An Application of Hirschi's Theory of Social Control to the Study of Partner Abuse

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AN APPLICATION OF HIRSCHI'S THEORY OF SOCIAL CONTROL
TO THE STUDY OF PARTNER ABUSE

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The Faculty of the Department of Sociology
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Master of Arts

by
Barbara R. Fellows
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AN APPLICATION OF HIRSCHI’S THEORY OF SOCIAL CONTROL
TO THE STUDY OF PARTNER ABUSE

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The purpose of this study was to determine if Hirschi's theory of social control could be applied to domestic violence. Two elements of Hirschi's theory of social control, attachment and beliefs, were used as the independent variables. The Conflict Tactics Scale was used to measure the dependent variables of directed non-contact violence and directed contact violence. Data was collected on 200 cohabiting heterosexual males. Half of these males were in court-ordered counseling programs, the other half belonged to civic or religious organizations. Crosstabulations were used to analyze the data. The Chi-square test of independence was used with an alpha level set at $p < .05$. Overall, strong support was indicated for both attachment and belief variables. These findings are strongly supportive of further research using Hirschi's theory of social control as applied to domestic violence in adult populations.
One evening in March 1977, a Dansville, Michigan, housewife bundled her children against the chill of the night, put them in the family car and returned to the bedroom she shared with her now sleeping husband. She saturated the man and the bed with gasoline, lit a match, and dropped it onto the floor as she backed out of the room. She then got into the car with her children and drove to the Ingham County Sheriff’s Office, where she confessed through sobs that she had killed her husband.

The housewife was Francine Hughes, and her story became the focus of national attention. It was published in the Chicago Daily News in an article entitled "Are Women Getting Away with Murder?" It appeared in Newsweek. She appeared on "The Phil Donahue Show." Ultimately her story was told in a book entitled The Burning Bed, which was later produced as a made-for-television movie (Gelles and Straus 1988; Gillespi 1989).

The story of a woman murdering her husband was not such a rare event that it warranted the type of attention given Francine Hughes. Women had killed their husbands before, some in brutal ways. If neither the act itself nor
the method by which it was committed was enough to merit this amount of national attention, what about this killing was? The answer lies in the motive and the plea of not guilty by reason of temporary insanity. Francine Hughes had been a severely battered woman for many years before she killed her husband. The verdict was not guilty (Gelles and Straus 1988; Gillespi 1989).

Francine Hughes' story brought wife abuse out of the privacy of the home and into the living rooms of millions across the country. The timing and publicity of this story was of great benefit to the emerging feminist movement in this country as feminists were striving to define wife battering as a major social problem (Gelles and Straus 1988).

With the publicity surrounding the Francine Hughes story and the emergence of women's-rights groups in the 1970s, one could be led to believe that wife abuse is a twentieth century phenomenon rather than an age-old problem. One may not be able to pinpoint the time when man first struck out against his mate, but research has traced the problem back to the Puritan settlers in this country and has found corresponding social and legal movements to combat the problem at different intervals in our nation's history (Gordon 1988; Pleck 1989).

As wife abuse has moved into the realms of criminal behavior, it is puzzling that the separation of
family-violence studies and criminological studies remains
(Ohlin and Tonry 1989). Much of the research in family
violence has borrowed from theories that are used to
"explain" criminal behaviors, with most of them rooted in a
variety of approaches from ecological to psychoanalytical.
These approaches leave a picture of the abuser as someone
vastly different, due to his aberrant personality or
unusual circumstances (Burgess and Draper 1989; Weis 1989).
However, research has not proved that these differences in
personality or circumstances affect abusive behaviors. The
man who performs the most despicable of deeds in the
privacy of his own home may appear to be a pillar of the
community (Mones 1991). There is also no evidence that
these men differ in circumstances from the total population
(Gelles and Straus 1988; Weis 1989). The outcome of
research in the area of family violence has left us with a
variety of marker variables, or correlates, for abuse
without any explanation as to why only some people in these
circumstances or possessing these characteristics express
violent behavior (Burgess and Draper 1989).

It is the intent in this thesis to attempt to clarify
some of the questions left unanswered by previous research
by applying Hirschi's theory of social control to the study
of partner abuse. A questionnaire using a conflict tactic
scale to determine categories of directed non-contact
violence and directed contact violence was used. The
questionnaire also contained eleven questions about the men's family experiences and beliefs. These questions were designed to gather information on the two elements of Hirschi's theory, attachment and belief, that will be explored. This questionnaire was administered to 200 men. The variables of these two elements were analyzed to determine their correlations with the dependent variables of directed noncontact violence and directed contact violence. The results may be beneficial in determining the usefulness of applying Hirschi's theory to the growing problem of violence in the home.
It was not until 1969 with the development of Hirschi's theory that criminology came under the influence of social control theory (Kempf 1993). Given the rich tradition of social control theory, spanning functionalist thinking from Durkheim to Parsons, it seems surprising that a theory such as Hirschi's was so long in coming (Hagan and Simpson 1978). To understand this delay it is necessary to explore the basic assumptions underlying the functionalist perspective as inherited from Durkheim and those Hirschi makes as a starting point for his theory.

Sociologists were not the first to question what held society together or what prevented individuals from pursuing their own interests at the expense of others. In the seventeenth century, Hobbes had posed the question of why men obey the law (Ritzer 1992). He had also supplied the answer to this question. As Hobbes saw it, fear of punishment was the major motivating force for inhibiting man's basic hedonistic impulses (Hirschi 1969).

Two centuries later sociologists found Hobbes' question intriguing but his answer unacceptable. Their
reluctance to accept Hobbes' answer stemmed from the consensus perspective of functionalism as set forth by Durkheim (Ritzer 1992). To understand their rejection of fear as a motivation for conformity it is necessary to take a closer look at Durkheim's concept of society and the individual's relation to society.

For Durkheim man derived his consciousness through contact with others. Society was the unit of analysis and existed in a reality which transcended the meanings attached to it by the individual members. Society stood above the individual with a collective moral power, which acted to impose limits and compelled men to behave within those limits (Durkheim 1957). This collective moral power, whether sustained by consensus or interdependence, held society together and led to an assumption of automaticity (Gibbs 1981). Gibbs depicts this assumption as social control that automatically flows from institutions and organizations to become instilled in the individual.

In an attempt to clarify how the connection of man to the collective moral power of society was established, Durkheim asserted that morality began with the attachment to "something other than ourselves" (Durkheim 1973). This "something other" was the community or society. The more one became involved, the more one took his or her personal identity from the community and the more compelled one felt to obey the rules of the community (Tittle 1980). Society
gathers the individual up into a secular morality that sustains the individual and protects him or her from the irrationality of baser human instincts (Durkheim 1957; Gane 1992).

It is basic to Durkheim's perspective of the relation between man and society that violence and dissent would be viewed as pathological (Turner 1991). If the individual is swept up by society and finds meaning and protection in society, then behavior that threatens the social order must result from irresistible pressure or forces beyond the control of the individual (Gane 1992). The efforts to explain how man, a basically social animal, could commit antisocial acts culminated in strain theory (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990).

Strain theories developed to explain the occurrence of crime were referred to by Hirschi (1969, p. 4) as the "historical results of good answers to a bad question." The question Hobbes posed as to why men obey society's rules was not a good one because it assumed that there was a consistent answer, fear of punishment (Hirschi and Selvin 1967). As Hirschi saw the question, the problem of deviance and the problem of conformity were the same. The correct question was one concerning both conformity and deviance and should be posed in a way that both problems could be solved at once. To the functionalists fear of punishment was meaningless to individuals who embraced the
laws of society; to Hirschi it was an incomplete answer at best, for many would not violate the rules of society if there were no ensuing punishment, and others did so knowing they would face consequences (Hirschi and Selvin 1967).

Hirschi's theory of social control is based on the assumption that all human behavior is pleasure-seeking behavior. Left to their own devices human beings would pursue pleasure with little thought to the long-term consequences of their actions. From this beginning, Hirschi sees no benefit in asking what causes people to commit crimes. Because all people are capable of committing crime, Hirschi is interested in those restraints that prevent people from the hedonistic pursuit of pleasure that might result in negative sanctions (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Hirschi 1969).

Unlike other control theorists Hirschi concentrates on the internal controls that are developed through the socialization process. This perspective is based on Hirschi's contention that the immediacy of reward or punishment is instrumental in the behavior decisions people make. Immediately gratifying acts are more pleasurable than those acts in which gratification is deferred. If the pleasure is immediate and the consequence is far removed, the tendency will be for the immediacy of the pleasure to override the possibility of a far-removed consequence. It is for this reason that external control or supervision is
not enough to prevent undesirable behavior in the child, adolescent, or adult. It is, however, this external control or supervision that teaches the child to internalize the values and norms of a society. This internalization is what Hirschi refers to as the psychological presence of the parent (Hirschi 1969). If one has been completely and properly socialized, he or she will take into account how others, specifically parents, will respond to his or her actions even though the parent(s) is/are not present. The extent to which one has internalized this control is synonymous with one's self-control. It is the degree of self-control that dictates the extent of pleasure-seeking behavior (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990).

Hirschi sees the family as the primary agent of socialization, with other institutions having varied effects on the process, a point he stresses to a much greater extent in his later work than he did in his previous research on delinquency (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Hirschi 1967; Hirschi 1969). This concentration on the family means that self-control remains fairly constant throughout the period of one's lifetime. It also means that there is a direct connection between the level of self-control of the parents and the level of self-control of the child. Although the level of self-control remains constant across time, it is not constant across
individuals. Self-control is so connected to deviant behavior and immediacy of rewards and varies so with socialization processes and individuals that Hirschi visualizes it on a continuum. A graphic presentation of the extremes of the continuum would appear as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High self-control</th>
<th>Low self-control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deferred gratification</td>
<td>Immediate gratification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caution</td>
<td>Risk-taking behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low or no incidence of crime</td>
<td>High incidence of crime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How self-control is achieved through socialization is expressed through the four components of Hirschi’s theory. These components are attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Hirschi 1969).

Attachment

Since his original work with delinquency in the 1960s Hirschi has made some changes in the way he conceptualizes attachment to the three major agents of socialization discussed under this variable (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Hirschi 1969). For clarity I have subdivided these three agencies under the headings of attachment to parents, attachment to peers, and attachment to school.

Attachment to Parents

In Hirschi’s earlier work (1969) attachment to parents appeared to be a one-way bond. In more recently published work (1990) he considers the role of the parent in creating the bond. He recognizes that the parents’ behavior toward the child affects the bond that exists.
Parents who demonstrate love and affection for their children produce children who are more attached to them than do parents who do not especially care for their children. The methods of discipline used by some parents may also affect the attachment a child feels. If they tend to be lax, inconsistent, and of a short-term and insensitive nature--hitting and slapping or yelling and screaming--they may teach the child to avoid the parent rather than encourage him or her to spend time with the parent. Time spent with parents is required for the vigilance necessary to complete a socialization process that depends on the child's ability or inclination to consider the feelings of the parents in order to establish self-control (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Hirschi 1969).

In Hirschi's earlier work a distinction was made between attachment to conventional parents and attachment to nonconventional parents. The findings of the first survey showed that the significance lay in the lack of attachment whether the parents subscribe to conventional values or not. This finding is consistent with Hirschi's claim that even parents who engage in criminal behavior do not believe what they have done is right and do not want their children to do the same (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Hirschi 1969).

The major consistency in Hirschi's work is the direct link between attachment to parents and the child's
behavior. It is this attachment that causes the child to stop and imagine the parental reaction before acting on impulses directed at immediate gratification. As Hirschi put it, "Everyone appreciates money; not everyone dreads parental anger or disappointment upon learning the money was stolen." (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990, p.95).

Attachment to Peers

The type of peers one is attached to is not as significant to the socialization process as it is indicative of the success of the process. Hirschi sees the choice of peers as an indication of the amount of self-control an individual has developed. Those with low self-control do not have the concern for the opinion of others that is necessary for the conformity required by groups with higher self-control. Therefore, association with deviant peers may be a manifestation of the tendency of people to seek the company of others like themselves. A deviant peer group does not teach one the lack of self-control needed to commit crime. Crime does not require the transmission of values but rather reflects the lack of transmission. The deviant peer group does not teach one the lack of self-control needed to commit crime, but such a group may facilitate crime (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Hirschi 1969).

Attachment to School

School is restrictive. It requires that students
attend with regularity, complete assigned work, show respect for others, and generally control their impulsive behavior. The child with low self-control finds this environment too restrictive to develop the attachment necessary for success. The child who is constantly unable to sit still, talks during classes, and is generally disruptive receives negative sanctions. Under these circumstances the child may develop an intense dislike for school that weakens his or her attachment (Hirschi 1969).

Hirschi sees the school as a potential agent of socialization, but he also states that any potential can be undermined by the family. If the child has not been taught to consider the opinion of others, he or she will place little value on the opinion teachers may have about him or her. Because attachment to teachers is another measure of attachment to school, those with low self-control will not value the opinion of their teachers and their attachment to school will be weakened (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990).

Commitment

Hirschi is referring here to commitment to conventional lines of action. Through this component Hirschi explores a person's ability to recognize the value of conformity. In order for one to make a commitment to conventional actions, one must be able to control his or her desire for immediate gratification in favor of the
rewards offered at a more distant time. Low self-control does not lead to the type of commitment necessary to achieve long-range goals. Commitment to education requires a student to give up what is immediately pleasurable (watching television) in favor of a less pleasurable pursuit (homework) with the promise of rewards in the future (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). For an adult, commitment would require one to consider the consequences of calling in sick and going fishing. It might also require working overtime at the expense of a relaxing evening with one's friends or family.

Persons with low self-control often find the environments of school and work too restrictive. Their low self-control keeps them from recognizing the necessity of the tasks required in the achievement of long-term goals.

Involvement

Although some have interpreted involvement in conventional behaviors as reducing the time available to commit acts of crime, Hirschi does not (Hirschi 1969; Johnson 1987; Shoemaker 1990). Acts of crime take little time and are characterized by opportunity rather than planning. Supportive of Hirschi's explanation is his finding of a positive correlation between work and delinquency (Hirschi 1969).

Involvement is significant as an indicator of commitment and belief. The connection could be explained
as one's belief in the value of education leading to the commitment to obtain an education and that commitment leading to involvement. The commitment to education can be measured by whether or not one does the assigned homework. The involvement with education can be measured by the amount of time one spends on the assignment. This example is a simplified association as involvement not only implies the amount of time spent in the pursuit of education but also implies the willingness to engage in other activities that are seen as less directly related to the attainment of an education. This willingness to engage in other activities may also indicate the degree of attachment one feels for the school as well as express his or her willingness to conform to the expectations of others (Hirschi 1969).

Belief

Hirschi clearly states that belief in the lawful, moral, or sinful value of a behavior is not enough to prevent crime. Even those who violate the law recognize their behavior as wrong. So, the question arises as to the role of beliefs in the restraint of behavior. If beliefs are fairly consistent in a society, why do they constrain the behavior of some and not of others? Hirschi's answer to this question is that beliefs are connected to the attachment one feels for others. If this attachment is strong, it increases the sensitivity one has for the
opinion of others and makes it harder for norm neutralization to occur. Hirschi believes the chain of causation runs from attachment to parents, through the concern for the approval of persons in positions of authority, to the belief that the rules of society are binding on one’s conduct (Hirschi 1969).

**Summary**

It is Hirschi’s basic assumption about the hedonistic nature of human beings that sets his theory apart from other social control theories. This assumption is grounded in classical logic rather than in the positivistic frame of reference in which the definition of a phenomenon is distinct from its explanation or causes. While the positivistic view defines people as naturally social beings who must be compelled to commit criminal or deviant acts by forces beyond their control, classical thought puts criminal or deviant behavior within the realm of possibility for everyone. In other words, the causes of any human behavior are inherent in human nature and cannot be separated from it. From the statement that all human conduct is self-interested pursuit of pleasure, Hirschi goes on to distinguish between the act of crime and criminality. Crime is behavior that is regulated by legal sanctions. Criminality is concerned with the characteristics of people who violate norms whether or not they carry legal, moral, religious, or physical sanctions.
Hirschi sees the common element in crime, deviant behavior, sin, and accident as so overriding that any attempt to treat them as separate is a major intellectual error (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). His view is of major importance if one is to see deviant behaviors as predictive of criminality and derived from the same causal mechanisms rather than view them as separate phenomena, each with a different set of causes (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990).

Hirschi concentrates on internal mechanisms of control that are developed through the socialization process. The major importance of external control mechanisms lies in their application or lack of application during the child's socialization process. The immediacy of the application of sanctions is of prime concern. The constant vigilance necessary to produce a highly socialized individual is meaningful only when combined with the parents' ability to recognize undesirable behavior and apply immediate sanctions to discourage that behavior. The formal negative sanctions applied by the legal system are usually so far removed from the act as to render them meaningless in affecting behavior. Therefore, the individual must have developed a bond with society that insure the level of self-control needed to prevent him or her from engaging in deviant acts. This bond is secured through four major elements: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Hirschi 1969).
Application of Hirschi's Theory to Partner Abuse

Although Hirschi's theory has been applied mainly to the study of juvenile delinquency, this use does not preclude its use in the study of adult behaviors. In fact Hirschi sees the level of self-control as constant throughout the life of the person. He explained the early peak in violations as more a consequence of the type of activity the offenders are involved in rather than a direct consequence of age. In pointing out the later age peak for person violence as compared to property violence, Hirschi cites the incidence of person violence involving primary-group conflict. These primary-group conflicts, which translate as domestic violence cases, produce a relatively stable number of offenses among those neither very young nor very old (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). This finding is consistent with domestic violence research, which has pointed out that, as couples age, the amount of violent behavior in their intimate relationships decreases (Fagan 1989; Gelles and Straus 1988).

The application of Hirschi's theory to adult crime was not unprecedented. Hickey (1991) applied it to serial killers, and Hirschi (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990) applied it to white-collar crime. The major problem that Hirschi saw was the obvious one--the instrument for testing was developed for use with juveniles (Hirschi 1994). The task of developing an instrument to use with adults was not
an easy one; however, this problem was not insurmountable. Williams and Hawkins (1989) developed a questionnaire specific to adult wife abusers, and Minor (1975) developed one for general adult crime. The challenge was to find those elements that were most meaningful when applied to adults and devise a questionnaire both complete and brief enough to obtain the desired response.

In looking at previous applications of Hirschi's theory, two elements were particularly significant in explaining adult behavior. These elements were attachment and belief. This finding was not surprising as Hirschi (1969) saw the causal path running from the attachment to parents to the development of concern for the approval of persons in positions of authority to a belief that the rules of society are binding on one's conduct. Without the initial attachment to parents, concern for the opinion of others does not develop leaving the individual free to violate the rules of society. The individual with weak attachment to his or her parents has not experienced the rewards of "approval and esteem of those he admires" and has received only "weak punishment" for his or her lack of conformity (Hirschi 1969, p. 200).

It is this attachment to parents, with its rewards, that develops a reward-seeking behavior in the child. By doing what is right and receiving the anticipated reward, the moral value of conforming behavior is validated for the
individual. This type of reward- or pleasure-seeking behavior reinforces the social order of the society by reinforcing the individual's belief that conformity to the rules is pleasurable while deviance is not. Those who do not conform are not deaf to society's demands. However, they have not received the rewards or punishments necessary to respect those demands or the authority of those making the demands. It is this direct connection that leads Hirschi (1969, p. 203) to state, "Belief in the moral validity of the law is consistently related to measures of attachment."

It is interesting that Hirschi (1969) seemed less confident regarding where commitment and involvement fit into the causal path and found some difficulty in conceptualizing these two elements, as have others (Minor 1975: Kempf 1993). At times it appears that commitment may be an effect of belief and involvement an effect of attachment. Considering Hirschi's definition of commitment to conventional lines of action as "those stakes in conformity that are built up by pursuit of, and by a desire to achieve, conventional goals." (Hirschi 1969, p. 62) a strong case can be made. A commitment to and an investment in conformity must be preceded by a belief in the moral validity of the law. Otherwise the individual is not constrained from choosing unconventional activities that could result in the attainment of the same goals (Hirschi
Involvement is also difficult to conceptualize, and measures of involvement have often been more closely related to attachment than to involvement (Minor 1975). This difficulty could be the result of the way in which Hirschi develops the individual level of social control. Individualized social control is the internalized self-control that is developed through the process of socialization. Attachment to parents sensitizes the child to the opinions of others. Those who are not properly attached and sensitive have low levels of self-control. As Hirschi put it, organized groups value conformity and self-control and will not tolerate those who do not possess these attributes (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990).

We are left with two elements, attachment and belief, that have previously been used successfully in research and two others, commitment and involvement, that have yielded some questionable results (Hirschi 1969; Minor 1975; Williams and Hawkins 1989). For these reasons only attachment and belief were explored in this study.

Given Hirschi's conviction that self-control is formed early and remains constant throughout life, questions concerning early socialization and attachment should be valid if placed in retrospective rather than current time frames. If this attachment is weak, low self-control results. It is this low self-control that
allows an individual to neutralize the norms of society throughout the course of an individual's life (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). Therefore, the element of belief was measured by whether or not norm neutralization occurred.
CHAPTER III
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Joel Best (1990) used the phrase "social problems marketplace" to describe the arena in which social problems compete for public attention. In the 1970s this marketplace was indeed a crowded one in which issues of both public and private violence abounded. As voices were raised in protest against public violence, the idea of the home as a safe haven from violence was being exposed as a myth (Stanko 1988). While one group of claims-makers (Best 1990) was searching for ways to end the violence in the streets, another group struggled to find ways of ending violence in the home. This dichotomy in the focus on violence resulted in a dichotomy in research that still exists (Stanko 1988). Because of this schism any attempt to place intimate violence within a criminological perspective necessitates reviews of both intimate violence literature and the literature generated by the criminological theory applied.

Nature and Scope of Intimate Violence Research

Although intimate violence is by no means a phenomenon of the twentieth century, it was not until the 1970s that it became a proper topic for research (Weis
1989). With feelings about the price of violence running high due to the Viet Nam War and the assassinations of public figures, women's-rights activists drew our attention to the unseen violence occurring every day in homes across the country (Gordon 1988). It was during this tumultuous period of searching for answers to the cause of public violence that Gelles and Straus began their search for answers to private violence. When they began their research in the early 1970s, they were led to believe by available literature and advice of colleagues that they were looking for something that did not exist (Gelles and Straus 1988). They persisted in their research, which resulted in two national surveys and established them as probably the most quoted authorities in the field of family violence.

Gelles and Straus also found themselves at the center of controversy in what Yllo (1988, p. 28) called "one of the most political and emotionally charged topics of study in the social sciences." Social scientists and social activists polarized into opposing camps (Saunders 1988). On one side Gelles and Straus represented the quantitative, non-feminist social scientists who were viewed by the other side, the qualitative feminist activists, as detrimental to the plight of all women (Dobash and Dobash 1988). Although much research has revolved around this polarization, little has been accomplished in clearing up the epistemological
confusion that still surrounds research on intimate violence (Ohlin and Tonry 1989; Saunders 1988).

If these two camps were divided on most issues, they were united on at least one front. They generally agreed that intimate violence exhibited unique characteristics that distinguish it from other forms of violence, leading to a public-versus-private violence dichotomy (Stanko 1988). This dichotomy left criminologists to investigate the public violence, or "real violence," while viewing the privacy of the home as a sanctuary from the danger that lurked in the streets (Stanko 1988).

The result has been a growing list of risk markers for intimate violence that are often inconsistent and contradictory from one study to another (Renzetti 1992; Hotaling, Straus, and Lincoln 1989). The mixed results were often attributed to the use of different samples (Stets and Straus 1989), theoretical diversity (Weis 1989), or lack of an integrated theoretical perspective (Ohlin and Torny 1989).

Kemph's Review of Research
Using Hirschi's Theory of Social Control

Kemph (1989) compiled a review of all research to date using at least one element of Hirschi's social control theory. Of the forty-six studies forty-four supported Hirschi's theory. Ten of the studies used all four elements, but only three used no other independent
variables. Fifteen of the studies used some combination of attachment and belief with either commitment or involvement as the third variable. Two used only attachment and belief, and two others used only one element—attachment or commitment. The remainder used either attachment or belief in combination with either commitment or involvement or both.

Attachment was the most frequently used element, appearing in seventeen of the studies. The most frequent focus of attachment was attachment to parents. Seventy percent of all studies included attachment to parents.

The majority of these studies used Hirschi's variables, with the items indicating affection for parents and parental supervision most often used in replications. Parent to child intimacy was used in twenty-nine studies. Eleven of these used the same variables as Hirschi had, and the remainder used either similar variables with the same concept or the same concept with other variables. There was a total of 123 variables used for attachment to parents. Attachment to parents was found to be the strongest component of the attachment element, particularly in measurements of affection and psychological presence.

The most common variable used for attachment to school was some variation of Hirschi's variable "like/dislike school." Sixty-six variables were used for attachment to peers, with attachment to delinquent peers appearing most
often.

Only thirty-five percent of the studies used involvement, making it the least used element. In those studies using involvement, the two variables most often used were employment and hours spent on homework.

Commitment variables appeared in forty-one percent of the studies, with mixed results. One study showed commitment as having the strongest explanatory value while a second study showed it to have just the opposite of the anticipated effect. In the second study commitment had a positive correlation with crime.

Belief appeared in fifty-two percent of the studies. Each of these studies included all of Hirschi's neutralization techniques. The most frequently used item was the one concerning denial of injury. Although belief was consistently important in crime specific models, only one study showed it to be the strongest explanatory element.

Kemph (1993) cites several recommendations for further research using control theory. She recommends collecting data for the specific purpose of testing social control theory, including serious crimes, and constructing crime-specific models.

Studies Involving Adult Respondents

Minor (1975) tested Hirschi's theory using a random sample of 269 adults, ranging in age from eighteen to fifty
years, drawn from the general population of Tallahassee, Florida. Minor used attachment, involvement, belief, investment, and fear as independent variables and speeding, driving under the influence, marijuana use, shoplifting, and tax fraud as dependent variables.

Minor (1975) used attachment variables for family, peers, and school. Family attachment variables were status of being married, number of years married, number of children, and approval from both spouse and parents. To measure attachment to peers he used Hirschi's variables of approval and dependability. Attachment to school was measured by how much one liked school. All of the belief variables were significantly negatively related to the dependent variables of crime. The strongest variable was a stable marital relationship. Approval of parents was a close second, with peers and school having significance at a higher alpha level (p < .001 for family and p < .05 for peers and school).

Minor (1975) conceptualized investment as what the individual had to lose through deviant behavior. For investment he used the variables of education, income, and head of household. Education was found to be unrelated, income negatively related, and head of household spurious because it was confounded by the sex variable.

The involvement variables used were church attendance and nonreligious group membership. Involvement had no
particular effect except for church attendance, which was found to have a higher association with attachment than with the other involvement variable. Minor (1975) concluded that church attendance was more a function of attachment than involvement.

Belief was measured using variables of having a moral obligation to obey the law whether one agrees with it or not, believing that the treatment one receives from the law is not contingent upon the amount of money one has, and two items concerning the wrongness of breaking the law when there appears to be no other choice. All belief items had strong negative correlations with all dependent variables.

The fear of consequences index dealt with the individual's perception of formal and informal sanctions that might be enforced if he or she broke the law. These included the seriousness of the consequences, the immediacy of the consequences, and the degree of certainty the person has of being caught. The only item showing a consistent and strongly negative effect on crime was certainty of punishment.

Path analysis was used to analyze the data. Minor's model was recursive instead of reciprocal. The path began with attachment, ran through investment, involvement, belief, and fear, with investment and involvement routed through both belief and fear to the dependent variable of crime. The paths for driving under the influence,
marijuana use, and tax fraud all included attachment and belief, with fear of consequences included only for tax fraud. The path for speeding included only attachment and investment.

To test Hirschi’s theory of social control Williams and Hawkins (1989) selected all married and cohabiting men who had consented to be reinterviewed from the National Family Violence Re-Survey conducted by Gelles and Straus in 1986. They readministered the conflict tactic scale and selected only those men who were non-assaulters.

Because the focus of their interest was the criminalization of family violence and its effectiveness, Williams and Hawkins (1989) used variables that were abuse specific. Examples of these variables were the ones used for norm neutralization and perceived risk of arrest. For the norm neutralization variable the men were asked whether they would consider it right or wrong to hit one’s partner in a set of eight situations. These situations ranged from the woman screaming hysterically to her refusing to have sex. For the risk of arrest measure, the men were asked to estimate their chances of being arrested if they did hit their partners.

Another modification was made to the element of attachment. For attachment variables the importance of integration of the husband and family into the community networks of friends and kin was used. An index was created
to measure the importance of socializing with others--including neighbors, friends, relatives, and partners.

Commitment was measured by length of relationship and number of years in the community. Employment was not used as a commitment variable as it was anticipated that the stress of a job, or lack of a job, could spill over into intimate relations (Williams and Hawkins 1989).

The frequency of socializing with neighbors, friends, relatives, and partners was used to determine the level of involvement. The response categories were measures of monthly occurrences and ranged from zero to more than five times.

The first stage of analysis involved bivariate comparisons of dichotomized independent variables on the dependent variable using gamma as a measure of association. Because the sample used only non-assaulters, the gammas were positive instead of negative. The highest gamma (0.57) was for the belief variable of moral disapproval of assault. The second highest gamma (0.27) was for the attachment variable of importance of activities. The gammas for the variables of the remaining elements showed a much weaker association, the lowest being 0.03 for involvement. The gamma for the perceived risk of arrest was moderately weak; however, it represented the third strongest association.
For the second step Williams and Hawkins (1989, p. 604) "estimated a multivariate logit model to determine and compare the independent effects of each variable on the non-assault dichotomous dependent variable." Again, the resulting significance of the variables followed the same pattern as found in the first step. Moral disapproval had the highest t-value with importance of activities second and moral disapproval of assault third. The importance of activities and moral disapproval of assault were significant at alpha level p < .005. Perceived risk of arrest was significant at alpha level p < .025.

Summary

The predictive power of Hirschi's theory of social control in the vast majority of studies presented here encourages further research. In particular the substantiation that it can be applied effectively to adults, especially in the instance of male aggression in intimate relationships, is encouraging to its further application and testing in the area of intimate violence. The virtual absence of the social control perspective from intimate violence was noted by Williams and Hawkins (1989), and the lack of other applications of the theory to intimate violence is established in Kempf's (1993) survey.

One major reason for this deficit probably stems from the separation of family and intimate violence from the field of criminology (Stanko 1988), based on the assumption
that private violence is vastly different from public violence (Hotaling et al. 1989). A second reason is the assumption by many researchers of intimate violence that external forces push or drive the abusive male (Williams and Hawkins 1989).
CHAPTER IV
METHODS

Hirschi’s theory of social control has proved an effective perspective from which to view both juvenile delinquency (Kempf 1993) and adult crime (Minor 1975; Williams and Hawkins 1989). However, adjustments had to be made in the components and the variables used. For example, attachment to peers was not a particularly strong variable for adults (Minor 1975). The dependent variable of partner abuse strongly affected the way in which data could be gathered. Partner abuse was a more sensitive variable than those generally used (i.e., marijuana use, DUI, and speeding). Precautions had to be taken to insure having a large enough number of respondents who engage in partner abuse. Exploring partner abuse from a criminological perspective also meant that preexisting data sets with the needed independent variables were not readily available. Although applying Hirschi’s theory to adults was methodologically challenging, previous results (Minor 1975; Williams and Hawkins 1989) suggested that the undertaking was possible as well as worthwhile.

The data used in this analysis were collected from a sample of 200 married or cohabiting, heterosexual men. One
of the major problems for researchers in the area of intimate violence has been the expense involved in obtaining a sample large enough to include a sufficient number of both abusive and nonabusive men (Weis 1989). The most noticeable of the resulting problems has been the purposive sampling of either abused women or abusive men (Friez and Browne 1989). This sampling on the dependent variable leaves no possibility for between-groups comparisons (Hirschi and Selvin 1967).

In an effort to overcome these problems one hundred of the men surveyed came from current enrollment in court-ordered programs for abusers, and the remaining one hundred were selected from community oriented or religious groups (i.e., Masons, Kiwanis, Junior Chamber of Commerce, or church fellowship groups). The selection of men from the first group guaranteed inclusion of abusive men while eliminating the problem of total reliance on self-reported data. The selection of men from the second group takes Hirschi's theory to its logical conclusion that men involved in conventional groups should not be among those involved in intimate violence.

Although Hirschi (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990) states that those who are weakly attached to and do not share the beliefs of conventional others find it difficult to fit into organized groups, it cannot automatically be assumed that these men are different in their degree of social
control from those in the court-ordered programs or that any existing differences prevent them from abusing their partners. However, this group could reasonably be expected not to be involved in other criminal activities that might equate to partner abuse on Hirschi's continuum. They would indeed be expected to be reasonably crime free.

On the other hand, there was the possibility that family violence differs greatly from "street crime" assaults (Williams and Hawkins 1989) and from violence outside of the family due to society's perception of the privacy of the home (Hotaling et al. 1989). Men who would never strike a stranger or cheat on their income tax may well be capable of committing acts of violence directed toward their partners. In order to determine the effectiveness of this particular control group in relation to violence committed against their partners a nineteen-item conflict tactics scale was included as part of the survey instrument.

Conflict tactics scales are the most widely used measure of family violence, with over 100 publications including several books either using or analyzing these scales (Gelles and Straus 1988). The scale used in this survey is the same one used by Gelles and Straus in their two national surveys on family violence. This scale was found to have a reliability factor of .83 for male-to-female violence (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz
In their instruments which were administered by an interviewer the conflict tactic scale is prefaced with the following paragraph:

No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person or just have spats or fights because they're in a bad mood or tired or for some other reason. They also use many different ways of trying to settle their differences. I'm going to read some things that you and your partner might do when you have an argument. I would like you to tell me how many times in the past 12 months you (READ LIST) (Gelles and Straus 1988, p. 237).

The preface and instructions on my questionnaire were modified for use as a self-administered questionnaire. The CTS (conflict tactic scale) has been used previously as an instrument for obtaining incidence rates of family violence. Because it was used here to separate two categories of men, those who did and those who did not commit violent acts directed toward their partners, there was no benefit to collecting data on the frequency of the tactics used. Therefore, the scale was modified to record only whether the tactics had been used in the previous twelve-month period by providing yes-no categories rather than frequency categories.

The focus of this research was on the occurrence of the respondents' violent behaviors directed toward their partners. The behaviors were classified as either directed non-contact violence or directed contact violence. For the purpose of this research items four, eight, nine, ten, and
eleven on the CTS were classified as acts of directed non-contact violence (see Appendix A), and items twelve through nineteen were classified as acts of directed contact violence. Any respondent who answered yes to any question in either category was considered to have committed acts of violence. If a respondent answered yes to one or more questions in either category, this response was counted as one act of violence in that category. If a respondent answered yes to one or more items in both categories, these responses were counted as one act of violence in each category.

The CTS contains a section that addresses emotional abuse. Although this section was not used to determine a category of abuse, it was not removed from the scale. The scale was constructed to start with the most socially acceptable means of conflict resolution and move gradually to the most socially unacceptable means. Removal of the mid-range behaviors could affect the flow of the scale by abruptly moving from the acceptable to the unacceptable, thus affecting the respondents' willingness to give truthful answers. Some demographic data were requested on the questionnaire; however, these data were not used in testing any hypotheses or as control variables. The purpose of these data was to exclude those who did not meet the requirements of married or cohabiting males as there was a possibility that without these categories women and non-cohabiting men could have been inadvertently included.
Independent Variables

Two elements of Hirschi's social control theory were used—attachment and belief. Although Hirschi includes commitment and involvement in his theory, he maintains that the chain of causation runs from attachment to parents to the concern for the approval of persons in positions of authority to the belief that the rules of society are binding on one's conduct (Hirschi 1969). Commitment and involvement were not explored because they appear to lie outside this causal path and are very difficult to separate from attachment and belief. The difficulty in conceptualizing commitment and involvement separately from attachment and belief is emphasized in Hirschi's 1969 survey of delinquency. It appears logical that commitment and involvement may well be by-products of attachment and belief (Hirschi 1969). Minor (1975) found that commitment, which he called investment, and involvement had no significant relation to the dependent variable. The only variable that was significant was church attendance, and Minor's findings were ambiguous enough for him to conclude that the individual's state of being was less relevant than the individual's state of mind. In other words the social bond created by attachment and belief is a better predictor of criminal behavior than the external manifestations, commitment and involvement, that are associated with the social bond.
Eleven items representing these elements of social control make up the first half of the questionnaire. The items were selected for their significance in previous research (Agnew 1991; Hirschi 1969; Minor 1975). They represent the variables of attachment and belief. The response categories are strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. The categories of strongly agree, agree, and undecided represent the presence of a greater amount of the variable. The categories of disagree, and strongly disagree represent an absence of the variable. The results are presented in two-by-two tables and coded by the presence or absence of the particular variable.

Attachment to Parents

In ascertaining the degree of attachment to parents, Hirschi (1969) originally explored attachment as a one-way path of affection of the child for the parents. However, in his later work he sees the affection of the parent for the child as significant in establishing attachment (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). Therefore, both affection of the parent for the child and affection of the child for the parent were explored. Affectional identification of child to parent was addressed by whether the person wanted to grow up to be like his parents. Affectional identification of parent to child was related to whether or not the child felt loved by the parents. The connection of
the affection the child felt from and for the parent in establishing sufficient attachment to prevent undesirable behavior is expressed by the first hypothesis.

\[ H_1: \text{Men who had little or no affection for their parents are more likely to commit violent acts directed toward their partners than are men who had greater affection for their parents.} \]

Hirschi (1969) found that intimacy of communication was a significant factor in social control. Intimacy of communication was explored under attachment using questions concerning the child's sharing of thoughts and feelings with parents and the parents' explaining of their feelings to the child. The effect of intimacy of communication was determined by the child's knowledge of whether the parents would approve or disapprove of his actions. Because attachment is significant for its effect of sensitizing the individual to the opinions of others (Hirschi 1969), concern for parental opinion was included. The second hypothesis addresses the intimacy of communication between the respondent and his parents. Intimacy of communication is based on the respondent's ability to talk to his parents about problems and on the parents' sharing of their feelings with the respondent.

\[ H_2: \text{Men who had less intimacy of communication with their parents are more likely to commit violent acts directed toward their partners than are men who had more intimacy of communications with their parents.} \]

The third hypothesis addresses the effectiveness of communication.
H₃: Men who had less effective communication with their parents are more likely to commit violent acts directed toward their partners than are men who had more effective communication with their parents.

The fourth hypothesis explores the effect of that knowledge on behavior.

H₄: Men who do not consider what their parents would think of their actions are more likely to commit violent acts directed toward their partners than are men who do consider what their parents would think of their actions.

Beliefs

Hirschi contends that beliefs are consistent throughout a society, and even those who break the law do not believe that what they did was right (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Hirschi 1969). This contention makes norm neutralization important in exploring social control. Norm neutralization has also been shown to be a significant factor in wife abuse (Pleck 1988; Saunders 1988). In this research abusers used techniques of blaming the victim, denying the seriousness of their actions, and denying their responsibility for those actions.

Norm neutralization was dealt with by using three questions--one question addressing each of the techniques used by abusive men. Blaming the victim was addressed in a question about a victim's culpability in the crime of auto theft. The question of whether most things people consider wrong hurt anyone was used to determine denial of injury. Agreement or disagreement with the statement, "I can't seem
to stay out of trouble no matter how hard I try" was used to determine whether or not a respondent accepted responsibility for his actions. The following three hypotheses deal with these three forms of norm neutralization.

H₅: Men who believe that victims are to blame for the crimes committed against them are more likely to commit violent acts directed toward their partners than are men who do not believe victims are to blame.

H₆: Men who deny the consequences of their actions are more likely to commit violent acts directed toward their partners than are men who do not deny the consequences of their actions.

H₇: Men who deny responsibility for their actions are more likely to commit violent acts directed toward their partners than are men who do not deny responsibility for their actions.

The association between abuse and traditional beliefs about gender roles has been documented by numerous researchers (Fagan 1989; Gelles and Straus 1988; Gordon 1988; Muehlenhard 1989; Pleck 1989). And, the patriarchal nature of our society has been blamed for the high incidence of wife abuse (Bograd 1988; Dobash and Dobash 1988). Because this association has proved significant in the past, patriarchal beliefs were addressed using the statement, "The world would be better off if women stayed home and took care of their husbands and children." This statement directly relates to traditional gender roles with man as the wage earner and woman as the caretaker of the family. If the respondent agreed with this
gender-role-based division of labor within the family, he was considered to have patriarchal beliefs. A man may believe that it is wrong to hurt a stranger or someone unrelated to him and at the same time believe that as the head of the family it is a man's right to expect certain behaviors from his partner. Thus, he is free to abuse his partner if her behavior does not meet his expectations. This connection between patriarchal beliefs and abuse is the basis for the eighth hypothesis.

H₈: Men who have patriarchal beliefs are more likely to commit violent acts directed toward their partners than are men who do not have patriarchal beliefs.

The belief in the certainty of punishment was the only fear variable in Minor's (1975) research that consistently correlated with each type of crime used in his index. The relations were negative and highly significant, alpha level p < .001. Hirschi (1969) was not unaware of certainty of punishment as a deterrent, but he placed more emphasis on the seriousness of the punishment and tied it to respect for authority and belief about the legitimacy of the law. However, when Hirschi explored child-rearing processes in the development of social control, he elaborated on the need for the child to be instilled with a sense of certainty about punishment (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). In doing so he made no differentiation among the types of punishment or the codes, laws, or moral taboos violated. Therefore, a belief in the certainty of some type of
sanction is critical whether it is immediate or at some point in the future. This certainty was defined as a belief that in the end we have to answer to someone for the things we have done wrong. This belief forms the basis for the ninth hypothesis.

H₉: Men who do not believe they will be held accountable for their actions are more likely to commit violent acts directed toward their partners than are men who believe they will be held accountable for their actions.

Statistical Analysis

Crosstabulations were run using SPSS for each independent variable and the dependent variables. The Chi-square test of independence was used with an alpha level set at p < .05. Crosstabulation tables were used to present the results of the analyses.
CHAPTER V
RESULTS

Questionnaires were administered to 200 cohabiting heterosexual males in order to ascertain whether Hirschi's theory of social control is applicable to domestic violence. One hundred men in this sample were from court-ordered programs. The other 100 men were members of various organizations involved in church or community activities. Because the two samples were taken from different locations, there is very little likelihood that the same person would appear in both samples.

The independent variables used in this study are attachment and belief. The questions representing these variables came from similar questions used in previous studies. These questions allowed for five different responses: two affirmative, two negative, and one undecided. Because the purpose was to measure the effects of the lack of social control on the commission of certain acts of violence, the undecided category was included with the affirmative responses for those categories in which a yes answer indicated the presence of social control and with the negative answers in those categories in which
affirmative answers indicated the absence of social control. The variables were dichotomized following those guidelines.

The two dependent variables indicative of violent behavior were measured using a conflict tactic scale that begins with nonviolent tactics and proceeds along a continuum of tactics ending with the most violent tactic: used a lethal weapon. Within this scale are two different types of violence. These types are described here as directed non-contact violence and directed contact violence. Directed non-contact violence consists of violent behaviors that will not result in physical injury to the person toward whom these actions are directed. Directed contact violence covers all actions that are intended to cause physical harm to the partner. Each category has been treated as a separate dependent variable.

A series of crosstabulations were used to examine any relationships existing between the dependent and independent variables. Chi-square was used to determine significance. The chi-square value given for each table includes the Yates correction. Significance was set at the .05 level.

Attachment

The first six questions on the questionnaire relate to the attachment variable. Hypotheses one through four address this variable.
Hypothesis one states:

Men who have little or no affection for their parents are more likely to commit violent acts directed toward their partners than are men who have greater affection for their parents.

Affection is indicated by responses to two questions. If respondents answer strongly agree, agree, or undecided to whether the respondents felt loved by their parents, then this response was considered to be an indication of affection for their parents. If the respondents answered strongly agree, agree, or undecided to the second question of whether the respondents wanted to be like their parents, then this response is also considered to be an indication of affection for their parents.

Table 1 Non-contact Violence by Felt Loved by Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-contact Violence</th>
<th>Felt Loved By Parents</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(176)</td>
<td>(24)</td>
<td>(200)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square, corrected = 4.997  d.f. = 1  p. = < .05

As can be seen in Table 1, 65.0 percent of all respondents committed acts of directed non-contact violence against their partners. However, 61.9 percent of respondents who felt their parents loved them committed acts of directed non-contact violence against their partners compared to 87.5 five percent of those who felt
their parents did not love them. The corrected chi-square of 4.997 indicates that this difference is statistically significant at <.05. Those who did not feel loved by their parents were more likely to commit acts of non-contact violence than those who did feel loved. The odds ratio of 4.30 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit acts of directed non-contact violence against his partner is slightly over four times greater when that person feels unloved by his parents.

Table 2 Contact Violence by Felt Loved by Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Violence</th>
<th>Felt Loved by Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

chi-square, corrected = 14.157 d.f. = 1 $p = < .001$

Table 2 presents the data on directed contact violence. Overall, 34.5 percent of the men committed such acts. Only 29.5 percent of those who felt their parents loved them committed acts of directed contact violence against their partners. However, 70.8 percent of those who felt their parents did not love them committed acts of directed contact violence against their partners. The corrected chi-square of 14.157 indicates a statistically significant difference at $p < .01$. The odds ratio of 5.79 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit directed
contact violence against his partner is almost six times greater when that man feels no love from his parents.

Table 3 presents the results of crosstabulations of directed non-contact violence by wanted to be like parents. When the respondents did not want to be like their parents, the percentage of those committing acts of non-contact violence directed at their partners is slightly higher (71.4 % compared to 62.5 %). However, the difference is

Table 3 Non-contact Violence by Wanted to Be Like Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Contact Violence</th>
<th>Wanted to be Like Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(144)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

chi-square, corrected = 1.047  d.f. = 1  p = No significance

not statistically significant. Whether respondents did or did not want to be like their parents had no significant effect on directed non-contact violence.

Wanting or not wanting to be like parents did have a significant effect on directed contact violence as can be seen in the results in Table 4. Only 27.1 percent of the respondents who wanted to be like their parents committed acts of directed contact violence against their partners, compared to 53.6 percent of those who did not want to be like their parents. The corrected chi-square of 11.374 indicates a statistically significant difference at p < .01.
Table 4  Contact Violence by Wanted to Be Like Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Violence</th>
<th>Wanted to Be Like Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(144)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

chi-square, corrected = 11.374  d.f. = 1  p = < .01

The odds ratio of 3.10 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit directed contact violence against his partner is three times greater when that man does not want to be like his parents.

Whether or not men felt loved by their parents appears to have a significant effect on both directed non-contact and directed contact violence with p < .05 in the directed non-contact violence category and p < .01 in the directed contact violence category. However, whether or not the men wanted to be like their parents appears to be significant only in the directed contact violence category.

The second hypothesis considered under the attachment variable addresses intimacy of communications between the men and their parents. This hypothesis states:

Men who had less intimacy of communication with their parents are more likely to commit violent acts directed toward their partners than are men who had more intimacy of communication with their parents.

Intimacy of communication is indicated by responses to two questions. The first question was whether the parents explained their feelings to the respondent. If the
respondent answered strongly agree, agree, or undecided to whether his parents explained their feelings to him, this was considered to be an indication of intimacy of communication between the man and his parents. The second question was whether the respondent felt he could talk to his parents. If the respondent answered strongly agree, agree, or undecided to this question, this response was also considered to be an indication of intimacy of communication between the man and his parents.

Table 5 Non-contact Violence by Parents Explained Feelings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-contact Violence</th>
<th>Parents Explained Feelings</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(144)</td>
<td>(56)</td>
<td>(200)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

chi-square, corrected = 14.517 d.f. = 1 p = <.01

Table 5 presents the results of crosstabulations of directed non-contact violence and parents explained feelings. Overall, 65 percent of the men committed acts of directed non-contact violence. Of those men who felt their parents explained their feelings to them 51.5 percent committed acts of non-contact violence directed toward their partners compared to 78.2 percent of those men who did not feel their parents explained their feelings to them. The corrected chi-square of 14.517 indicates a statistically significant difference at p < .01. The odds
ratio of 3.37 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit directed non-contact violence against his partner is about three and one-half times greater when that man felt his parents had not explained their feelings to him.

Table 6 presents the data on directed contact violence. Of the respondents 34.5 percent committed directed contact violence against their partners. However, 11.1 percent of respondents who felt their parents explained their feelings committed directed contact violence against their partners compared to 57.4 percent of those who felt their parents had not explained their feelings to them. The corrected chi-square of 45.429 indicates that this difference is statistically significant at p < .01. The odds ratio of 10.79 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit directed contact violence against his partner is over ten times greater when that man feels less intimacy of communication with his parents.

Table 7 presents the results of crosstabulations of directed non-contact violence as influenced by whether the
man could talk to his parents. Overall, 65 percent of the men committed directed non-contact violence against their partners. Of those respondents 56.2 percent of those who felt they could talk to their parents committed acts of directed non-contact violence against their partners as compared to 74.7 percent of those who committed directed non-contact violence against their partners and felt they could not talk to their parents. The corrected chi-square of 6.747 indicates a statistically significant difference at p < .01. The odds ratio of 2.30 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit directed non-contact violence against his partner is over two times greater when that man felt he could not talk to his parents.

Table 8 presents the data on directed contact violence. Overall, 34.5 percent of the men committed acts of directed contact violence. Only 14.3 percent of the men who felt they could talk to their parents committed acts of contact violence. However, 56.8 percent of those men who felt they could not talk to their parents committed
directed contact violence against their partners. The corrected chi-square of 38.110 indicates a statistical significance at p < .01. The odds ratio of 7.90 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit directed contact violence against his partner is almost eight times greater when that man feels he cannot talk to his parents.

The third hypothesis addresses the effectiveness of communication between parents and respondents. This hypothesis states:

Men who had less effective communication with their parents are more likely to commit violent acts directed toward their partners than are men who had more effective communication with their parents.

Effectiveness of communication is indicated by whether men knew their parents values. If the men answered strongly agree, agree, or undecided to whether they knew their parents would approve of an act before they committed that act, this response was considered to be an indication of effectiveness of communication.

Table 9 presents the results of the crosstabulation of
non-contact violence as related to whether the man knew his parents would approve. When the respondents have no knowledge of their parents' values the percentage of those

\textbf{Table 9 Non-contact Violence by Knew Parents Would Approve}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-contact Violence</th>
<th>Knew Parents Would Approve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(178)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square = 2.298  d.f. = 1  p = No significance

committing acts of directed non-contact violence against their partners is somewhat higher (81.8% compared to 62.9%). However, the difference is not statistically significant. Knowing whether their parents would approve of their behavior had no significant effect on directed non-contact violence.

\textbf{Table 10 Contact Violence by Knew Parents Would Approve}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Violence</th>
<th>Knew Parents Would Approve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>71.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(178)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square, corrected = 22.195  d.f. = 1  p = <.01

Knowing or not knowing whether their parents would approve of their actions does have a statistically
significant effect on directed contact violence. As can be seen in Table 10 only 28.7 percent of the men who knew whether their parents would approve committed directed contact violence against their partners, compared to 81.8 percent of the men who did not know. The corrected chi-square of 22.195 indicates a statistically significant difference at p < .01. The odds ratio of 11.20 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit directed contact violence against his partner is over two and one-half times greater when that man does not know whether his parents will approve of his actions.

Hypothesis four explores the effective outcome of communication between the men and their parents. This hypothesis states:

Men who do not consider what their parents would think of their actions are more likely to commit violent acts directed toward their partners than are men who do consider what their parents would think of their actions.

The outcome of communication was measured by whether consideration of the parents' opinions of an act kept the men out of trouble. If the respondents answered strongly agree, agree, or undecided to whether considering their parents' opinions kept them out of trouble, this response was considered to be an indication of an effective outcome of communication between the men and their parents.

Table 11 presents the results of crosstabulations of non-contact violence and whether the men considered their
parents' opinions. Of those men who said considering their parents' opinions of their actions prior to committing those actions had kept them out of trouble, 60.6 percent committed acts of directed non-contact violence against their partners compared to 85.7 percent of those men who said considering their parents' opinion had not kept them out of trouble. The corrected chi-square of 6.935 indicates a significant difference at the p < .01. The odds ratio of 3.90 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit directed non-contact violence against his partner is almost four times greater when that man states that considering his parents' opinion of his actions prior to committing those actions had not kept him out of trouble.

Table 12 presents the results of crosstabulations of directed contact violence by whether the men considered their parents' opinions. Of the respondents 34.5 percent committed acts of directed contact violence against their partners. Of these men 23 percent who answered that considering their parents' opinions of their actions kept
them out of trouble committed acts of directed contact violence against their partners compared to 88.6 percent who answered that considering their parents' opinions did not keep them out of trouble. The chi-square of 52.027 indicates a statistically significant difference at p < .01.

Table 12  Contact Violence by Consider Parents' Opinion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Violence</th>
<th>Consider Parents' Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(165)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square, corrected= 52.027  d.f. = 1  p = < .01

The odds ratio of 25.90 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit directed contact violence against his partner is almost twenty-six times greater when that man does not consider his parents' opinion of his actions.

Beliefs

Beliefs fall into three categories. The first is norm neutralization beliefs, the second is belief in traditional gender roles, and the third is belief in punishment.

Questions seven, eight, and nine on the questionnaire and hypotheses five, six, and seven address three forms of norm neutralization. Norm neutralization has been an important area of exploration in Hirschi's research (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Hirschi 1969) and a significant factor in the study of wife abuse (Pleck 1988;
Norm neutralization techniques found in previous research included blaming the victim, denying the consequences of behaviors, and denying responsibility for actions.

Question ten on the questionnaire and hypothesis eight address traditional beliefs about gender roles for women. The association between belief in traditional gender roles and domestic violence has been documented by numerous researchers (Fegan 1989; Gelles and Straus 1988; Gordon 1988; Munchlenhard 1989; Pleck 1989).

Finally, question eleven and hypothesis nine address the belief in punishment. This approach to punishment deals not with immediacy of punishment but rather with the certainty of punishment.

The first hypothesis under beliefs states:

Men who believe that victims are to blame for crimes committed against them are more likely to commit violent acts directed toward their partners than are men who do not believe that victims are to blame.

Question seven on the questionnaire was used for this hypothesis. This question addresses the crime of automobile theft rather than domestic violence. The outcome was measured by whether the respondents answered strongly agree, agree, or undecided to whether the victim of the crime should share equal responsibility with the perpetrator for the crime. Any of these responses was considered an indication of blaming the victim.
Table 13 Non-contact Violence by Blamed The Victim

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-contact Violence</th>
<th>Blamed the Victim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square, corrected = 4.733  d.f. = 1  p = .05

Table 13 presents the results of crosstabulations of directed non-contact violence and whether the man blamed the victim. Overall, 65 percent of the men committed directed non-contact violence. When the respondents indicated the victim was as much to blame as the perpetrator, 75.7 percent committed directed non-contact violence against their partners compared to 59.2 percent of the respondents who did not blame the victim and committed directed non-contact violence. The chi-square of 4.733 indicates a statistically significant difference at p < .05. The odds ratio of 2.14 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit directed non-contact violence against his partner is two times greater when that man believes the victim is to blame.

Table 14 presents the results of crosstabulations of contact violence relating to whether the man blamed the victim. Of the respondents 34.5 percent committed directed contact violence. Of these respondents 67.1 percent blamed the victim compared to 16.9 percent who did not blame the
victim. The corrected chi-square of 48.582 indicates a statistically significant difference at <.01. The odds ratio of 10.031 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit directed contact violence against his partner is slightly over ten times greater when that man blames the victim.

Hypothesis six states:

Men who deny the consequences of their actions are more likely to commit violent acts directed toward partners than are men who do not deny the consequences of their actions.

For this hypothesis another general question was used. The men were asked to respond to the following statement: "The things most people think are wrong don't really hurt anybody." An answer of strongly agree, agree, or undecided was interpreted as an indication of denial of consequence.

Table 15 presents the results of crosstabulations of directed non-contact violence by denial of consequences. Overall, 65 percent of the men committed directed non-contact violence against their partners. Of these men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Violence</th>
<th>Blamed the Victim</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(70)</td>
<td>(130)</td>
<td>(200)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square, corrected= 48.582  d.f.= 1  p= <.01
Table 15  Non-contact Violence by Denial of Consequences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-contact Violence</th>
<th>Denial of Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>90.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(54)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square, corrected = 20.022  d.f. = 1  p = <.01

90.7 percent indicated denial of consequences compared to 55.5 percent who did not indicate denial of consequences. The corrected chi-square of 20.022 indicates a statistically significant difference at p < .01. The odds ratio of 7.86 indicates that the likelihood that a man will commit directed non-contact violence against his partner is almost eight times greater when that man denies the consequences.

Table 16  Contact Violence by Denial of Consequences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Violence</th>
<th>Denial of Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>85.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(54)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square, corrected = 81.050  d.f. = 1  p = <.01

Table 16 presents the results of crosstabulations of contact violence by denial of consequences. Overall, 34.5 percent of the respondents committed acts of directed contact violence. Of these men 85.2 percent indicated denial of the consequences of their actions compared to
15.8 percent who did not. The corrected chi-square of 81.050 indicates a statistically significant difference at p < .01. The odds ratio of 30.75 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit directed contact violence against his partner is over thirty times greater if that man denies the consequences of his actions.

The seventh hypothesis addresses denial of responsibility. This hypothesis states:

Men who deny responsibility for their actions are more likely to commit acts violence directed toward their partners than are men who do not deny responsibility for their actions.

To determine acceptance of responsibility for actions the following statement was used: "I can't seem to stay out of trouble no matter how hard I try." If the respondent answered strongly agree, agree, or undecided, this was considered to be denial of responsibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-contact Violence</th>
<th>Denial of Responsibility</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square, corrected= 11.876  d.f.= 1  p= < .01

Table 17 presents the results of crosstabulations of directed non-contact violence by denial of responsibility. Overall, 65 percent of the men committed directed
non-contact violence against their partners. Of these men 88.4 percent indicated denial of responsibility compared to 58.6 percent who did not. The corrected chi-square of 11.876 indicates a statistically significant difference at p < .01. The odds ratio of 5.369 indicates the likelihood that a man will commit non-contact violence against his partner is slightly over five times greater when that man indicates denial of responsibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Violence</th>
<th>Denial of Responsibility</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(43)</td>
<td>(157)</td>
<td>(200)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square, corrected = 73.420  d.f. = 1  p = < .01

Table 18 presents the results of crosstabulations of directed contact violence by denial of responsibility. Overall, 34.5 percent of the men committed acts of directed contact violence. Of these men 90.7 percent indicated denial of responsibility compared to 19.1 percent who did not. The corrected chi-square of 73.420 indicates a statistically significant difference at p < .01. The odds ratio of 41.275 indicates the likelihood that a man will commit directed contact violence is slightly over forty-one times greater when that man denies responsibility for his actions.
Whether or not men engaged in norm neutralization techniques appears to affect both directed non-contact and directed contact violence. All crosstabulations showed a statistically significant difference at $p < .05$.

Hypothesis eight explores the effects of traditional beliefs about gender roles on violent behavior. This hypothesis states:

Men who have patriarchal beliefs are more likely to commit acts of violence directed toward their partners than are men who do not have patriarchal beliefs.

Patriarchal beliefs were determined by agreement with the statement that the world would be better off if women stayed home and took care of their husbands and children. If the respondents answered strongly agree, agree, or undecided to whether the world would be better off if women stayed home, then this was considered to be an indication of patriarchal beliefs.

Table 19  
Non-contact Violence by Patriarchal Beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-contact Violence</th>
<th>Patriarchal Beliefs</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(91)</td>
<td>(109)</td>
<td>(200)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square, corrected= 6.179  
d.f. = 1  
p = <.05

Table 19 presents the results of crosstabulations of
violence against their partners. Of these men 74.7 percent who committed such acts had patriarchal beliefs compared to 56.9 percent who committed such acts and did not. The corrected chi-square of 6.179 indicates a statistically significant difference at p < .05. The odds ratio of 2.24 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit directed non-contact violence against his partner is slightly over two times greater when that man subscribes to patriarchal beliefs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 20</th>
<th>Contact Violence by Patriarchal Beliefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact Violence</td>
<td>Patriarchal Beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(91)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square, corrected = 47.633 d.f. = 1 p = < .01

Table 20 presents the results of crosstabulations of contact violence by patriarchal beliefs. Overall, 34.5 percent committed directed contact violence against their partners. Of those men 60.4 percent indicated patriarchal beliefs compared to 12.8 percent who did not. The chi-square of 47.633 indicates a statistically significant difference at p < .01. The odds ratio of 10.367 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit directed contact violence is slightly over ten times greater when that man has patriarchal beliefs.
Hypothesis nine states:

Men who do not believe they will be held accountable for their actions are more likely to commit acts of violence directed toward their partners than are men who believe they will be held accountable.

Belief in accountability was indicated by whether the men believed they would have to answer for the wrongs they had committed. An answer of strongly agree, agree, or undecided was considered to be an indication that there was a belief in accountability.

Table 21 presents the results of crosstabulations of directed non-violence by belief in punishment. Overall, 65 percent of the men engaged in this behavior. Of these men 57.8 percent believed they would be punished for the wrongs they had committed compared to 89.1 percent who did not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-contact Violence</th>
<th>Belief in Punishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(N) (154) (46) (200)

Chi-square, corrected= 13.943 d.f. = 1 p = <.01

The corrected chi-square of 13.943 indicates a statistically significant difference at p < .01. The odds ratio of 5.988 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit directed non-contact violence is almost six times greater if that man believes there will be no punishment for his actions.
Table 22 presents the results of crosstabulations of directed contact violence by belief in punishment. Overall, 34.5 percent of the men engaged in directed contact violence against their partners. Of these men 26.6 percent believed there would be punishment compared to 60.9 percent who did not. The corrected chi-square of 16.8898 indicates a statistically significant difference at $p < .01$. The odds ratio of 4.28 indicates that the likelihood a man will commit directed contact violence against his partner is slightly over four times greater when that man believes there will be no punishment for the things he has done wrong.
The purpose of this research was to investigate whether a theory of criminal deviance could be applied to domestic violence. Hirschi's theory of social control was chosen for this purpose. There were several reasons for this choice. This theory is well known and well defined in sociology. Over the past three decades Hirschi and many others have written extensive explanations of this theory that have helped to clarify the concepts and research associated with it. Finally, numerous researchers have gathered valuable information in both juvenile and adult populations in support of at least two of the components of Hirschi's theory of social control--attachment and beliefs.

Findings

The attachment and belief hypotheses were supported with only two exceptions. These two exceptions concerned the attachment variable and its relationship with directed non-contact violence as the dependent variable. In all associations involving directed contact violence the findings were statistically significant at or below the .05 level of probability. See Table 23.
Table 23  Summary of Results of Hypotheses Relating to Partner Abuse in Cohabiting Heterosexual Men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 Men who have less affection for their parents are more likely to commit violent acts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 I have always felt that my parents loved me.</td>
<td></td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>4.997(NC)*</td>
<td>4.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 I wanted to grow up to be like my parents.</td>
<td></td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>1.047(NC)</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 Men who had less intimate communications with their parents are more likely to commit violent acts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6 My parents have always explained their feelings.</td>
<td></td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>14.571(NC)**</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7 I could talk to my parents about my problems.</td>
<td></td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>6.747(NC)**</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 Men who had less effective communication with their parents are more likely to commit violent acts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5 I knew before I did anything</td>
<td></td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>2.298(NC)</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>22.195(C)**</td>
<td>11.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
whether my parents would approve of the act.

#4 Men who do not consider what their parents would think of their actions are more likely to commit violent acts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q4 Considering my parents' opinion of what I was about to do kept me out of a lot of trouble</td>
<td>Yes 60.6  No 85.7</td>
<td>6.935(NC)**</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23.0 88.6</td>
<td>52.027(C)**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#5 Men who believe victims are to blame are more likely to commit violent acts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q7 Anyone who leaves the keys in his/her car is as much to blame for its theft as the one who steals it</td>
<td>Yes 75.7  No 59.2</td>
<td>4.733(NC)*</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>67.1 16.9</td>
<td>48.582(C)**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#6 Men who deny the consequences of their actions are more likely to commit acts of violence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q9 The things most people think are wrong don't really hurt anybody.</td>
<td>Yes 90.7  No 55.5</td>
<td>20.022(NC)**</td>
<td>7.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>85.2 15.8</td>
<td>81.050(C)**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 23 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**#7** Men who deny responsibility for their actions are more likely to commit violent acts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q8</th>
<th>I can't seem to stay out of trouble no matter how hard I try.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**#8** Men who have patriarchal beliefs are more likely to commit violent acts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q11</th>
<th>The world would be better off if more women stayed home and took care of their husbands and children.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**#9** Men who do not believe they will be accountable for their actions are more likely to commit violent acts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q10</th>
<th>In the end we all have to answer to someone for the things we've done wrong.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*  p < .05  
**  p < .01

NC = Non-contact Violence  
C = Contact Violence
Attachment

Attachment to parents as measured by whether or not the respondent felt his parents loved him appeared to be a significant factor in both directed non-contact violence and directed contact violence. Hirschi (1969, 1990) had suggested that methods of discipline probably affect this attachment to the parents. Some of the methods Hirschi listed as detrimental to this bond include yelling, screaming, hitting, and slapping. These discipline techniques that weaken the bond between parents and children fit well with the types of behaviors explored as dependent variables in this research.

When attachment was measured from child to parent using the question of whether or not as a child the respondent wanted to grow up to be like his parents, the only significant difference was found in the area of directed contact violence. The absence of a significant difference for directed non-contact violence could be the result of several factors. The question used to measure the attachment of the respondent to the parents may be insufficient or inappropriate for this age group. Whether a respondent wants to be like his parents may be more relevant for examining the outcomes of delinquent behaviors in teenagers who may be more critical of their parents during the teen years than they will be in later life. This question also asks the respondent to recall an earlier
period in his life. Retrospective questions often yield answers that are colored by experience or changes in memory.

The next three hypotheses deal with the communication flow between the parent and the respondent. This flow is important to the task of teaching the "child" to consider the opinion of others, a component central to instilling social control into the level of self-control that is needed to prevent criminal behavior. Three elements of communication are intimacy, effectiveness, and outcome. With the exception of hypothesis three, as it relates to directed non-contact violence, all hypotheses were strongly supported in both categories of violence.

For hypothesis three the respondents were asked about knowing in advance their actions whether their parents would approve. Lack of support for the hypothesis in the category of directed non-violence could be a result of not investigating the parental values. Directed non-contact violence may have more widespread cultural approval and therefore be considered normal behavior within the marital relationship. If the parents believed this behavior to be normal, then it would have their approval. Therefore, exploring parental values could be central to the value of this question as it relates to directed non-contact violence.

The results of the data for hypothesis four yielded
the largest odds ratios for both categories of violence in the communications group (see Table 23). This result closely follows Hirschi's theory as it builds step by step to the final outcome where external social controls become instilled into the person to the degree of becoming internal self-control. Self-control occurs when the person places enough value on the opinion that others have of his behavior that the loss of their esteem is sufficient to insure that his behavior fits within society's norms.

This research as it applies to the attachment variable lends strong support for Hirschi's theory of social control. It follows his chain of causality beginning with affection for parents and proceeding through communication to the internalization of society's values to the extent that they become self control. The pathway leads from parental affection through communication ending with internalization.

Beliefs

Hirschi clearly stated that beliefs alone are not enough to restrain deviant behaviors. Beliefs, according to Hirschi, work only because of the attachment one feels to others and one's increased sensitivity for the opinion of others due to this attachment. It follows that if the attachment variable is strongly supported, then the belief variable should also be strongly supported. It also appears that this support would be as strong for all types
of cultural beliefs as well as all types of deviant behaviors.

The first area under beliefs to be explored was norm neutralization. If attachments are strong, there must be a way of circumventing beliefs that are either too restrictive or ambiguous for the individual. Norm neutralization is one technique used for this purpose.

Three norm neutralization techniques, blaming the victim, denying the consequences, and denying responsibility, were used in this study. All three have been significant factors in both social control and domestic violence research. All norm neutralization techniques indicated significant differences.

Significant results were obtained for directed non-contact violence and directed contact violence with denial of consequences. Denial of consequences was based on whether the respondent agreed with the statement: "The things most people think are wrong don't really hurt anybody." It is a strong possibility that many abusers see the consequences of letting a partner continue in behavior they perceive as wrong as more detrimental than the physical violence that partner endures to correct that behavior. It is also reported in feminist research that men trivialize the extent of the injuries they inflict upon their partners during violent episodes (Ptacek 1988).

Significant results were also obtained for directed
non-contact violence and directed contact violence with denial of responsibility. Denial of responsibility is based on the belief that whatever occurs in the individual's life is beyond the individual's control and that nothing they do will make a difference in the outcome of events. The statement "I can't seem to stay out of trouble no matter how hard I try." was used to determine denial of responsibility. Denying responsibility appears to fit well with an abuser's attitude that once the violent behavior is triggered, he is powerless to stop it until it runs its course.

Although there is support for the fifth hypothesis, it is the weakest of the norm neutralization hypotheses. This hypothesis involves blaming the victim. Agreement with the statement "Anyone who leaves the keys to his/her car is as much to blame for its theft as the one who steals it" was taken as an indication of blaming the victim. The weaker support for this hypothesis may be due to the question used. In this specific area there may be a difference in the way perpetrators think of domestic violence. They may not see domestic violence as being in the category of a "real crime" such as automobile theft.

Hypothesis eight addresses patriarchal beliefs. The findings of this research suggest a strong positive relationship between these beliefs, expressed as traditional gender roles, and both directed non-contact and
directed contact violence. Patriarchal belief has been a strong component of feminist research on domestic violence. Therefore the finding of statistically significant differences based on patriarchal beliefs is not surprising (Bograd 1988; Dobash and Dobash 1988).

Belief in punishment as a deterrent to domestic violence is addressed by the ninth and final hypothesis. There were statistically significant differences for both categories of violence. Although supported, this hypothesis showed very little difference between directed non-contact violence and directed contact violence. The reason for this narrow margin could lie in the question that was used to determine the belief in punishment. The question stated "In the end we all have to answer to someone for the things we've done wrong." This places punishment, although certain, in what may be perceived as the distant future. Hirschi addressed both the immediacy and certainty of punishment in his research, finding both necessary to affect deterrence (Hirschi 1969; Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). Domestic violence is mainly concerned with the certainty of punishment, relegating immediacy to a learning theory perspective (Gelles and Straus 1988). Consequently, in domestic-violence research the immediacy of the reward, the feelings the man receives from committing violent acts against his partner, is more immediate and somewhat removed from the possibility of the
potential punishment of being arrested after he has received the immediate reward. If the reward is immediate and the punishment is somewhat deferred, then the reward will outweigh the concern with punishment (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990).

Previous researchers have been unable to define punishment in a way that yields consistent results. The lack of a workable definition for punishment made belief in punishment difficult to work with. However, using final accountability appeared to be more consistent with the internalization of social control than would a question involving arrest, which is an external social control. The findings relating to this hypothesis suggest that self-control may be a better deterrent for both directed non-contact violence and directed contact violence than the external deterrents imposed by society.

The belief variables appear to be the juncture at which social control theory and traditional domestic-violence research meet. Both branches of research deal with immediate gratification and norm neutralization, and both branches have shown strong support for these variables in previous research. It, therefore, appears that social control theory may be a viable avenue for future research in the area of domestic violence.

Limitations of the Study

Overall, the findings of this research support the use
of Hirschi's theory as a viable means for exploring domestic violence. Although these findings were consistent with previous research findings, caution should be used in any attempt to generalize those findings to the total population.

A comparatively small sample was used. This sample was taken in two different geographic locations. The group representing the suspected perpetrators of domestic violence resided in a midwestern state and the group chosen from the membership of civic and religious organizations resided mainly in a south central state. It is possible that different results may have been obtained if the entire sample had been drawn from either the same general geographic location or a larger range of geographic locations. It is also possible that the results would have been different had a larger and more randomly selected sample been used.

There also may be differences between the men in one sample and men in the general population who commit acts of violence against their partners and are not in a treatment program. The men chosen for this research had chosen a group treatment plan as an alternative to serving time in jail or sentencing in a court of law. Differences may have been seen if attention had been focused on the amount of time these individual men had spent in the program or if attention had been focused on the specific types of
programs. It is possible that length of time spent in a counseling program could affect the beliefs these men had, as could the specific orientation of the program.

This research design was somewhat narrow in focus. Only those variables and questions that had yielded strong support for Hirschi's theory of social control in the past were used; therefore, some hypotheses were tested using a single question. Development of other relevant questions for use in testing these hypotheses could produce different results.

There also appears to be a problem with self-reporting even though attempts were made to eliminate this problem. According to Hirschi (1969) it may be expected that juveniles may overreport incidences of certain behaviors. It is also expected that adults may underreport incidences of behaviors that carry negative social or legal sanctions. Underreporting of incidences appears to hold true in this research as only 35 percent of the men reported acts of directed contact violence against their partners. It was expected that the reporting rate would be higher because at least 50 percent of the men in this study had exhibited behaviors violent enough to justify legal interventions.

Suggestions for Further Research

Over the past three decades domestic violence has emerged from the privacy of the home and come into the public arena of the criminal justice system. With this
emergence it no longer makes sense for researchers to view domestic-violence research as not within their purview. As domestic violence becomes criminalized we need more research that treats domestic violence as the crime it is rather than treating domestic violence as a relationship problem.

If social control theory is used in further research on domestic violence, special care must be taken to develop concepts that are meaningful to the adult experience and can be operationalized to fit the experiences of the adult world. A wider variety of questions may be needed for the testing of hypotheses. These questions should be constructed to have meaning to the adult experience while maintaining the integrity of the theory.

As the criminalization of domestic violence continues, construction of a longitudinal study could be valuable in determining the effects criminalization has on beliefs that support the commission of domestic violence. This type of study could produce valuable insight into how social change occurs when previously acceptable behaviors become criminalized.
APPENDIX A

Social Relationship Questionnaire

Please do not write your name or any other identifying information on this form.

Instructions: Please check the appropriate blanks.
Sex: ___ Male ___ Female
Years of Education: ___
Age: ___ Under 20 ___ 20-29 ___ 30-39 ___ 40-49 ___ 50 and over
MARITAL STATUS
___ Married ___ Living Together ___ Separated ___ Divorced
___ Single ___ Other

INSTRUCTIONS
Please answer the following questions by placing a check in the blank that most closely describes your feelings.
SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Family Experiences:

1. I have always felt that my parents loved me.
   SA A U D SD

2. I could talk to my parents about my problems.
   SA A U D SD

3. I wanted to grow up to be like my parents.
   SA A U D SD

4. Considering my parents' opinion of what I was about to do kept me out of a lot of trouble.
   SA A U D SD

5. I knew before I did anything whether my parents would approve or disapprove of the act.
   SA A U D SD

6. My parents have always explained why they feel the way they do.
   SA A U D SD

Adult Attitudes:

7. Anyone who leaves the keys in his/her car is as much to blame for its theft as the one who steals it.
   SA A U D SD

8. I can't seem to stay out of trouble no matter how hard I try.
   SA A U D SD

9. The things most people think are wrong don't really hurt anybody.
   SA A U D SD

10. In the end we all have to answer to someone for the things we've done wrong.
    SA A U D SD
11. The world would be better off if more women stayed home and took care of their husbands and children.  

If you have been in a relationship with a woman within the past twelve months, please complete the next section. If you have not, you have completed the questionnaire. Thank you for your cooperation.

Instructions: In the course of all relationships there are times when couples disagree, get annoyed with each other, or just have spats or fights because they are in a bad mood or tired or for some other reason. Couples use many different ways of trying to settle their differences. Below is a list of some of the ways couples have been known to settle their conflicts. Please check yes for each tactic you have used in the last twelve months and no for each you have not used during the same twelve-month period.

1. Discussed an issue calmly  
2. Got information to back up your side of things  
3. Brought in or tried to bring in someone to help settle things  
4. Insulted her or swore at her  
5. Sulked or refused to talk about an issue  
6. Stomped out of the room, house, yard  
7. Cried  
8. Did or said something to spite her  
9. Threatened to hit her or throw something at her  
10. Threw, smashed, hit, or kicked something  
11. Threw something at her  
12. Pushed, grabbed, or shoved her
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Slapped her</td>
<td>___yes ___no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Kicked, bit, or hit her with a fist</td>
<td>___yes ___no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Hit her with something</td>
<td>___yes ___no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Beat her up</td>
<td>___yes ___no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Choked her</td>
<td>___yes ___no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td><strong>Threatened</strong> her with a knife or gun</td>
<td>___yes ___no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Used a knife or gun on her</td>
<td>___yes ___no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


______. 1994. Personal Correspondence.


