arts

in the field of Criminology and Criminal Justice

Approved by:

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TITLE: WHY GENDER MATTERS: A PARTIAL TEST OF TRAVIS HIRSCHI'S ELEMENT OF ATTACHMENT

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Christopher Mullins

Recent studies have demonstrated the important role gender plays in determining the likelihood of involvement in delinquent behavior. Earlier theories of delinquency, including Hirschi's theory of social control have ignored the importance of gender by ignoring females all together. Using data derived from Wave 1 of the National Youth Survey, the purpose of this study is to conduct a partial test of Hirschi's Social Control theory to determine whether the theory can properly explain not only delinquency in boys, but also delinquency among girls.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1969, Travis Hirschi introduced his version of Social Control Theory in his book, *Causes of Delinquency*. Hirschi (1969) proposed that rather than focus on explaining why adolescents resort to delinquent behavior, research should focus on reasons why youth abstain from deviant behavior. Based on his analysis drawn from a sample of adolescent boys from the Richmond Youth Project, he claims that certain youth abstain from criminal behavior because of their stronger bonds and ties to conventional society. Furthermore, Hirschi (1969) identifies four different factors that play a role in the strengthening of their bond to society: attachment to conventional institutions, commitment to particular institutional goals, involvement in conventional activities, and belief in the moral validity of the law.

Since Hirschi's Social Control Theory surfaced in 1969, many researchers have made several attempts to test the legitimacy of Hirschi's (1969) theory. In addition, several scholars have attempted replications as well as additional extensions to social control theory (Marcos et al., 1986; Hindeling, 1973; Greenberg, 1999; Akers & Cochran, 1985; Agnew, 1985; Wiatrowski et al., 1981; Krohn et al., 1983; Agnew, 1991). Prior literature that has tested Social Control Theory has generally produced mixed findings (Marcos et al., 1986; Hindeling, 1973; Greenberg, 1999; Akers & Cochran, 1985; Agnew, 1985; Wiatrowski et al., 1981; Krohn et al., 1983; Agnew, 1991). However, mixed outcomes could be a result of differences across research designs, especially in the area of operationalization of the elements of the bond. The purpose of this paper is to provide a partial test of Travis Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory, examining specifically his element of attachment.

CHAPTER 2

THEORY AND BACKGROUND

In the early nineteenth century, control theories were just beginning to flourish with the work of a prominent sociologist known as Emile Durkheim. In his publication of *Suicide* in 1951, Durkheim's primary focus was on social control within societies (Durkheim, 1951). He initially proposed that human beings are not entirely happy unless their needs are satisfied. In addition, he provides examples of how the needs of human beings are purely based on natural conditions. Once the needs of the animal are met the animal is satisfied however, Durkheim (1951) argues that human beings are entirely different, and in fact the complete opposite. Human beings desire items that are not necessary for their well-being and that are based on purely socially driven desires. These socially driven desires highlight Durkheim's (1951) propositions on human nature relying on the notion that human beings are inherently hedonistic and self-serving. He claims that external forces, such as society, must restrain and control these hedonistic and self-serving desires.

In 1951 Albert J. Reiss Jr. introduced one of the earliest forms of control theory; he identifies the absence of personal and social controls. Personal control is defined as the lack of the inability to refrain from deviating from the normative rules and values within a community. Social control is defined as the role of social institutions maintaining and ability to enforcing those rules and values. Much emphasis is placed on the importance of family factors as well as neighborhood context in sources of control.

Jackson Toby also presented a social control argument in addressing the increase of property crime in 1957. Toby (1957) indicates that in cases of theft, examining the age and socioeconomic status of the offender might provide clear indications behind the recent increases

of theft. He further makes the claim that thieves are “young hoodlums from slum neighborhoods”(p.12) residing in communities that exercise anti-social impulses and are a result of weakened external controls. Based on this perspective, he introduces the role of “stakes in conformity.” He argues that everyone has the potential to violate the law. However certain individuals may be less inclined to engage in criminal behavior because it may jeopardize things that the individual has worked for, such as family or even marriage.

In 1958, Ivan Nye introduced an extensive version of earlier control theories in his book “Family Relationships and Delinquent Behavior.” Focusing on three sources of control: direct, internal, and indirect, Nye (1958) focuses specifically on the importance of indirect sources as the most important source of social control. According to Nye (1958), direct sources of social control are characterized as formal and informal punishments. Internal sources of social control are restraints within the individual who has already been exposed to effective and positive beliefs. Indirect sources of social control include positive and affectionate attachments to parents. He claims that indirect sources of social control are most important because adolescents are typically exposed to family first compared to the other sources of social control.

Social Control Theory

Hirschi (1969) proposes that delinquent behavior is a result of an individual’s weakened bond to society. He further claims that if the bond between an individual and society is strong they will be less compelled to engage in crime (Hirschi, 1969). According to Hirschi (1969), the bond an individual has with society is derived from four elements: (1) attachment to conventional institutions such as parents, teachers, and peers, (2) commitment to achieve their conventional goals, (3) involvement in various conventional activities and, (4) belief in society’s commonly held attitudes and values.

Elements of the Bond

Attachment

One of the primary elements of social control theory is the bond and affection an individual has with society. This bond to society is an important factor in determining whether the person will engage in delinquent behavior. According to Hirschi (1969), the stronger the bond an individual has to conventional institutions, the stronger the likelihood the individual will take the bond into consideration when contemplating the idea of whether or not to engage in crime.

Attachment to Conventional Parents

Hirschi (1969) indicates that one of the key research findings relating to the relationship between family relationships and criminal behavior reveal that adolescents that are closely tied to their parents are less likely to engage in delinquent behaviors. Although Hirschi (1969) mentions several other forms of attachment, such as school and peers, we will focus primarily on the role of the parents. Hirschi (1969) indicates that individuals who lack attachment to their parents have a much higher likelihood of having much more exposure to “criminogenic influences” (Hirschi, 1969).

This emotional bond between the parent and the child can provide a pathway for the distribution of parent’s values and influences. For children who lack a sufficient bond to their parents, the chances of the child developing a variety of moral values and rules that are primarily instilled by their parents are slim (Hirschi, 1969). In addition, a lack in the proper development of positive morals and values will prevent the child from developing a conscience, which may eventually lead to criminal behavior.

Attachment to School/Teachers

In Hirschi's (1969) study of boys, he claimed that boys who dislike school would be more likely to be involved in delinquent behavior than boys who generally have favorable attitudes towards school. He also pinpoints the influential roles teachers play a role in the likelihood a child being involved in criminal behavior. According to Hirschi (1969), a delinquent boy who generally dislikes school will not care what the teachers think of him. Overall those boys who have "high stakes" in conformity attachment and commitment will be less important than those with "low stakes" in conformity (Hirschi, 1998, p. 132,). Also Hirschi indicates that as a result of those favorable attitudes towards school, adolescents will have attained better grades. Therefore, adolescents who have attained better grades in school will be less likely to engage in delinquency (Hirschi, 1969).

Attachment to Peers

According to Hirschi (1969) delinquent acts are committed in groups. In addition, delinquent youth are much more likely to have delinquent friends. Based on his analysis of self-reported delinquency, boys engaged in delinquent behavior are much more likely have to delinquent friends than boys who do not have delinquent friends (Hirschi, 1969). Based on these results, Hirschi (1969) concludes that adolescents who are primarily engaged in delinquent behavior lack positive social relations and are limited in social skills. These social skills inhibit the ability of fostering positive relationships amongst one another. In other words, Hirschi (1969) proclaims that boys who have relationships with peers who have positive social relations will be less likely to commit delinquent acts.

Commitment

Control theory also assumes that an individual's ties to investing time in certain activities such as getting an education, building a business, and acquiring a quality reputation will be taken

into consideration and will be deciding factors in determining whether to engage in criminal behavior (Hirschi, 1969). According to Hirschi (1969), when an individual contemplates being involved in crime he must consider the consequences of his criminal acts. Under social control theory, commitment assumes that the investments and ties an individual has acquired over time would be endangered if the individual decides to engage in criminal behavior. Therefore, Hirschi (1969) indicates that when certain actions are thought to jeopardize the qualities that an individual has acquired over time, such as an education or careers, delinquent behavior will presumably be avoided.

Involvement

Control theory also assumes that opportunity plays a key role in the likelihood of an individual's potential involvement in deviant behavior. According to Hirschi (1969), based on the element of involvement, a person may be less inclined to engage in deviant behavior simply because he may be preoccupied with other activities. He further states that an individual may have prior commitments to appointments, deadlines, working hours, and many other forms of distractions, which may consume an individual's time, making committing delinquent behavior slightly difficult (Hirschi, 1969).

Belief

According to Hirschi (1969), delinquency not caused by criminally held beliefs, but is caused by the absence of positive and effective beliefs that forbid engaging in delinquent behavior. Hirschi (1969) also mentions the role parents have on whether their child will have stronger ties to conventional order. Hirschi (1969) states that children who are closely tied to their parents will have a higher likelihood of obeying conventional order because their parents will be more likely to reward their child for conformity. If there is an absence of those

attachments between the child and the parents, there will be no reward for obeying conventional order, so therefore there will be weak punishments if there is deviation from conventional order.

If a child is not punished for disobeying orders or rewarded for obeying orders, this opens up the possibility of the child engaging in delinquency simply because he has no reason to embrace conventional order if the approval or disapproval of his parents is absent.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Attachment to Parents

Hirschi (1969) indicates that the stronger the ties an individual has to his conventional parents the less likely they are to engage in delinquent behavior. The important role a family plays in the likelihood of an individual's propensity to engage in delinquency is one of the most frequently cited findings in studies related to deviant behavior (Gove & Crutchfield, 1982). The findings related to attachment to parent in Hirschi's (1969) elements of social control and the likelihood of a child's engagement in delinquency are relatively mixed in their outcomes. Grover and Crutchfield (1982) attempted to examine the relationship between a association in the likelihood of an individual's potential to engage in delinquent behavior. Results revealed that the way a parent experiences a child proved to be the strongest predictor of delinquency. Grover and Crutchfield (1982) state that parents who do not get along with their child and who are generally dissatisfied with the behavior of their child will act in such ways that actually promote the misbehavior of their children.

Hindelang's (1973) replication of Hirschi's (1969) study reveal similar results, indicating that based on his sample of urban males, attachment to parents is strongly related to involvement in delinquent behavior (Hindelang, 1973; Rankin & Kern, 1994; Liska & Reed, 1985).

Cernkovich & Giordano (1987) examined the relationship between delinquency and family attachment. They claimed that many studies have focused on either the child being attached or unattached to their parents, without fully examining that nature of those attachments. Their results revealed that parental attachment accounted for small amounts of delinquency, but they did not completely rule out the importance of family variables. Similarly Agnew's (1985)

longitudinal test of social control theory found that parental attachments had indirect effects on minor delinquency.

Akers & Cochran (1985) attempted to test social control theory, social learning theory, and differential association theory on adolescent drug use. Their results were slightly opposite of the previous literature. As previously stated, attachment to parents was a significant predictor of delinquent behavior. Akers and Cochran (1985) revealed that when tested simultaneously with other theories, the social control variables ranged to having no to moderate effects on adolescent marijuana use. Krohn and colleagues (1983) revealed similar results when they examined social control variables on the potential of adolescent smoking; attachment to parents has significantly small effects on adolescent smoking behavior (Krohn et al., 1983; Marcos et al., 1986; Agnew, 1985)

The differences in results across the studies may be due to differences in the study's operationalization of attachment to parents. Both Hindelang (1973) and Akers and Cochran (1985) measure attachment to parents in completely different ways. For example, Hindelang (1973) measured attachment with a single indicator of, "Would you like to be the kind of person your father is." However, Akers and Cochran (1985) comprised of a scale assessing attachment to parents by comprising measures of parental supervision, parental praise, and closeness and satisfaction to the parent.

Attachment to School/Teachers

One of Hirschi's (1969) key research findings in relation to attachment to school and teachers was that adolescents who have much more favorable attitudes towards school are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior. These favorable attitudes eventually lead to the attainment of higher grades. Therefore adolescents who achieve better grades in school are less

likely to be delinquent. Many studies have made several attempts to examine the credibility behind Hirschi's findings. Wiatrowski's and colleagues' (1981) study of tenth grade boys as a representation of high school boys across the United States found that school attachments have a strong negative correlation to delinquency. Similarly, Agnew (1991) found that although the amounts of school attachment were small, as school attachments increase, minor delinquency decreases. However Liska and Reed's (1985) study of boys from 87 high schools found that school attachment does not directly affect delinquency but rather it is attachment to parents, not school, that has effects on delinquency. Interestingly, this study finds that lack of parental attachment leads to delinquency, which then affects school attachments, and this then affects parental attachments. Therefore, school attachments have an indirect affect on delinquency. These differences in results can be due to numerous differences between the studies, however one key difference is how attachment to school was measured. Attachment to school in Wiatrowski and colleagues' (1981) study was measured by utilizing factor analysis and was represented by indices. Liska and Reed (1985) measured school attachment as a latent variable indexed by composite measures of school satisfaction such as positive attitudes towards school and satisfaction with school experience totaling to 12 items.

Marcos and colleagues (1986) attempt to test Hirschi's social bonding theory and its effects on adolescent drug use. Their findings indicate that educational attachment affects the choice of drug using friends, has a direct effect on adolescent cigarette and small direct effects on adolescent marijuana use and did not have affects on serious drug use. These results are consistent in previous studies such as in Agnew (1985) as well as in Krohn and Massey (1980) claiming that Hirschi's control theory is primarily best for explaining minor delinquency.

Attachment to Peers

Using two waves of the National Youth Survey, Agnew (1991) conducted a longitudinal study of social control theory. He found that an association with delinquent peers, next to prior delinquency, is one of the best predictors of delinquency. Also an interesting from this study revealed that although Agnew (1991) found that social control variables have a small impact on delinquency, current delinquency is a function of prior delinquency and an association with delinquent peers. However in Krohn and colleagues (1980) revealed that attachment to friends was positively related to smoking among adolescents. Similarly in Marcos and colleagues (1986) drug-using friends have the strongest effect of cigarette use for adolescents. Also drug using friends have a strong direct affect on alcohol use as well as on lifetime marijuana use among adolescents. Drug using friends also has a strong direct affect on adolescent use of amphetamines and depressants (Krohn et al., 1980).

Commitment

Hirschi (1969) indicates that individuals who have ties to achieving conventional goals are less likely to engage in criminal behavior. According to Hirschi (1969) activities such as getting an education, acquiring a quality reputation and several other positive factors are certain aspects an individual may take into consideration when deciding to engage in criminal behavior. Previous literature of Hirschi's element of commitment has also revealed mixed findings. Hindelang (1973) examines Hirschi's (1969) element of commitment to conventional goals in the likelihood of an individual engaging in delinquent behavior. Results revealed that those who have committed values to achieving good school performance are less inclined to engage in delinquent behavior due to the possibility of delinquency jeopardizing those commitments. Similarly, Akers & Cochran (1985) revealed that social control variables only had moderate

effects on delinquency. However, commitment was found to be to be the strongest variables in the social control model; yet the level of significance was reduced to zero when social learning variables were incorporated into the model.

One aspect that maybe taken into consideration when weighing the strength of the evidence of Hirschi's element of commitment are differences in operationalization of commitment across the studies. Akers & Cochran (1985) measured commitment with four measures: commitment to activities that the adolescent may be involved in such as athletics, schoolwork, church or youth group, and grade point average. Hindelang (1973) measured commitment using the amount of effort one may put into homework and the importance of one attaining good grades. The differences in the way commitment was measured may have an impact on the differences of the outcomes across the studies.

Krohn and colleagues (1983) revealed that having the commitment to work had little to no effect on adolescent cigarette smoking. However commitment to education had one of the strongest effects on cigarette smoking indicating that educational institutions are important in adolescent deviant behavior (Krohn et al., 1983; Krohn & Massey, 1980). Agnew (1989), attempted to conduct a longitudinal analysis of Hirschi's elements of social control theory in terms of minor and serious delinquency. He indicated that the social control variables are more likely to explain minor delinquency compared to serious delinquency. Wiatrowki's and colleagues (1981) measured commitment with an index of youth's occupational aspirations coded by Duncan occupational prestige score; Agnew (1989) conducted a factor analysis to determine his measure of commitment. Their results revealed that educational aspirations such as commitment to college and commitment to a career were not shown to have any statistical significance. Differences in study designs such as the cross sectional design used in Krohn and

colleagues (1983) and Akers's (1985) longitudinal design may also account for the differences in their outcomes.

Involvement

According to Hirschi (1969) individuals may be less compelled to engage in crime simply because that individual may be too busy with other activities to engage in criminal acts. One problem in attempting to empirically reviewing Hirschi's element of involvement is the failure of many studies measure involvement independently. Krohn and Massey (1980) have argued there is a considerable overlap between involvement and commitment (Krohn & Massey, 1980; Krohn et al., 1983). Akers and Cochran (1985) failed to assess involvement individually and combined involvement and commitment in attempting to test Hirschi's Social Control Theory. Marcos and colleagues (1986) also did not individual assess involvement, combining involvement with commitment (Marcos et al., 1986; Agnew, 1991).

Studies that have assessed involvement individually have generally reported mixed findings. Wiatrowski and colleagues (1981) reported that the element of involvement had small but relatively significant effects on delinquency. However Hindelang (1973) that involvement in afterschool related activities did have any affect on delinquent behavior. One major difference between the studies was that various background measures were incorporated in Wiatrowski's and colleagues' (1981) study. Measures of social class were incorporated into the model whereas Hindelang (1973) did not include a measure of social class, which may impact the outcome of their studies.

Belief

According to Hirschi (1969) belief is an acceptance of the moral validity of the law and society's values. Studies attempting to determine where belief affects delinquency have generally produced mixed findings as well. Agnew (1991) reported that deviant beliefs have an indirect effect on both minor and serious delinquency. Differently, Wiatrowski and colleagues (1981) reported that when attempting to examine his test of his measure of belief, belief had negative impacts on delinquent behavior. However Cochran and Akers (1985) reported that belief was one of the strongest variables in predicting delinquent behavior. The differences across the studies may be due to the differences in research designs as well as the operationalization of key indicators.

Why Gender Matters

Mainstream criminology has been consistently criticized for its lack of attention towards women and gender (Daly & Chesney-Lind, 1988), Heimer and De Coster (1999) examined the mechanisms and the variations between males and females and their propensity to engage in violent crime. In addition, the authors attempt to grasp a greater understanding of juvenile violence among males and females. According to Heimer and De Coster (1999) a combination of cultural definitions, cultural practices, and structural definitions influence violent delinquency however these variables are influenced differently across gender. More specifically, their results indicate that learning violent behavior is an important predictor of violent delinquency for both boys and girls, yet the process in which the youth learn violent behavior varies differently by gender. For instance, aggressive peers have a greater influence on boys than girls whereas emotional bonds to family have a greater influence on girls than boys. Also, accepting traditional gender definitions reduces violence for girls but does not influence violence for boys.

Supervision of youth's friendship was more important for boys, however this variable did not have any influence on girls. The authors concluded that the primary reason boys engage in violent behavior more frequently than girls is because boys learn more violent definitions and more traditional gender definitions than girls. Boys also have a prior experience with violence delinquency than girls (Heimer & De Coster, 1999). In other words, boys tend to have engaged in violent behavior way before girls have engaged in violent behavior. Thus Heimer and De Coster's (1999) study establish that there are significant gender differences in the factors that eventually lead to juvenile delinquency. Other work in the area has produced mixed findings.

Gove and Crutchfield (1982), examining minor forms of delinquency with parental reports, found 30 percent of boys were more delinquent than 20 percent of the girls. In addition they found that the variables related to delinquency were different across genders. Results indicated that single parent households were significant predictors of delinquency for boys. However for girls, marital variables had little impact on delinquency and rather the parents' lack of knowledge of friends was a stronger predictor of delinquency. These findings are opposite of the findings found in Heimer and De Coster's (1999) study; revealing that supervision of youth's friendship had an impact on boys delinquency but did not have an impact on girls' delinquency. Also girls appeared to be more associated with factors such as parent child interaction and parental control.

Cernkovich and Giordano (1987) also wanted to examine family variables and their influence on delinquency. They found that males were more delinquent in the family context than they were for females. Control and supervision, lack of intimate communication, and lack of instrumental communication are important predictors of juvenile delinquency for males,

whereas for females the strongest predictors of delinquency were lack of identity support, conflict, lack of instrumental communication, and parental disapproval of peers.

Krohn and Masey (1980) attempt to address Hirschi's social control theory and the theory's questionable application to both males and females. Results revealed that the variables that were used to measure attachment were stronger in predicting male delinquency than for female delinquency. For females, the variables used to measure commitment were stronger predictors of delinquency. In addition, they also conclude that Hirschi's social control theory is suggestive in predicting female delinquency. They also found that they were much more able to predict female delinquency than male delinquency.

Hirschi's original test of social control theory failed to incorporate females into his sample with only focusing on a sample of boys. Based on the review of literature in relation to Hirschi's social theory as well as previous studies examining the differences in offending across gender, it is apparent that Hirschi's social control theory may or may not be applied to females similarly as the theory can be applied to males. The purpose of this study is to determine whether Hirschi's element of attachment can be appropriately applied to females similarly as the theory can be applied to males. Based on Hirschi's original hypothesis in relation to his element of Attachment, my hypothesis are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Adolescents that are more attached to their parents are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior.

Hypothesis 2: Adolescents that are more attached to school are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior.

Hypothesis 3: Adolescents that are more attached to their peers are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS

Data are from the first wave of the National Youth Survey (NYS) collected in 1976 (ICPSR). NYS is a probability-based sample consisting of seven waves between the years of 1976 and 1987. Wave 1 consisted of a total of 1,725 respondents (Elliot, 1976). This survey consists of interviews of youth and their parents regarding events and behaviors that have occurred within the past year (Elliot, 1976). NYS was the most ideal data set used to carry out my research due to the numerous family variables along with the extensive delinquency measures incorporated into the survey.

Of the total 1,725 respondents 53% of the sample was male and the remaining respondents were female. 79% of the respondents answered Anglo to signify their ethnicity and the remaining respondents responded with one of the other categories of either Black, Chicano, American Indian, Asian or Other. All of youth in this survey were between the ages of 11 and 17 years age. 18% of the respondents also reported that they were receiving some form of public assistance (See Table 1).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

				Mean	
	N	Minimum	Maximum	or %	Std. Deviation
Attachment to Parents	1706	5.00	29.00	21.2597	3.82506
Attachment to School	1697	5.00	30.00	18.5439	4.08337
Attachment to Peers	1480	3.00	25.00	15.2851	4.05854
Ethnicity	1722	0.00	1.00	79.00%	.40717
Public Assistance (Yes)	1683	1	2	18.40%	.388
Male	1725	0	1	53.20%	.499
Age	1725	11	17	13.87	1.945
Valid N (listwise)	1427				

Measures of Indicators

Data Reduction

Multi-item indexes were used to assess single indicators for the dependent variables as well as the independent variables. In order to ensure the variables used to construct the multi-item indexes, Cronbach's Alpha statistics were calculated in order to determine whether the multi-item indexes sufficiently hold up together. Multi-item indexes that produce Alpha scores of a .5 or higher sufficiently hold up together determining that these variables properly assess the reliability of the multi-item index (Cronbach, 1951).

Dependent Variables

The purpose of separating delinquency by minor forms of delinquency and serious forms of delinquency was to determine whether Hirschi's elements of the bond had different results on certain types of delinquency. Minor and serious delinquency were measured by two separate

multi-item indexes comprised of survey questions that determined a youth's involvement in delinquent behavior. Minor delinquency ($\alpha = .587$) is a ten-item index comprised of survey questions indicating a youth's involvement in minor delinquency within the last year. Survey questions for minor delinquency were: “ “How many times in the Last Year have you”... (V378) purposely damaged or destroyed property belong to your parents or other family members; (V380) purposely damaged or destroyed property belong to a school; (V382) purposely damaged or destroyed other property that did not belong to you (Not counting family or school property); (V392) thrown objects (such as rocks, snowballs, or bottles at cars or people; (V394) run away from home; (V400) stolen (or tried to steal) things worth \$5 or less; (V426) been loud, rowdy, or unruly in a public place (disorderly conduct); (V448) been drunk in a public place; (V450) stolen (or tried to steal) things worth between \$5 and \$50; (458) skipped classes without an excuse?

Serious Delinquency ($\alpha = .428$) is an eleven multi-item index comprised of survey questions indicating their level of involvement in serious delinquent behavior. Survey questions for minor delinquency were: “How many times in the last year have you”... (384) stolen (or tried to steal) a motor vehicle, such as a car or motorcycle; (V386) stolen (or tried to steal) something worth more than \$50; (V398) carried a hidden weapon other than a plain pocket knife; (V402) attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting or killing him/her; (V408) been involved in gang fights; (V410) sold marijuana or hashish (“pot”, “grass”, or “hash); (V422) hit (or threatened to hit) one of your parents; (V424) hit (or threatened to hit) other students; (V420) hit (or threatened to hit) a teacher or other adult at school; (V428) sold hard drugs such as heroin, cocaine, and LSD; (V454) broken into a building or vehicle (or tried to break in) to steal something or just look around.

Both scales were summed in order to create a general delinquency index ($\alpha = .695$).

Independent Variables

Attachment to Parents ($\alpha = .605$) is a six multi-item index comprised of variables used to measure the strength of the relationship between youth and their parents. The questions used are as follows: “Between Christmas a year ago (1975) and the Christmas just past (1976)”... (V209) On average, how many evenings during the school week, from dinnertime to bedtime, have you spent talking, working, or playing with your family; (V210) On the weekends, how much time have you generally spent talking, working, or playing with your family; (V213) “How often have your parents/family taken part or shared in: your school activities, for example, games, plays, homework, or assemblies”. Some questions also tapped into certain feelings or beliefs: “I’d like to ask you about some of your feelings and beliefs. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with these statements about you,” For three variables, reverse recoding of the variables were required based on the nature of the question and the responses that were given. For the question (V254) “I feel like an outsider with my family,” the response set ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Respondents originally answered 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neither, 4 for agree, and 5 for strongly agree. These questions were reverse coded so responses with the number 1 were recoded to 5, responses for 2 were recoded as 4, responses for 3 remained the same, responses for 4 were recoded as 2, and responses with 5 were recoded as 1. The purpose of recoding is so that higher scores indicated higher levels of family attachment. Similar tactics were used for the question, (V259) “Sometimes I feel lonely when I’m with my family” as well as for the question, (V266) “My family doesn’t take much interest in my problems.”

Attachment to Peers ($\alpha = .546$) is a five multi-item index comprised of survey questions used to measure a youth’s attachment to their peers in addition to the amount of time

spent with their peers. Survey questions used to measure attachment to peers were as follows:

“Between Christmas as year ago (1975) and the Christmas just past (1976)...” (V174) On the average, how many afternoons during the school week, from the end of school or work to dinner, have you spent with your friends; (V175) On the average, how many evenings during the school week, from dinnertime to bedtime, have you spent with your friends; (V176) On the weekends, how much time have you generally spent with your friends; (V177) How much have your friends influenced what you’ve thought and done; (V178) How important has it been to you have a group of friends and be included in their activities.

Attachment to school (.571) is a six- multi-item index comprised of variables used to measure a youth’s attachment to their school. The questions are aimed at exhibiting the amount of time spent studying and beliefs about the importance of school work. The survey questions used to measure a youth’s attachment to school are as follows: (V171) What is your grade point average; “Between Christmas a year ago (1975) and the Christmas just passed (1976); (V182) On average, how many afternoons during the school week, from the end of school to dinner, have you spent studying; (V183) On the average, how many evenings during the school week, from dinnertime to bedtime, have you spent studying; (V184) On the weekends, how much time have you generally spent studying; (V185) how important has your school work been to you; “I’d like to ask about some of your feelings and beliefs. “Please tell me about how much you agree or disagree with these statements about you”; (V260) “I don’t feel as if I really belong at school.” The question, “I don’t feel as if I really belong at school” the responses were reverse coded based on the nature of the question. Respondents that had the option of answering 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither, 4 =agree, 5= strongly disagree. Responses were reverse coded, therefore responses answered with 1 were reverse coded 5, responses with 2 were

reversed coded to 4, responses with 3 remained the same, responses with 4 were reversed coded to 2, and responses with 5 were reversed coded with 1.

Control Variables

Three control variables were incorporated into the model. Ethnicity, sex and age. Ethnicity was measured by using the question, “Which group best describes you.” Respondents answered 1= Anglo, 2=Black, 3=Chicano, 4= American Indian, 5= Asian, 6= other. Responses were recoded in order to see the differences between Anglo (White) vs. Other. Respondents that answered with 1 remained the same and all other responses were recoded into 0. For sex the interviewer was instructed to circle the sex of the respondent with 1= Male and 2= female. Sex was also recoded into a dummy variable where for respondents that answered 1 remained the same and responses that answered 2 were recoded into 0. Age was measured in years by the response to the question, “How old are you?”

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

In Model 1, the dependent variable was the general delinquency index compiled from the multi-item indexes used for minor and serious delinquency. Attachment to parents was significant ($\text{sig}=.001$) and was negatively related to delinquency ($b= -3.489$). According to Hirschi (1969), the more attached an individual is to their parents, the less like they are to engage in delinquent behavior. Based on this analysis, his hypothesis was supported. Attachment to school was significant ($\text{sig}= .001$) and was negatively related to delinquency ($b= -3.667$). Hirschi (1969) claims that individuals who are more attached to their school will be less likely to engage in delinquency. Based on this analysis, Hirschi's hypothesis of attachment to school is supported. Attachment to peers was not significant in this model. Based on Hirschi's (1969) analysis of attachment to peer, delinquent acts are committed in groups and therefore delinquent youth are more likely to have delinquent friends. My analysis has shown, that attachment to peers is positively related to delinquency; therefore my hypothesis is not supported. Ethnicity and age were not significant. Public assistance was close to being significant ($\text{sig}= .057$) and shown to be positively related to delinquency ($b=20.889$). Sex was significant ($\text{sig}= .000$) and was positively related to delinquency ($b=29.136$) (See Table 2).

Table 2
Model 1 General Delinquency

Variables	B	Std. Error	β	Sig.
	149.418	48.884		.002
Attachment to Parents	-3.489	1.093	-.090	.001
Attachment to School	-3.667	1.055	-.099	.001
Attachment to Peers	1.698	.966	.046	.079
Ethnicity	-10.890	10.677	-.029	.308
Public Assistance	20.899	10.994	.053	.058
Sex	29.136	7.905	.098	.000
Age	-2.212	2.075	-.029	.287

R Square = .046

In Model 2, the multi-item indexes used to generate a minor delinquency (Model 2-A) and serious delinquency (Model 2-B) index were used as outcome variables to run two separate models. In both of the models, sex was incorporated into the models as a control variable. In Model 2-A (Minor delinquency), attachment to Parents (sig.= .002) was significant and was negatively related to minor delinquency ($b = -2.496$). Attachment to school was also significant (sig=. .001) and was negatively related to minor delinquency ($b = -2.440$). However, attachment to peers was not significant. For the control variables, ethnicity and age were not significant in this model. However public assistance was significant (sig. = .024) and was positively related to minor delinquency ($b = 17.995$). Sex was also significant (sig. = .001) and was positively related to delinquency ($b = 19.441$) implying that boys are more likely to engage in minor delinquency (See Table 3).

Table 3
Model 2-A Minor Delinquency

Variables	B	Std. Error	β	Sig.
	95.124	35.545		.008
Attachment to Parents	-2.496	.795	-.089	.002
Attachment to School	-2.440	.766	-.091	.001
Attachment to Peers	.929	.703	.035	.187
Ethnicity	-10.174	7.765	-.037	.190
Public Assistance	17.995	7.982	.063	.024
Sex	19.441	5.747	.090	.001
Age	-.694	1.508	-.012	.645
R Square = .043				

In Model 2-B (Serious Delinquency) attachment to parents was significant (sig = .017) and was negatively related to serious delinquency (b=-1.008). Attachment to school was significant (sig= .001) and was negatively related to delinquency (b= -1.353). Attachment to peers was significant (sig= .050) and was positively related to serious delinquency (b=.735). Ethnicity, public assistance, and age were not significant for serious delinquency. Sex was significant for serious delinquency (sig = .002) and was positively related to serious delinquency (b= 9.792) implying that boys are more likely to engage in serious delinquency.

Based on Hirschi's (1969) analysis, those with stronger attachments to conventional parents, school, and peers will be less likely to engage in delinquency. All of my hypotheses were supported except for attachment to peers in serious delinquency, which was not supported (See Table 4)

Table 4
Model 2-B Serious Delinquency

Variables	B	Std. Error	β	Sig.
	53.663	18.929		.005
Attachment to Parents	-1.008	.423	-.067	.017
Attachment to School	-1.353	.408	-.095	.001
Attachment to Peers	.735	.374	.052	.050
Ethnicity	-.017	4.133	.000	.997
Public Assistance	4.291	4.255	.028	.313
Sex	9.712	3.057	.085	.002
Age	-1.389	.802	-.047	.084
R Square = .034				

In Model 3, separate models were run for both boys and girls and the general delinquency scale was used as the outcome variable for both models. In Model 3-A (boys), attachment to parents was significant (sig = .003) and was negatively related to delinquency (b= -6.203). Attachment to school was significant (sig=. 005) and was negatively related to delinquency (b= -5.664) Attachment to peers was not significant for boys. Ethnicity and age were significant predictors for boys' delinquency. Public assistance was significant (sig=. 046) and is positively related to delinquency (b=40.815) (See Table 5).

Table 5
Model 3-A Boys Delinquency

Variables	B	Std. Error	β	Sig.
	276.446	91.058		.002
Attachment to Parents	-6.203	2.087	-.115	.003
Attachment to School	-5.664	2.030	-.108	.005
Attachment to Peers	1.675	1.848	.033	.365
Ethnicity	-19.039	19.546	-.038	.330
Public Assistance	40.815	20.406	.077	.046
Age	-3.744	3.861	-.036	.333

R Square = .043

Model 3-B (Girls) attachment to parents was not significant. Attachment to school was significant (sig=. 000) and is negatively related to delinquency (b=-1.947). Attachment to peers was significant (sig = .000) and is positively associated with delinquency (b =1.765). Ethnicity, age, and public assistance were not significant predictors for girls' delinquency.

In Hirschi's original analysis, individuals who were attached to conventional parents, school, and peers were less likely to engage in delinquency. In my analysis, in Model-3 A, all of the hypotheses were supported except for attachment to parents. In Model 3-B, attachment to parents and attachment to peers did not support my hypothesis. However attachment to school did support my hypotheses (See Table 6).

Table 6
Model 3-B Girls Delinquency

Variables	B	Std. Error	β	Sig.
	43.950	20.108		.029
Attachment to Parents	-.742	.448	-.067	.098
Attachment to School	-1.947	.429	-.180	.000
Attachment to Peers	1.765	.394	.168	.000
Ethnicity	-2.101	4.587	-.018	.647
Public Assistance	-.278	4.628	-.002	.952
Age	-.087	.875	-.004	.920

R Square = .080

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Hirschi's original study revealed that juveniles who have positive and conventional attachments to parents, school, and peers are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior. The purpose of this study was to retest Hirschi's social control theory examining specifically his element of attachment using Wave 1 of the National Youth Survey. In this study, separate models were generated. Model 1 utilized a general delinquency scale as its outcome, with sex incorporated into the model as a control variable. In model 2, two multi-item indexes were compiled: one index for minor delinquency and a separate index for serious delinquency. Sex was incorporated into each of the models as a control variable. In model 3, separate models were run. One model only included girls and one model only included boys. For each of the attachment variables, attachment to parents, attachment to peers, and attachment to school, multi-item indexes were generated. Results of this study revealed interesting findings.

Attachment to parents revealed interesting findings. In Model 1, attachment to parents was negatively related to delinquency, consistent with his Hirschi's original findings. In Model 2-A (Minor Delinquency) and Model 2-B (Serious Delinquency) attachment to parents was negatively related. However in Model 3-A and Model 3-B, when models were ran separately for boys and girl, different findings for attachment to parents were present. In Model 3 A (boys) attachment to parents was significant and negatively related to delinquency, which does support Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory. In Model 3 B (Girls), attachment to parents was not significant and does not support Hirschi's (1969) social control theory. These findings imply that

while attachment to parents was significant and was negatively related to delinquency for boys, attachment to parents was not significant for girls. These suggest the protection factor of attachment to parents, can vary differently for boys and girls. Therefore these results reveal that boys who spend more time with their parents are less likely to engage in while girls' attachments to parents is unimportant to their delinquency.

Interesting findings were also found for attachment to peers. In Model 1, attachment to peers was shown to be not significant. In Model 2 A, when separate multi-item indexes were generated for minor and serious delinquency, attachment to peers was shown to be not significant for minor delinquency. However in Model 2 B attachment to peers was shown to be significant when the outcome variable was for serious delinquency. Also in Model 3, separate models were run for both boys and girls. For boys, attachment to peers was shown to be not significant, however in the model ran separately for girls attachment to peers was significant and positively related to delinquently. These results imply that the variables used in Hirschi's original model of social control theory can be applied differently and have varied results when applied separately to boys and girls. Overall, these results indicate that girls who spend more time with peers are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior than girls. These results are opposite of Hirschi's social control theory and therefore does not support Hirschi's social control theory.

The results for girls' attachment to peers are consistent with other (Matsueda, 1982; Matsueda & Heimer, 1987). According to Sutherland's (1947) theory of differential association, delinquent and or criminal behavior is learned through interactions between individuals. Overall, based the results presented, Differential Association Theory is a firmer and more efficient explanation for girl's involvement in delinquent behavior. Several other tests that have examined social control theory against differential association have found greater support for differential

association theory. According to Matsueda (1982), his results revealed that differential association theory is also supported over Hirschi's social control theory. In addition Matsueda and Heimer (1987) also find more support for differential association theory.

Public assistance was one of the control variables incorporated into all of the models as a proxy for poverty. The public assistance variable revealed interesting findings. In Model 1, public assistance was not significant, (however the public assistance (sig. = .058) was very close to being significant and was shown to be positively related to delinquency). In Model 2A, public assistance was shown to be significant and was positively related to minor delinquency; however public assistance was not significant in Model 2 B for serious delinquency. In Model 3A, public assistance was significant and positively related to delinquency for boys, however public assistance was shown to be not significant in Model 3 A for girls' delinquency. These results indicate that it seems that poverty has a greater affect on delinquency for boys than it does for delinquency in girls.

Limitations

One of the key limitations in this research project was the inability to fully test Hirschi's social control theory. Using the National Youth Survey as my primary data set limited my ability to test several key variables in Hirschi's social control theory such as commitment, involvement, and belief. From the very beginning, it was shown that NYS failed to provide sufficient variables used to compile a belief measure. Also, the original model for this research project included a commitment and involvement scale, however the data used to compile the multi item indexes had missing data, so therefore I unable to compile a sufficient index for commitment, involvement, and believe. In order to provide a sufficient test of Hirschi's original social control theory, a different data set must be used.

Future Directions

The results stated implicate several policy implications. For boys, it seems that programs that are aimed at enhancing positive relationships between youth and their parents can reduce the likelihood of their involvement in delinquency. Also, it is apparent that for boys and girls the more time adolescents spend at school the less likely they engage in delinquency. Therefore, programs that encourage much more effective ties to school such as afterschool tutoring programs as well afterschool sports programs can potentially reduce their likelihood of being involved in delinquency because these programs take up a significant amount of time which can prevent delinquent behavior. For peers it is apparent that positive and conventional ties to peers can reduce involvement in delinquency for boys, therefore programs that can better assist boys with learning how to choose positive friends.

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Why Gender Matters: A Partial Test of Travis Hirschi's Element of Attachment

Major Professor: Dr. Christopher Mullins