1986

Convicted offenders' vocabulary of motive: truth or consequences

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CONVICTED OFFENDERS' VOCABULARY OF MOTIVE: TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

Iowa State University

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300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106
Convicted offenders' vocabulary of motive:  
Truth or consequences  
by  
Melvin C. Ray  

A Dissertation Submitted to the  
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  

Department: Sociology and Anthropology  
Major: Sociology  

Approved:  
Signature was redacted for privacy.  

In Charge of Major Work  
Signature was redacted for privacy.  

For the Major Department  
Signature was redacted for privacy.  

For the Graduate College  
Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa  
1986
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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Explanation of Dissertation Format

The two paper design is an alternative dissertation format recently adopted by Iowa State University. This design is intended to provide the researcher the opportunity to address his/her research problem in a series of papers, appropriate for submission to professional journals, as means of meeting the criteria for the doctoral degree. In terms of the present investigation, this format is appropriate because the two major papers are independent yet topically intertwined. The two articles address a single social problem, the cause of criminal behavior, but differ in terms of the theoretical approaches and methodological techniques employed to enhance the analysis. Each paper represents an exclusive exploratory study, yet synthesized they constitute a thorough investigation of the research problem.

Research Overview

This dissertation is an exploratory study conducted to identify and determine the effects of various social factors on offenders' involvement in criminal activities. This design
was chosen because it is the author's intention to use the results of this study to formulate a more precise research problem statement and to develop hypotheses that are amenable to empirical verification. Thus, an exploratory design will facilitate the generation of ideas and access to insights on social factors that are related to violent, criminal behavior.

Although social scientists have made numerous speculations concerning the importance of social factors for explaining criminal behavior, they have failed to use their sociological imagination in constructing causal models. Moreover, previous studies on the etiology of crime have traditionally employed a single theoretical framework, thus restraining their capacity to account for the variation in offenders criminal involvement. Additionally, sociologists, psychologists, legislators, and law-enforcement personnel express the view that to identify the social factors impacting upon criminal offenders it is imperative that we obtain the perpetrators' perceptions of the factors that caused them to commit violent and/or nonviolent crimes. This dissertation format will allow the researcher to address both of the issues stated above.

The flow of this two-paper study is as follows. The first section will include an in-depth discussion of the major sociological orientations and relevant research literature on criminal behavior. In addition, a brief description of the
types of crime most frequently committed and investigated by social scientists will be presented. This general overview of sociological orientations and offense categories will be the foundation upon which the two subsequent research papers will be developed.

The first paper constitutes a symbolic interaction approach to a particular type of crime, murder. Content analysis will be employed to identify certain sociological factors in the accounts of convicted murderers. These accounts will be used to identify the perpetrator's vocabulary of motive. The results of this exploratory study will hopefully provide the foundation for more structured studies and to establish priorities for further research in the area of lethal violence.

The second paper represents a quantitative study conducted to assess the relative importance of factors identified in sociological theories of criminal behavior. The objective of the study is to determine which theoretical construct was perceived as the most important cause of the offender's behavior. Additionally, the study is intended to determine the extent to which the offender's perceptions concerning the relative importance and the frequency of occurrence of the social factors vary by type of crime (i.e., property or violent). Finally, log-linear models will be used to determine the relative impact of selected social factors on
the odds of an offender being in the property category rather than the violent category.

The final section of this dissertation will contain a brief overview of the findings from both studies. Additionally, some crime prevention strategies and treatment recommendations based on the results of the studies will be discussed.

The data used in both papers were collected with the cooperation of the Iowa Corrections Department. A sample (N=120) of convicted offenders, entering the Iowa Medical and Security facility between October, 1984 and October, 1985, was used for this study. Each inmate was interviewed to obtain information regarding the offenders' involvement in criminal activities, the victim's effect, and offenders' perceptions of the social factors that caused them to commit criminal acts. Additional information concerning the research design will be included in each of the major papers.

The Iowa State University Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research reviewed this project and concluded that the rights and welfare of the human subjects were adequately protected, that risks were outweighed by the potential benefits and expected value of the knowledge sought, that confidentiality of data was assured and that informed consent was obtained by appropriate procedures.
SECTION I.

THEORETICAL ISSUES AND LITERATURE REVIEW
Section I.

Theoretical Issues and Literature Review

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INTRODUCTION

The writings of early social scientists suggest that crime (violent and nonviolent) is inevitable. For example, in the famous chapter (The Rules of Sociological Methods) on "The Normal and the Pathological," Emile Durkheim argued that conditions in society generate crime, and that crime is inevitable (normal) and serves a social function. Thus, for Durkheim crime and/or deviance served as a boundary enhancing function for society (Durkheim, 1938). Subsequently, Quinney (1974) in his "Critique of the Legal Order" asked us to try to imagine a utopian-like society in which there was no crime. He expressed the view that crime is a result of the struggle between social groups and social differentiation.

Sociological Theories of Crime

Sociological theories, especially theories of crime and deviance, employ both structural and cultural concepts. Nevertheless, social theories of crime are generally tagged as either structural or cultural (Nettler, 1978:141; and Kornhauser, 1978) based on whether their major assumptions rely on objective structural conditions (i.e., division of labor, economic inequality and class structures) or more
subjective cultural factors such as values, beliefs and group norms.

Zahn (1984) argued that there are three major sociological theories of criminal behavior: sociocultural; structural, and interactional. It should be emphasized that the original theoretical formulations were primarily posited to explain lower-class and middle-class delinquency. However, some of the theorists did address the issue of interpersonal violence as a type of delinquency. The original systems were deductive systems, whereas most of the extensions provided here are more conjectural and inferential.

Sociocultural explanations

Subcultural theorists do not all agree on the factors that cause norms and values to exist within the subculture, but all their studies can be characterized by their view of crime as sanctioned by the subculture and perpetuated by the status requirements of certain groups. Subcultural theories explain violent behavior as a result of social learning, shared values and attitudes toward violence. The most salient causal factors are value orientations that encourage violence. The term "value" has an ambiguous meaning in sociocultural theories, yet most social scientists agree that values determine our attitudes and behavior (Williams, 1971; Parsons and Shils, 1962; Rokeach, 1973).
Frederic Thrasher's (1927) extensive studies on delinquent gangs preceded the emergence of the subcultural thesis. He argued that crime was a result of social disorganization. Thrasher did not explicitly address the issue of violence, yet the results of his study facilitated the subsequent emergence of the subculture of violence thesis.

Most of the early research conducted to explain gang delinquency employed a subcultural or class oriented theoretical model. Further, the studies conducted in the '50s and '60s did not focus on specific types of delinquency. Thus, the results of those studies can only provide limited knowledge of the nature of interpersonal violence.

For example, Cohen (1955) argued that crime was inherent in the lower-class. His thesis suggested that lower-class individuals suffer from low self-esteem and major adjustment problems because of their failure to attain middle-class standards. According to Cohen, lower-class youth are evaluated in terms of the criteria fostered in the middle-class culture. Because they are generally unable to meet the middle-class standards they inevitably develop a subculture. He stated that within the subculture activities are nonutilitarian, malicious, negativistic, and characterized by short-run hedonism.

In terms of malicious behavior, it seems reasonable that violence can be a result of obtaining thrills or joy from
inflicting injury upon others. Cohen's theory was primarily constructed to explain why lower-class boys develop subcultures: "He is denied access to status within society, so he must find status within the subculture." Therefore, both violent and nonviolent behavior can be used as a mechanism by which status is attained within certain groups (Miller, 1958; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960).

Miller (1958) also expressed the view that lower-class culture could cause criminal behavior. He stated that the lower-class is characterized by six elements, which he argued were issues which should command widespread and persistent attention and eradication to prevent criminality in lower-class persons. He identified the following themes as supporting both violent and nonviolent behavior: trouble, toughness, smartness, excitement, fate and autonomy.

Violent behavior within the subculture is often an attempt to "save face" (Miller, 1958). Miller substantiated his argument with interview data from gang members. He recalled the following statement: "We can't chicken out on this fight; our rep would be shot!" Thus, it seems apparent that within certain groups violent behavior is both learned and sanctioned by the normative structures.

Subsequently, Cloward and Ohlin (1960) conducted an in-depth study of delinquent gangs. The results of their study suggested that delinquency was a function of three types
of subcultures. The subcultures identified by the researchers were the "criminal subculture," "conflict subculture," and "retreatist subculture." These subcultures seem to have emerged because of different processes and in different sections of the social structure. They concluded that the subcultures influenced their members' beliefs, values, and behaviors.

Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) are credited with popularizing the notion of a subculture of violence. More specifically, they stated that there are subcultures in which values encourage the use of violence in both interpersonal relationships and group interactions. Further, access to weapons and possession of weapons show a willingness or a predisposition for violence. The use of violence is not accompanied by a sense of guilt or remorse in the subculture, because the violent behavior is perceived as a legitimate means to an end.

Michalowski (1975) examined the records of 119 vehicular homicides occurring in Columbus, Ohio over a three year period. The results supported the hypothesis that the tendency toward aggressive behavior, which is characteristic of a subculture of violence, influence the way an individual drives and their behavior in face-to-face interactions.

Other recent evidence, Erlanger (1979) reanalyzed the
subculture thesis. He used qualitative data on Chicano gangs in East Los Angeles. He found that within that particular subculture, there were both a relatively autonomous value set (i.e., machismo) that is compatible with a normative support for violence and a strong dependency on violent behavior as a result of structural conditions which in turn determines the effects of the values on gang members' criminal involvement. Additional support for the existence of a subculture of violence has also been cited in the literature (Hartnagel, 1980; M. Smith, 1979; Green and Wakefield, 1979; McCleary, 1975).

According to Zahn (1984) critics of the subcultural perspectives focus their grievances on two counts. First, the subcultural approach does not explain why subcultures emerge and secondly, they fail to explain why some individuals who are exposed to the subculture adopt violent and/or nonviolent modes of behavior while others similarly exposed do not. Furthermore, she argues that statistical and ecological studies rather than individual level data have been the source of confirmation for the subcultural approach.

For example, Ball-Rokeach (1973) employed the Rokeach Value Survey to test the hypothesis that violent behavior results from values and attitudes supportive of violence. They examined two types of criminal behavior, interpersonal violence and violent property crimes. Data were obtained from
1,429 nonoffenders and 363 imprisoned males about the nature of their interpersonal violent behavior and their values that were supportive of such behavior.

Ball-Rokeach (1973) stated that since values are the foundation upon which subcultural theorists construct their hypothesis, "empirical tests on the subculture of violence must depend on evidence of value differences between persons engaged in violent behavior and those who are not." The results of their study did not support the subcultural of violence hypothesis. A relatively small correlational coefficient (.20) was found between the nonoffenders approval of violence and their participation in violent activities. in addition, neither socioeconomic status nor social class were related to violent behavior in either sample (i.e., nonviolent offenders and violent offenders.)

Further, she examined the relationship between values and violent behavior in comparing males incarcerated for murder with males imprisoned for other offenses. She concluded by stating that:

The relatively weak association between attitudes and violent behavior taken together with the fact that there is little or no relationship between values and violent behavior suggests that the subculture of violence thesis is, at best, incomplete and, at worst, invalid as an explanation of interpersonal violence and violent crime (Ball-Rokeach, 1973).

Additionally she stated that values and attitudes are virtually unrelated to violent behavior. She maintained that
values and attitudes are intra-individual phenomenon whereas
violence is an interpersonal act requiring some interaction
between two or more persons.

Ball-Rokeach (1973) believed that one should not expect a
causal relationship between values and violent behavior when
the values of only one of the interactants are violently
oriented. She expressed the view that violent behavior is
neither "victim precipitated" nor assailant initiated, but
should be explained in terms of both parties definition of the
situation. Erlanger (1974) evaluated the validity of research
supporting the subcultural of violence hypothesis (i.e., M.C.
Wolfgang, Patterns of Criminal Homicide, Philadelphia, PA:
University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958). Based on analysis of
data collected under the auspices of the president's
Commission on the Cause and Prevention of Violence, he
concluded that there was no tendency for specific groups to be
violent or favorable to violence.

He also reanalyzed data used by Ball-Rokeach. He found
that domestic violence, which is commonly understood to be con­
donned in violent subcultures, was not widely accepted as
appropriate behavior. For example, when male respondents were
asked about situations in which they might possibly slap their
wife's face, only 26% of the white and 37% of the black married
respondents age 18 to 60 stated that they could imagine speci­
fic situations in which they would approve. Furthermore, the
respondents' perceptions did not vary significantly by income nor education.

Other researchers have focused their criticisms of sociocultural explanations of criminal behavior on the validity of their empirical measures (Messner, 1983; Green and Wakefield, 1979; Fine and Kleinman, 1979; Tittle, 1983). For example Blau and Blau stated that:

Cultural theories of crime usually do provide explicit definitions of their explanatory concepts, but they use them as hypothetical variables for which no empirical evidence is supplied. The typical explanatory format is that empirically observed relationships between objective conditions and crime rates are interpreted on the basis of cultural factors assumed to constitute the links between the antecedent variables and the rates, without any empirical evidence corroborating the linkages (1982:118).

Subsequently, Blau and Blau (1982) stated that these assumed linkages are the underlying basis of Gastil's and others interpretation of high southern crime rates, high crime rates in poor slums, and high crime rates of blacks and other ethnic minorities. Further, they argued that the above mentioned crime rates can be studied and interpreted with empirical data. Thus, they expressed the view that if an observed empirical relationship between antecedents factors and crime rates can be shown to be explained by structural conditions that can be empirically measured, "it obviates the need to advance conjectures about cultural influences that cannot be so demonstrated" (1982:118).
Structural theories

The basic argument underlying structural theories of crime is that certain members of society as a result of their relative lower socio-economic status, are forced to commit violent and nonviolent crimes to achieve the goals that they are denied through legitimate avenues (Merton, 1938; Cohen, 1955; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Shaw and McKay, 1942). Specifically, Structural models posit a causal relationship between various structural based pressures that more or less drive or force the individual into committing criminal behavior.

Cernkovich (1978) stated that the most frequently stressed variables in structural theories have been socio-economic status (SES) and blocked opportunity structures. A review of the writings of early structural theorists, however, suggests that it is primarily property crimes and not violent offenses that are seen as resulting from relative economic deprivation (Engels, 1950; Bonger, 1916; Marx, 1859; Merton, 1938).

However, Coser (1963) stated that there is a causal link between social structures and violence. He argued that economic inequality may or may not be perceived as unjust by lower status persons. When lower SES persons perceive economic inequality as being unjust, the results are likely to
be in the form of frustration and/or aggression. Further, he maintained that this aggression could be directed toward the self, repressed or sublimited, or channeled outward. His thesis identified relative economic inequality as a salient source of violence. He concluded that violent crime rates will be particularly high for categories of persons who experience disproportionately "structure induced frustration" and for those in strata where, "internalized social controls are not strong enough to prevent homicidal aggression" (1963).

Results of recent studies have provided support for hypotheses relating poverty and violence (Quinney, 1966; Humphries and Wallace, 1980); low economic status and violence (Wolfgang, 1958; Lundsgaurde, 1977; Curtis, 1974; Block, 1977); income inequality and other forms of deprivation and violence (Loftin and Hill, 1974; Blau and Blau, 1982).

Bailey (1984) used data from cities rather than SMSA's and for three time periods rather than one to determine the relationship between poverty, inequality and violence. The results of his study showed that poverty and homicide rates were positively related. He also found that income inequality did not account for a significant amount of the unexplained variance in homicide rates.

Other studies have been conducted to determine the effects of structural variables on different categories of violent crimes (Linholm, 1981; Najman, 1980; Hoivik, 1977).
For instance, Smith and Parker (1980), distinguished between primary homicide and nonprimary homicides. The former referred to those homicides in which the victim(s) is/are known to the perpetrator, whereas the latter referred to homicides involving strangers. They concluded that social structural variables, especially poverty were strong predictors of differences in primary homicide rates but are less important in explaining variation in nonprimary rates.

However, the results of studies conducted to investigate the relationship between poverty and violence have been mixed rather than conclusive. For example Blau and Blau (1982) showed that income inequality was the most salient factor for explaining interpersonal violence. In addition, they found that when income inequality was controlled, the relationship between poverty and criminal violence disappeared.

In addition, social scientists have also posited a strong positive relationship between structural density and violent crime rates (Barnett et al., 1980; McCarthy et al., 1975). These studies have generally been based on data obtained from official crime rates of large urbanized areas. Blau (1977), addressing the relationship between city life and violence, stated that the city provides its inhabitants with the opportunity to be involved in interpersonal conflict.

Roncek (1981) examined the characteristics of residential areas in the city and their impact on criminal violence. His
analysis included the testing of several hypotheses relating violent crimes to household composition, to features of the residential environment and to the interaction of social composition and features of the residential environment. The results of his study supported the major hypotheses and showed that a substantial proportion of the variance in criminal violence rates can be accounted for by the opportunities provided by the social and physical differentials of the city.

Sampson (1983) also investigated the relationship between neighborhood structural density and violent crime rates. He hypothesized that there was a positive relationship between structural density and victimization, independent of the victim's characteristics. Hypotheses were tested with national crime survey victimization data for the years 1973 to 1978. The results supported the major hypotheses and showed that structural density was positively related to rates of robbery and assault victims, controlling for age, race, sex of victim, and for extent of urbanization.

Other structural variables have also been related to violence in specific areas/regions. Blau and Blau (1982) stated that high rates of violence in the South have been associated with the percent of blacks residing in that region. Other studies have also found a strong positive relationship between percent of blacks residing in residential areas and violent crime rates (Sampson, 1983; Stahura and Huff, 1981).
Structural theories have used a number of empirical indicators to account for variation in violent crime rates. However, the results of studies conducted to test the effects of structural variables on criminal violence suggest that additional research is needed. Earlier studies conducted to test Shaw and McKay's conclusion that economic level was the most salient contributing factor in terms of accounting for both violent and nonviolent crime rate, revealed that an area's economic level was not significantly related to crime rates when other conditions were controlled (Landers, 1954).

According to Landers (1954), anomie rather than economic conditions was the primary cause of crime rates. Furthermore, Hepburn (1973) stressed that virtually all interpersonal violence is enacted within particular situations, thus structural determinants have insufficient explanatory power in determining interpersonal violence rates.

Interaction approach

The most critical attack on structural explanations of criminal behavior has come from theorists who argue that criminal behavior (i.e., nonviolent and interpersonal violence) is better accounted for in symbolic interactionists terms. These theorists have based their arguments primarily on the work of early symbolic interactionists such as George Herbert Mead and Charles Cooley.
Mead (1934) emphasized several factors in explaining human behavior. He argued that to account for behavior we must consider social conditions, the individual interpretation of those conditions and finally the individual responses to the conditions. He envisioned man as determining and determined by his/her environment (Vold, 1979).

Most interactionists agree that an individuals' behavior is determined by their definition of the self and their definition of the situation. First, the person may define himself as dangerous, a drug addict, a trouble-maker, or an alcoholic. The person will then act toward himself and others according to the meanings he has for himself. However, the image that each person has of him/her self is a result of a social process. The process involves the procedure by which we view ourselves and give our "self" meaning from the perspective of significant others. This is what Mead referred to as "The self as a social construct" (Mead, 1934) and Cooley called "The Looking Glass Self" (1902).

Cohen (1966) expressed these sentiments eloquently by stating the following:

A great deal of deviance that seems "irrational" and "senseless" makes some sense when we see it as an effort to proclaim or to test a certain kind of self. A great deal of illicit (as well as socially acceptable) sexual activity is motivated less by glandular secretions than by role anxiety. The use of marijuana and heroin, especially in the early experimental stages; driving at dangerous speeds and "playing chicken" on the highway; illegal consumption of alcoholic beverages; participation in illegal forms of social protest and civil
disobedience; taking part in "rumbles" — all of these are likely to be role-expressive behavior.

Cohen in the above passage suggests that violent and/or nonviolent behavior can be a result of an individual defining himself in deviant terms and then enacting the appropriate behavior.

It seems apparent that symbolic interactionism was the foundation upon which more recent theories of crime have been constructed. For example, labeling theory has become one of the most popular explanations of criminal behavior. Numerous studies have been conducted to test the effects of deviant labels on delinquent behavior (Chassin and Young, 1981; Gold, 1970; Simons et al., 1980). The labeling perspective was first popularized by a statement made by Tannenbaum:

The process of making the criminal is a process of tagging, defining, identifying, segregating, describing, emphasizing, making conscious and self-conscious; it becomes a way of stimulating, suggesting, emphasizing, and evoking the very traits that are complained of (1938:19-20).

Labeling theory is based on the premise that criminal behavior is a result of an individual accepting a criminal identity (Becker, 1962; Schur, 1969; Rubington and Winberg, 1968; Gibbons and Jones, 1971; Kituse, 1972; Lemert, 1967). Lemert (1967) stated that when individual criminal behavior (violent and nonviolent) becomes incorporated in one's self-image, then one's behavior is considered normal and a natural part of their role. Further, if a person thinks of
himself as being "tough," "aggressive" or "delinquent" then the negative societal reactions have little if any affect on their behavioral choices. Therefore, a person who incorporates violence into his self-concept as a defense or buffer against attacks of social reaction is involved in what Lemert called secondary deviance.

Additionally, labeling theorists distinguish "formal" and "informal" labeling. Formal labeling involves the interaction between the individual and social control agencies as well as social service personnel. Labeling theorists argue that processes such as arrests, adjudication and incarceration are formal labeling processes. Formal labels affect the individual's self-concept negatively and increase their involvement in criminal activities.

Elliot and Ageton (1978) concluded from data collected in a study of diversion treatment modalities that negative labeling effects were more likely to occur when treatment followed official processing than when official processing was not followed by treatment. Gold (1970) and Haney and Gold (1973) stated that offenders who were officially booked by law enforcement agencies were more likely than offenders who were not officially processed to engage in subsequent delinquent behavior, suggesting that official processing by law enforcement persons increases as opposed to decreases the number of future crimes. On the other hand, Chassin and Young
(1981) found that a "delinquent" self-concept did not result in more behavior problems than did the "popular teenager" self-concept. Thus, the results of studies conducted to determine the effects of labels on behavior have been mixed rather than conclusive.

Social scientists were also concerned about the effects of informal (i.e., parents, teachers and friends) labels on behavior. Wenz (1978) concluded from his study on informal labeling of multiple attempt suicide offenders that the more intense the labeling by each set of significant others (parents and friends), the greater the likelihood of additional attempts of suicide. In addition, Aultman and Wellford (1979) employed a path analysis model that included variables reflecting independent variables from anomie, labeling and control theories to test their effects on delinquency causation. They concluded that variables reflecting labeling by parents and teachers were found more closely related to delinquency than other variables included in the model.

Labeling theory has not been directly associated with interpersonal violence. Yet the implications of labeling theory suggest that the self-concept is the major determinant of criminal behavior. Violent as well as nonviolent behavior is likely to be related to the adoption of a criminal self-concept.
Faulkner (1973) presented a theoretical and an empirical argument for why men in groups employ violence, emphasizing the importance of the subjective meanings attached to the intentional assaultive behavior which takes into account the "self" and the behavior of others. His analysis was based on his observation of hockey players. He stated that violence among players was influenced by several subjective themes including "showing yourself," "testing others," "never back down" and "be smart".

Athens (1980) suggested that the self-concept of individuals who commit violent criminal acts falls into three types; violent, incipient violent, and nonviolent. A linkage was found between the type of self-concept that individuals hold and the type of definitions they give to situations in which they employ violence. He argued that individuals who hold nonviolent self-concepts only commit violent criminal acts in situations in which they form "physically defensive" definitions. Those holding incipient violent self-concepts only commit violent criminal acts in situations in which they form physically defensive or frustrative-malefic definitions. Finally, those holding violent self-concepts commit violent criminal acts in situations in which they form physically defensive or any one of the three offensive definitions. Thus, the type of self-concept that an individual holds is causally related to the range and character of the situation.
that they define as calling for violence.

In addition, Athens (1980) stated that career violent offenders fall into three basic types: stable, escalating and de-escalating. In stable careers, the types of self-images the individuals held over their lives and the kinds and amount of violent acts they committed stayed constant. In escalating careers, the types of self-images and amount of violence became more serious and increased. In de-escalating careers, the types of self-images and amount of violence decreased over the years and became less serious. He concluded that persons who commit substantive violent acts have violent generalized others and these generalized others may change over time.

Zahn (1984) stated that interaction theory attempts to explain violent behavior by looking at the social context and the process in which it occurs. Hence, it attempts to isolate those factors in the victim-offender situation which ultimately results in violence. Similarly, Felson (1978) argued that the most salient advantage of the interactionist approach to violence is that it accommodates the processual nature of violent encounters.

Social learning theory

Social researchers have become particularly interested in the relationship between having been exposed to child abuse
and/or neglect and an individual's subsequent involvement in criminal activities. Bandura's social learning theory has provided the theoretical framework for most of the studies conducted to explain the hypothesized relationship between child abuse and subsequent adult violent and nonviolent criminal behavior. Bandura (1977) stated that, "most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action" (1977:22). He argued that modeling serves as the principal mechanism through which new forms of behavior are transmitted. In addition, these observations are made in everyday situations.

Sutherland (1947) also argued that criminal behavior is learned. He stated that through one's interaction with other persons he/she learns how and when to commit criminal acts. He maintained that they learn the mechanics of committing crimes which are sometimes very complicated and at other times very simple. He argued that the individual who learns to commit crimes of all sorts also learns the "specific motives, drives, and rationalizations for their behavior."

Glaser (1956) supported Sutherland's explanation for criminal behavior. However, he argued that Sutherland's thesis needed to be reconstructed to include the effects of identification with criminals as a salient factor in
explaining criminality. He defined identification as "the choice of another from whose perspective we view our own behavior." Thus, his thesis stated that "a person pursues criminal behavior to the extent that he/she identifies himself with real or imaginary persons from whose perspective his criminal behavior seems acceptable."

After reviewing the various theses on the validity of social learning theory, Akers (1973) attempted to reconceptualize its assumptions by integrating the works of both Sutherland and Bandura. He defined social learning theory as an integration of differential association with differential reinforcement. Thus, people with whom we interact are the reinforcers that result in learning of both deviant and nondeviant behavior.

It appears that social learning can be used to explain most forms of criminal behavior. The most explicit statement concerning the impact of social learning on criminal behavior was presented over five decades ago. Gabriel Tarde (1928) stated that, "one kills or does not kill because of imitation." Additionally, he expressed the view that nonviolent crimes were also a result of social learning. He argued that; "one steals or does not steal...because of imitation." He concluded by stating that "all the important acts of social life are carried out under the domination of example."
Helfer and Kempe (1976) concluded from the results of their study that children learn aggressive or violent behavior from their parents by imitation and identification. Also, Bender (1957) investigated the factors that predisposed delinquents to violence. She concluded that the most common factor is the individual tendency to identify with an aggressive parent. This identification leads the person to adopt their model's idiosyncratic violent patterns.

Social learning theory was the impetus for the emergence of the "cycle of violence" thesis. The cycle of violence thesis specifies a process whereby violent behavior is transferred from one generation to the next. This process has been identified by numerous researchers. Thus, several researchers have concluded from their studies that those children who are abused or witness others being abused subsequently become involved in criminal (i.e., violent and/or nonviolent) behavior (Barnett et al., 1980; Hunner and Walker, 1981; Straus et al., 1980; Pagelow, 1984; Glueck and Glueck, 1950).

Benard and Benard (1983) used a questionnaire to collect data to test the cycle of violence hypothesis. The sample consisted of 168 males and 293 female students in a large urban southern university, of whom 99 males and 162 female students later completed questionnaires on attitudes toward women. Of the larger sample, 15% of the males and 21% of the
females had abused a partner; 19% of the males and 38% of the females had been abused. Furthermore, no significant difference was found between abusers and nonabusers concerning sex role attitudes. A moderately strong positive relationship was found between abusiveness and having experienced abuse in one's own family. They concluded that specific forms of violence seemed to be transmitted by modeling.

Bolton et al., (1977) employed social learning theory to explain violence. They hypothesized that abused children would be least likely to imitate their abusers behavior because they did not find it rewarding. On the other hand, those siblings who were only observers of aggressive and/or violent behavior would probably imitate the observed behavior. The results of their study supported their hypothesis. They found that only 7.8% of the victims of abuse were subsequently involved in violent situations in which they were the perpetrators, whereas the nonabused sibling had a substantially higher rate of reported violent acts.

Pfouts et al. (1981) and Owens and Straus (1975) found similar results. For example, Pfouts et al. (1981) studied 73 families that had reports of violence filed with the police and/or social service agencies. They also found that children who were abused by one or both of their parents are more likely to become delinquents than those siblings who were not abused.
Lefkowitz et al. (1977) examined results from a ten year longitudinal study of girls from a semi-rural population. They were first studied at 8 years and again at 19 years of age. He found that the lack of nurturance (i.e., no parent at home to provide nurturing) was a strong short-term predictor of violence. In addition, he stated that parental rejection yielded the strongest immediate effect, yet had no long-term effect on aggressive behavior.

Other researchers have found an association between being abused as a child and subsequent enactment of lethal violence (Frazier, 1974 and Sendi and Blomgren, 1975). King (1975) interviewed juveniles convicted of homicidal crimes. He found that a substantial number of the offenders had been the victim of physical abuse at an early age.

After reviewing the literature on domestic violence Fontana (1964) stated that:

Studies by these physicians lead to the conclusion that among murderers, remorseless physical brutality at the hands of the parents had been a constant experience. . . . It would seem that imitation and identification with violent parents can lead to the adult abnormal behavior beginning with the physical abuse of individuals and leading to ultimate murder (1964:19).

Scott (1979) examined many types of violence, from violence against and among children to adolescent and adult fighting and murder. He stated that violence apparently results from learning the wrong reaction in antisocial surroundings. He concluded that violent behavior can be
unlearned by teaching more acceptable methods of reacting.

Based on the results of the previously mentioned studies, it appears that social learning theory should be considered as a potential contributing explanation for an individual's involvement in criminal behavior. The significance of being abused as a child should be the focus of additional research conducted to explain and prevent violent and/or nonviolent behavior.

**Alcohol, drugs and criminal behavior**

The above mentioned theories have been employed alone or integratively to explain criminal behavior. Nevertheless, they are intrinsically interwined. A discussion concerning the interrelatedness of these theories are beyond the scope of this paper.

However, a common focus of the theories cited above is the impact of alcohol and drugs on offenders' behavior. For instance, it has been stated that alcohol acts as a depressant in the area of the frontal lobe that acts as a constraining mechanism, routinely suppressing the enactment of violent behavior (Wolfgang and Weriner, 1984; and Slawinska, 1981). However, the results of several studies conducted to determine the relationship between alcohol consumption and interpersonal violence have been mixed rather than conclusive (Lester, 1980; Wolf, 1980; Bloom, 1980).
The relationship between alcohol consumption and interpersonal violence has been described in terms of alcohol consumption as a legitimate justification for violence. Daille et al. (1979) argued that alcohol-related violence can be a fact (he is violent when he has been drinking) or a risk (he has been drinking and may become violent). Violence as a result of alcohol consumption seems to be more tolerable in this society. Further, they argued that some persons who cannot express their violence unless they are drunk indicate, not that alcohol facilitates the expression of violence but that the environment tolerates this kind of violence, whereas the same person would not tolerate pure violence.

Thus, they stated that the often heard postulate that alcohol facilitates violence can thus be understood in the following sense: "alcohol gives violence features which make it more acceptable, and therefore more readily expressable." Some persons normally unable to express their aggression can do so when under the influence of alcohol. Thus, in these persons alcohol functions like a carnival, an accepted and controllable outbreak.

Lenoir (1980) examined the association between crime and blood alcohol concentration (BAC) in criminals and their victims. The BAC of criminals at the time the crime was committed is important to determine responsibility. He argued that alcohol can cause a temporary loss of responsibility and
rationality. The results of his study showed that in 78% of 82 criminal offenses studied, the perpetrator or the victim or both were intoxicated; in 16% only the victims were intoxicated; in 17% only the perpetrator; and in 45% both victim and aggressor were intoxicated.

Roslund and Larson (1979) collected data on 793 offenders submitted to forensic psychiatric examination between 1972 and 1976; 44% were guilty of crimes of violence against persons. Among them, 68% were under the influence of alcohol when committing their crimes and for nonviolent offenders 38% were drunk. Similarly, Gerson (1978) used data on alcohol-related acts of violence gathered from the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional police reports. They reported that most of the cases were marital disputes or other common assaults. The results of his study showed that in most cases the offender or both spouses had been drinking.

The studies reviewed here have provided substantial support for the relationship between alcohol consumption and violent behavior. However, critics of this thesis argue that alcohol is only one of a number of causes of violence through a single mechanism, and that alcohol can contribute to the completion of violent acts in various ways (Evans, 1981).

In addition to alcohol use, other researchers have also examined the effects of various types of drugs on criminal involvement (Heller, 1983). Wolfgang and Weriner (1984)
stated that drugs have a significant influence on violent behavior. They claimed that some drugs have the capacity to influence the brain function sufficiently to both stimulate the center of violent behavior in the brain or to inhibit the impulse toward violent behavior. In terms of opium-related drugs, they stated that these drugs have an indirect effect on violence due to the illegal efforts (i.e., property crimes) often needed to obtain the large amounts of money necessary to support a drug habit. Thus, Asnis and Smith (1978) stated that a substantial amount of violence and assaultive behavior can be accounted for by individuals who use amphetamines in moderate or high doses.

In addition, the combination of alcohol and drugs have also been hypothesized as causal variables in explaining criminal behavior. For example, Langevin et al. (1982) stated that the use of alcohol and drugs at the time of the offenses, suicide attempts and situational strains were compared in 109 killers and 38 nonviolent offenders seen for psychiatric assessment. They found that more killers than nonviolent offenders used alcohol and drugs at the time of their offense but there was no difference in previous attempts at suicide nor in situational strains. They concluded that the results of their study suggest that the use of intoxicants and stimulants in violence-prone individuals is the most important factor in homicides.
Holcomb and Anderson (1983) investigated the effects of alcohol and drugs on individual criminal involvement. Their sample consisted of 110 men convicted of first degree murder. Subjects were divided into groups based on whether they were sober, drinking alcohol, using alcohol and other drugs in combination or whether they were abusing only nonalcoholic drugs at the time of the murder. The four groups were compared on 15 sociological, behavioral and demographic variables. The results showed that there were significant differences in the groups on nine of the variables included in the study.

In addition, alcohol and drug use has been linked to nonviolent crimes. Goode (1984) maintained that some property crimes are committed to enable the perpetrator to obtain alcohol and/or drugs. Furthermore, persons under the influence of selected substances are generally more easily persuaded by friends to become involved in nonviolent, criminal activities.

Other variables have also been identified as having a causal effect on criminal involvement: sex (Wolfgang, 1978), age (McClintock, 1963; Mulvihill et al., 1969), education (Strasburg, 1978) and occupation (Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967). Mednick et al. (1982) argued that although most of the factors stated above were social, biological factors may be used to explain violent behavior in those situations where
sociological variables are not applicable. They stated that there is interaction between social variables and biological variables (i.e., age and sex) to account for or determine the likelihood of violent behavior.

As stated previously, the theoretical approaches and factors reviewed above will serve as the foundation upon which the two papers will be constructed. Thus, this section was included to provide a thorough investigation of the relevant sociological theories concerning the etiology of criminal behavior.

Index Offenses

The following review of index crimes will be presented in an ascending manner in terms of the amount or severity of violence involved. For this study theft and burglary were treated as identical offenses because they both occur without the use of force and/or violence. Additionally, they both refer to the unlawful taking of material goods.

Conversely, robbery refers to the taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victims in fear (U.S. Department of Justice, 1983). The U.S. Department of Justice (1983) stated that there was a slight decrease in the number of robberies
reported in the last two years. In addition, the report indicated that the number of robberies reported were lower during summer months than any other season.

The remaining violent crimes included in this study are those intended to inflict serious injury. For example, aggravated assault refers to an "unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault is usually accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm." The number of assaults reported in 1982 and 1983 were 655,383 and 639,532, respectively. This decrease represents a -2.4% change. In addition, assault offenses occur more frequently during the summer months (U.S. Department of Justice, 1983).

Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter refers to the willful killing of one human being by another. Murder and/or nonnegligent manslaughter accounted for 21,012 lives in 1982 and 19,308 lives in 1983. Most of the research on violence has focused on murder/homicide. In current investigations, typologies of the violent crimes have been based on differences in victim-offender relationships. A brief description of the above mentioned typologies will be presented based on a report by the Center for Disease Control, a national study on the nature and patterns of American Homicide (Riedel and Zahn, 1982) and a review of studies done
on each category. The categories to be discussed include domestic homicides, murder between friends and/or acquaintances, and murders between strangers.

Domestic homicides

Domestic homicides accounted for 16.1% of the homicides in which the perpetrator was known (U.S. Department of Justice, 1980). The majority of domestic murders are spouse killings. However, the perpetrators of the violent behavior within the family has changed in recent years. For example, the wife was the most frequent victim in 1980, whereas the husband was the most likely victim in the 1970s. Yet, another type of domestic homicide is that in which the children are victims. This type of offense occurs less frequently than the above mentioned types (U.S. Department of Justice, 1980).

Riedel and Zahn (1982) concluded from their analysis of a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) national data set that approximately 55% of domestic homicide victims are white, and 43.7% are black. The median age of both the victims and the perpetrators are in the early 30s, 33 and 32, respectively. Luckenbill (1977) and Gelles (1972) both argued that domestic homicides take place through a series of interactive stages which are usually in the aftermath of a history of other assaultive incidents.
Homicides between friends and acquaintances

According to the U.S. Department of Justice (1980) victims of acquaintance homicides are substantially younger than those of domestic homicides and they are most likely to be male. The report suggests that this type of homicide is most common among blacks. In addition, the offender in this category is usually younger than the victim and those who generally commit domestic homicide. Further, homicides among friends are likely to occur in a private residence, although approximately one third of these offenses occur in places serving liquor.

Stranger homicide

Zahn (1984) stated that stranger homicide is one in which the victim and perpetrator do not know one another. Data within the UCR report for 1980 showed that 13.3% of the murders committed were among strangers. Interestingly, Zahn stated that the youngest perpetrators are those involved in stranger homicides. In addition, stranger homicide is generally committed in the process of another crime. Riedel and Zahn (1982) concluded that robbery is the most frequent crime associated with stranger homicides.

Previous studies on robbery related homicides showed that there was a sharp upward surge in the number of these types of homicides during the 1970s (Cook, 1980; Block, 1977).
According to Cook (1980), the probability of the robbery leading to murder is greater if the offender is armed than if there is no firearm present. In addition to the presence of a gun, Block (1977) found that the extent to which victims resisted the efforts of the would-be-robber was one of the most significant determinants of lethal violence.

As stated previously, the theoretical approaches, review of literature, and summary of index offenses will provide the foundation upon which the two research papers will be constructed.
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SECTION II.

THE ACCOUNTS OF VIOLENT OFFENDERS:

A STUDY OF VOCABULARY OF MOTIVES
Section II.

The Accounts of Violent Offenders:
A Study of Vocabulary of Motives

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INTRODUCTION

The results of recent studies show that the frequency of criminal homicide is several times higher in the United States than in other industrialized nations (Gibbons, 1982; Goldstein, 1975). Similarly, the U.S. Department of Justice (1984) reported that one homicide occurred every 28 minutes, and that approximately 18,692 murders were committed in the United States alone in 1984. These statistics show that criminal homicide, to our dismay, is a relatively common phenomenon. The incidents of murder have become so widespread, officials at the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta have decided to treat it like a disease.

Until recently, sociologists have relied on two approaches to explain criminal homicide. They have primarily focused on either income and status inequality (Bailey, 1984; Blau and Blau, 1982; Braithwaite, 1979; Braithwaite and Braithwaite, 1980; Krohn, 1976; Messner, 1980) or on violent subcultures (Ball-Rokeach, 1973; Curtiss and Dobash, 1975; Doerner, 1978; Erlanger, 1974, 1976; Lofton and Hill, 1974; Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967). The inequality approach analyzes the effects of large variations in income and social status in communities on violent crime rates. In contrast, the subculture thesis suggests that certain groups and/or
classes of people have a tendency to use violence because of prevailing values and norms that encourage such behavior. Both perspectives are concerned with identifying sociocultural factors which appear to encourage violence. However, research based on each of the perspectives has produced inconsistent findings.

In the last few years, an alternative approach to studying violence has emerged. Some sociologists have adopted an interactional approach whereby they examine the processual development and the dynamic nature of violent situations. Much of this research has employed an impression management explanation of violent encounters.

Fittingly, the work of Goffman (1963) has been the theoretical basis for most of the interactional studies of violence. For example, Luckenbill (1977) drawing on Goffman's concepts of "situated transactions" and "social occasions" attempted to analyze the dynamic nature of situations that resulted in criminal violence. The former refers to "a chain of interaction between two or more individuals that lasts the time they find themselves in one another's immediate physical presence," and the latter refers to "a wider social affair within which many situated transactions may form, dissolve, and re-form" (Luckenbill, 1977:177-178).

Luckenbill (1977) found that violent transactions were the result of what Goffman (1967) termed "character contests."
These contests are conducted to enhance or maintain a favorably situated identity. The character contest explanation supports Wolfgang's notion of victim-precipitated violence. In addition, Luckenbill pointed out that there seems to exist a consensus among the contestants that violence is appropriate and deemed necessary.

The results of Luckenbill's study suggested that social occasions that ended in murder shared some common features. First, most of the transactions occurred during leisure times. Secondly, they occurred more frequently in informal places (i.e., at home, the corner tavern or at parties) where norms constraining antisocial behavior are relatively relaxed. A final feature of social occasions is that the contestants are usually intimates. For example, Luckenbill (1977) found that most murder victims were related to the perpetrator by "marriage, kinship, or friendship."

More importantly, violent transactions were characterized by a series of "movés" that were initiated by both the victim and the offender on the basis of the other's moves and in some instances, the reaction of an audience. The first stage in Luckenbill's model included the opening "move." This behavior is generally committed by the victim which is interpreted by the offender as an assault to his/her face. Goffman (1967) stated that "face" referred to the image of one's self in the context of a particular occasion.
According to Luckenbill (1977), the nature of the moves vary, however, the general form includes some verbal expression and/or physical act by the victim which the offender defines as severely offensive. A less frequent kind of move consists of the victim refusing to comply with a command or request issued by the offender. The offender in this case generally interprets the victim's behavior as a denial of his/her legitimate right to command.

It seems apparent that the initial move of the victim ignites the violent fuel, which propels the contestants into physical, violent behavior. The intermediate stages, then, can be viewed as a series of violent boosters.

Felson and Steadman (1983) also examined the sequential nature of situations that end in criminal homicide. Official data from 159 incidents of murder and/or assault with intent that were not connected with other crimes were examined with respect to the behavior of the offender, victim, and bystanders.

The murderous incidents appeared to have followed a pattern. First, the interactants were interacting when an identity attack occurred. An identity attack was a term used to refer to symbolic interactionists concept of self-image (Becker, 1962; Toch, 1969; Hepburn, 1973; Athens, 1977). Thus, it seems that interaction concepts such as "character contests" and "identity attacks" have been used
Based on the results of their analysis, Felson and Steadman (1983), modified Luckenbill's thesis on character contests by including the significance of retaliation in violent situations. They pointed out that the results of experimental studies show that physical retaliation is an important mechanism for "face saving" concerns. Additionally, they expressed the view that physical retaliation may also be employed for strategic purposes.

More importantly, Felson and Steadman (1983) argued that a number of situational factors increased the likelihood of violence. For instance, they found that the probability of lethal retaliation is increased if the victim had an unconcealed weapon or had been drinking alcohol. Additionally, victims who were aggressive were more likely to be killed even when they did not possess a weapon. Finally, the results suggested that a norm of reciprocity exists in violent situations. For example, if person A verbally attacks person B, then it is most likely that B will retaliate with a counter verbal attack. Similarly, physical aggressive behavior was responded to in kind.

In contrast to these impression management studies, Athens (1977, 1980) directed attention on the offender's definition of the situation, self-concept, and the generalized other employed by the perpetrator. Athens (1978) interviewed
58 convicted perpetrators of violent, criminal offenses (murder, assault, robbery, and rape). Data were obtained on the perpetrator's definition of the situation that caused their violent behavior, and their self-image at the time of the offense.

The results of the study show that perpetrators of violence generally form one of four definitions of situations (Athens, 1977). The first type is physically defensive in which the offender interprets the behavior of the victim as physically threatening (victim precipitated). Second, the "frustrative" interpretation of the situation refers to those situations in which the offender resorts to violence because the victim acts as a barrier to his/her following a specific line of action. Third, is the interpretation of the situation in which the perpetrator defines the victim's behavior as a personal insult. Thus, the malefic definition of the situation is similar to what Felson and Steadman (1983) called "situated identity attacks" and Luckenbill (1977) and Goffman (1963) referred to as "character contests." Finally, the frustrative malefic interpretation is founded on the premise that the victim not only obstructs the offenders access to desired goals, but additionally attacks the offender's self-image.

In addition, Athens (1977) also claimed that the self-concept of violent offenders falls into three categories:
violent, incipient violent and nonviolent. He argued that those persons who have a violent self-concept are those who see themselves as having a violent disposition from the perspective of his/her significant and/or relevant others. In contrast, offenders with an incipient self-concept perceive themselves as "one whose bark is worse than his bite." This type of person often issues verbal threats that he/she is not expected to carry out. Finally, violent offenders with a nonviolent self-concept do not see themselves as having a violent disposition.

Athens (1977) also reported that offenders with a nonviolent self-concept only commit violent acts in situations in which they define as physically defensive. Those persons possessing incipient violent self-concepts resort to violent behavior only in physically defensive and/or frustrative-malefic defined situations. Thus, he concluded that one's self-concept is a strong predictor of the "range and character of the situation that they interpret as calling for violence." Furthermore, he stated that "the problem of violent crime centers around persons who have violent generalized others."

Based upon his own research and a reanalysis of some of the data presented by Luckenbill, Athens (1985) concluded that there is little evidence for the character contest explanation of interpersonal aggression. He stated that:
A character contest presumes that people always commit violent criminal acts in order to display a strong character and maintain honor and face. However, this is not the meaning which the perpetrators of violent criminal acts often attribute to their actions (1985:425-426).

Similarly, Dobash and Dobash (1984) failed to find support for the impression management explanation in their study of situations involving domestic abuse.

To an extent the conflicting findings associated with the situational approach may be a result of differences in samples and methods. With regard to differences in samples, Luckenbill focused upon convicted murderers; Felson and Steadman studied persons convicted of felonious assault, manslaughter, or murder; Athens included individuals convicted of homicide, aggravated assault, forcible and attempted rape, and robbery; and Dobash and Dobash only considered women who had experienced repeated domestic abuse. Rape, robbery, homicide, and spouse abuse are very different events. One might therefore expect the interpersonal dynamics and motives associated with these various situations to also be dissimilar. Character contests might be endemic to one type of violent offense but not another.

Concerning differences in methodology, Luckenbill and Felson and Steadman attempted to construct the behavioral sequencing of violent events through the use of court records; while Athens employed data obtained through interviews with perpetrators; and Dobash and Dobash utilized information
gleaned from interviews with victims. If one is concerned with the meaning that perpetrators of violence attach to their actions and to those of their victims, court records or reports from victims might be considered less valid and reliable sources than interviews with perpetrators themselves.

In the present study a sample of offenders convicted of manslaughter or murder were interviewed in an attempt to obtain their meaning of situational factors that forced them to commit their respective crimes. Of particular concern were the situated reasons or motives which the perpetrators perceived as guiding their violent actions.
FOCUS OF THE STUDY

Over forty years ago, Mills (1940) encouraged sociologists to give more attention to the study of "vocabulary of motives" associated with various types of situations. He noted that:

A satisfactory or adequate motive is one that satisfies the questioners of an act or program, whether it be the other's or the actor's. . . . The words which in a type situation will fulfill this function are circumscribed by the vocabulary of motives justifications for present, future, past programs or acts (1940:906).

It seems apparent that particular vocabularies of motives are considered appropriate for particular types of classes of situations. When an actor engages in motive talk he or she describes a proposed line of action and the reasons for the action.

However, groups sometimes differ in the way they classify or define various situations. As a consequence, they are likely to differ in terms of the vocabularies of motive they perceive appropriate in a particular situation. These observations lead Mills (1940) to state that, "What is reason for one man is rationalization for another. The variable is the accepted vocabulary of motives of each man's dominant group about whose opinion he cares."

Following the lead of Mills, several sociologists have focused on the motives of violent offenders (Hall and Hewitt,
1970; Hewitt and Hall, 1973; Hewitt and Stokes, 1975; Sykes and Matza, 1957). For instance, Scott and Lyman (1968) described excuses and justification as linguistic "accounts" that are employed to explain and remove culpability for an antisocial act after it has been committed. Their typology of accounts was used as an aid in analyzing the accounts of the offenders included in the present study. As Scott and Lyman contended:

The study of deviance and the study of accounts are intrinsically related, and a clarification of accounts will constitute a clarification of deviant phenomena (1968:62).

A major focus of this study was the identification of the range of accounts associated with situations involving homicide.

Specifically, accounts involving justifications often suggest commitment to norms and values supporting the use of violence. Justifications, according to Scott and Lyman (1968) are "accounts in which one accepts responsibility for the act in question, but denies the pejorative quality associated with it." In contrast, excuses are "accounts in which one admits that the act in question is bad, wrong, or inappropriate but denies full responsibility" (Scott and Lyman, 1968). Generally speaking, excuses assume, or appeal to, the conventional cultural view of violence.

The analysis in the present study will attempt to classify the vocabulary of motives of offenders convicted of
manslaughter or murder. The analysis is divided into two sections. In the first, we discuss the accounts which the offenders used to justify their behavior. In the second, we discuss those accounts which attempted to excuse the murderous behavior. Additionally, the offender's descriptions of the situation will be analyzed to ascertain the role that the presence of a gun and alcohol/drugs played in each of the homicides.
METHODS

From October, 1984, through October, 1985, data were obtained from a sample of convicted violent offenders. This study was conducted with the cooperation of a Midwestern state corrections department. Given the small population and relatively low crime rate of the state this amounted to 26 persons. The interviews were conducted by the author who has several years experience working as a guard on death row in a large prison in the southern part of the United States. After answering several structured questions, the offenders responded to a lengthy set of open-ended questions and probes concerning the circumstances surrounding their crime. The items were constructed to obtain data on the murderers' perceptions of the causes of their violent behavior, their definitions of the situation, and their victims' behavior. A tape recorder was used to ensure that complete and accurate data were obtained. In almost all of the interviews a close rapport developed between the inmate and the interviewer. The respondents seemed to enjoy the interviews, seeing them as a welcome relief from the monotony of correctional system life.

Interviews lasted from one hour to three hours; the average was about two hours. The interviews were completed with little or no difficulties. It is important to note that
most of the offenders had no previous criminal record. More importantly, the offenders had not been socialized into the prison subculture. Therefore, there was little if any expected informal sanctions against them from fellow inmates for their involvement with an outsider.

As in other studies of this type (Athens, 1977; Scully and Marolla, 1984), validity checks were performed by comparing the offender's reports to court records and newspaper coverage of their crimes. In only one case did a respondent present an account of events that was widely at variance with the other sources. This individual was dropped from the study. Another person was dropped after he refused to discuss his case because of a pending appeal. Analysis was performed on the remaining 24 cases.

Six of the 24 respondents were female. Five were black with the remaining individuals being white. The black population in the state is a little over 1 percent. Eight of the offenders were married, 14 were single and had never been married, and 9 were divorcees. Educational level varied from 5 years of elementary school to 4 years of college. The average education was 10 years. Using the Reiss et al. (1961) status occupation scale scores, the offenders' occupational prestige scores ranged from 6 to 78, with an average of 17. Comparing the occupational scores to educational attainment, it appears that many of the individuals were underemployed at
the time of their crime. Consistent with previous studies on individuals convicted of homicide, most of the respondents had no previous felony record.

Responses to the open-ended questions were transcribed and analyzed using the typology of accounts provided by Scott and Lyman (1968). The transcripts were also coded with regard to the presence of a hand gun, reports of suicide ideation, and evidence of insults and face-saving actions. The respondents' names were changed to help protect their identity.
RESULTS

Consistent with previous findings (Wolfgang, 1958), most of the cases involved the killing of someone the perpetrator knew. In one case the victim was a spouse, in four cases it was a relative, in twelve cases it was a friend or well-known acquaintance, while in only six cases was the victim a stranger. The location of the killing reflected the relationship between the victim and perpetrator. In 13 cases, the homicide took place in either the home of the victim or perpetrator. One of the murders took place in a bar, another at a party, and the remaining nine were carried out in various other locations. In fifteen cases a gun was used to kill the victim. A knife was employed in six cases. The remaining three homicides involved other means of killing the victim.

Justifications

Self-defense

Six of the murderers legitimized their behavior by defining the situation as self-defensive. Murderers in this category were not concerned about their self-concept or their situated identity, rather they employed violence to protect themselves.
The offender had attended church services, upon his arrival at his house he was confronted by his brother-in-law. The victim had been living with John for over a year. The victim demanded money. "I told him I didn't have no money. He demanded money and he got louder and louder. He said if I didn't give it to him he'd kill me. I got concerned when he said he'd killed some people. So I tried to walk away from him and asked him to leave. And he got violent and violent; he got louder and louder. And when I tried to escort him out the door he wouldn't go. He ran off to the bathroom to the right. He went in and got his knife out, and I saw him coming toward me. He kept right on coming so I had to shoot him. And then I called the police. He was only 3 feet away from me and I had to shoot him otherwise he was going to kill me."

The above account shows that the behavior of some violent offenders is not at all premeditated. Additionally, the offender's account puts the responsibility for his behavior on the victim. Finally, the behavior occurred in private rather than in the presence of an audience.

Another example is Kathy, who stabbed another woman outside a bar:

Kathy, age 22 years, single, was convicted of involuntary manslaughter. Her victim was a female who she met at a party. Kathy stated that she was new in town. She had just moved to a small, rural, midwestern town from the West coast. She attended a party given by some of her relatives. While at the party several of the guys had attempted to buy her a drink. She recalled one such transaction: "Some guy came up and started talking to me and asked me if I wanted to go get loaded. I said no. So then he asked me if he could buy me a drink, and I said sure. One of the girls in the bar came up and told me that he was her guy. I said how the hell was I supposed to know that?"

The victim then returned to her friends who were sitting at a nearby table. "I could hear her saying that I was supposedly flirting with her man." By this time Kathy was feeling uneasy and decided to leave the bar and
return home. She could hear the victim's friends encouraging her to harass the offender: "Ah, she's nothin'; she's just a punk; let's kick her ass." "Where does this girl think she's at?" Kathy stated that she would never forget the grins on their faces.

At this stage in the transaction, Kathy became extremely angry. "Oh, I got really furious because I didn't figure I had done anything wrong. Those were just little country, backstreet, hick girls, and they were intimidated by me; that's the way I looked at the situation. I went out the front door to a telephone booth, in order to call a taxi. These girls followed me. I was scared. There were three or four of them and only one of me, plus they had been drinking. I just got nervous and reached in my purse and pulled out my Swiss blade. It is natural to carry protection in California, that's why I had the knife. I was just going to show it to her to frighten her. But her friends kept urging her on. Finally she came at me and I stabbed her in the stomach."

Kathy stated that she was in the wrong place at the wrong time. She had no remorse for her violent behavior. "I don't feel bad at all. I mean, I wish it hadn't happened but she asked for it."

The remaining four persons who provided a self-defense justification expressed a great deal of emotion during their interviews, suggesting that they felt some regret about their violent behavior. They displayed tears or developed a low husky-like tone when describing the situation. In each situation, the death of the victim was defined as regrettable, yet the offenders claimed their behavior was appropriate given the circumstances.

Interestingly, two of the offenders justified their behavior by stating that the victim caused their death or deserved what they got. For example, Mr. B was convicted of
second degree murder. He plea bargained to reduce the charge from first degree murder.

(Case #70)
Some insights into the situation reveal that the perpetrator wanted to finish watching "American Bandstand", but his wife wanted to attend a birthday party for a family friend. He stated that, "I told her to just go ahead and I would be there later but she wouldn't take no for an answer."

...then Jill started to argue with me about why I didn't go over there...I got a cup of coffee...then I came out in the living room and then me and Jill was fighting right off the bat. And then that's when the violence came in and that's when I hit her and pulled her hair and threw her on the floor, then that's when the knife came in. And then she got up and I turned around and just cut her right around the neck and it went in too deep and killed her...See I done it for a good reason though...I did not want to argue. She knows me too well, what that does to me."

The above account suggests that the perpetrator perceived his violent behavior as a legitimate means of dealing with his wife's nagging. Both offenders in this category had a history of fights and violent outbursts. Thus, their accounts suggest that they might identify with a violent generalized other or subculture.

Additionally, these accounts suggest that murderers often define their violent behavior as victim-precipitated (Wolfgang, 1958). Hence, the general thrust of the accounts concern the behavior of the victim that catapulted the transactions into a violent confrontation.
Accounts Involving Excuses

In contrast to the murderers who were able to define situations in a manner that made the victim appear culpable, regardless of their own behavior, excusers claimed responsibility for their behavior to some extent. Interestingly, murderers in this category did not blame their victim in terms of causing or contributing to the violent outcome. In addition, offenders in this category appeared to be remorseful about their actions. Another disparity that existed between justifiers and excusers was that the latter tended to excuse their behavior by appealing to external forces beyond their control.

In summary, excuses allow murderers in this category to admit to murder, yet lay claim to a moral self-concept. Excuses gave the offenders a means of defining their behavior as situationally induced rather than role prescriptive. Four themes run through these accounts: (1) the use of alcohol and/or drugs; (2) stressful life events; (3) stressful life event and alcohol/drugs and (4) social influence.

The use of alcohol and drugs

Thirteen of the offenders attributed their behavior to alcohol and/or drug consumption. The results of previous
studies have shown that alcohol and drug use is related to violent behavior (Slawinska, 1981; Gerson, 1978; Lester, 1980). Daille et al. (1979) pointed out that the use of alcohol is often used by the perpetrator as well as members of the audience to reduce the offender's responsibility for his/her behavior. They stated that: "Alcoholic violence can be a fact (he is violent when he has been drinking) or a risk (he has been drinking and may be violent)." Additionally they found that some persons claim that they cannot express their violence unless they are under the influence of alcohol.

(Case #112)
Shirley was convicted of first degree murder. Her definition of the situation was colored by the fact that she insisted that she was not in control of her behavior. "I'd been drinking, smokin' reefer, shootin' heroin, and droppin' pills." The offender further diminished her responsibility by stating that it was some foreign material in the drugs that she had purchased. "It had to be something else in the drugs, PCP or something, I don't know."

In the above account the offender also stated that she must have blacked out during the time the stabbing occurred. Alcohol has been shown to produce an amnesia state in violent offenders (Wolf, 1980). In fact, researchers were able to reproduce alcoholic amnesia in 5 Alaskan native men who had committed homicide during previous alcoholic blackouts but had no recollection of the events.

Another such account was provided by a young offender who interrupted the interview with a series of emotional outbursts.
(Case #33)
Amos was convicted of first degree murder. He had gone to the victim's house on two previous occasions but he was unable to commit the murder. "I had a few beers and I went over there to her house to kill her but I chicken out." Jerry knew what he had to in order to carry out his violent attack on his victim. "I guess, I knew I couldn't do it unless I was real drunk, you know so drunk I couldn't remember." He continued: "You black out."
The offender had a history of blacking out after consuming a large quantity of alcohol. "I knew I had to be in a condition like that before I would be able to kill somebody." Amos described the situation leading up to his violent behavior. He went back to the victim's house after consuming approximately 3/4 of a liter of Jim Beam whiskey. He had a knife but he did not remember anything after that point. "I don't remember much, but I have flash backs every once in a while."

Based on the testimony of the perpetrator and other witnesses the court felt that the offender was guilty of second degree murder.

These data strongly suggest that whatever effect alcohol and/or drugs have on violent behavior, it seems apparent that murderers in this sample learn the advantages of attributing their behavior to these factors. The frequently heard postulate that alcohol promotes violence can be reconceptualized as a means by which violent behavior can be made more acceptable (Daille et al., 1979).

**Stressful life events**

Three of the offenders' attributed their violent behavior to factors other than alcohol/drugs. Stressful life events (i.e., deaths and divorce) have also been associated with
violent behavior (Humphrey and Palmer, 1980). Violent offenders who have recently experienced a sudden change in their lives sometimes feel useless and alienated.

In two of the cases, the offenders had lost their jobs and were in the initial stage of a divorce. The following is a good indication of the type of sad stories provided by such offenders.

(Case #81)
I was a construction worker and the economy was real bad at that time. It was hard finding work and for the last 15 years I had been drinking more heavily. We had started the divorce the week before the shooting occurred. I met up with her one night at a bar. She was in the embrace of another guy. I followed her home and we continued to fight. I don't know why I loaded the gun and took it out. There was something driving me, I had to get out of the house. As I proceeded out of the house toward my car, all of these lights came on, it was just like everything was closing in on me and just out of reaction, I shot, I guess at this light, at that time I didn't know I had fatally shot someone." The offender had shot a policeman. He explained: "I didn't know it was an officer. I have no bitterness against the police. It was just like everything was closing in on me, and ah, maybe it was just self destruction on my part. Maybe I wanted them to open up on me. I don't know."

Stressful life-events were useful tools for some offenders because of our culture. It is reasonable to assume that when one loses a close friend or relative he/she might become depressed and act on the basis of their emotions rather than rational judgements. By attributing their behavior to their emotional state at the time of the crime, their responsibility for their violent behavior is somewhat diminished. In general offenders who gave this type of excuse
claimed that their violent act was an anomaly stemming from the extreme duress they were experiencing.

**Stressful life-events and alcohol and drugs**

Other offenders maintained that the presence of stressful life-events and alcohol/drugs use were the cause of their violent behavior. They expressed the view that they had nothing or no one to live for. In other words, they provided accounts which combined the two types of excuses cited above.

One such account was provided by Mr. Smith:

(Case #40)
I felt like I wasn't nottin'. My mom passed away and I could not find anybody who could replace her. I never was happy after she passed away until I met my girlfriend, Karen. I mean I had all kinds of girl friends and stuff, but it just wasn't there. I mean out of all the time after my mom passed away, and before I met Karen, I had no girl ever tell me that they loved me, like she did you know. They never told me that they loved me, they might have told me that they cared about me and stuff like that, but Karen, she was different you know, and I did everything in the world for her, cause I didn't want to lose her, because I was happy for the first time since my mom passed."

However, things were not going well between Mr. Smith and Karen. He continued: "Me and my girl friend had broke up and I had been heavily depressed all day long for about three or four days. I was feeling badder and badder... and I was drinking pretty heavy that night and I was doing cocaine and smoking weed... I just wanted to kill myself. And I wrote a suicide note to my brother and I went over to my girlfriend's house... and had took a gun out of the cabinet and went over there... I went in and there she was standing with a butcher knife and says, 'come on mother fucker,' like that. Then that's when I took the gun out and put it to my head. And then she panicked and ran into the bedroom, and I just went into the bedroom to talk to her... I asked her if it was really over between us, (he began crying) and she went down on her knees and said, "Oh my God," or
The accounts cited above show that a number of factors can be used to excuse one's behavior.

**Agentic state**

The effect of social influence was also a salient theme emerging from some of the accounts. It appears that the offenders were acting in the capacity of an "agent" for someone who they perceived as an authority figure. The offenders in this category were convicted of homicides involving two or more perpetrators. For example, Helen was convicted of second degree murder, and her accomplices included her husband and some of his friends. She stated that:

(Case #103)
I did everything he wanted me to do. I didn't really make decisions for myself. That's where my own stupidity came in. I let him get me into trouble which I should have known better. I should have put my foot down, but I was in fear of him cause he always threatened that if I ever left him or tried to divorce him he'd kill me which he tried to kill. . . . He put a knife to my throat one day. I wore marks, his finger marks around my neck clear around to the other side from where he tried to choke me.

Helen, like the other two individuals who cited scapegoats, expressed regret and guilt over the incident but claimed she was not the kind of person who would normally do such a thing. She maintained that it was her inability to
escape from her violent husband that caused her to go along with the act.

The results of the analysis show that several types of excuses are used to nullify one's responsibility for their violent behavior. However, the individuals who employed excuses in accounting for their crimes did not seem to identify with a violent generalized other. Additionally, almost all of the offenders who cited excuses expressed deep regret concerning the victims loss of life.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the results of the study suggest that factors other than relative deprivation and violent subcultures are needed to explain violent behavior. Only two of the offenders' accounts implied some indication that they believed that their victim deserved to die. Most of the offenders included in this study expressed a great deal of sorrow and remorsefulness for their behavior.

The offenders included in this study represented a relatively homogeneous sample. They were likely to have been unemployed or underemployed at the time they committed their respective offense. These conditions often provide the individual with the drive or desire to "get away" from it all by using alcohol and/or drugs. Thus, in many of the cases the offenders were individuals from impoverished backgrounds living rather dead-end lives, who in the course of mounting life stress, struck out against someone, usually, an acquaintance, while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

In terms of the presence of handguns in these situations, a gun was used in almost half of the cases. In general, the gun was kept in the car or at home for protection. Therefore, they were readily accessible to offenders in perceived adverse
situations. It is interesting to note that it appears that most of the homicides would not have occurred if a handgun had not been so readily available.

The findings partially support Athens (1977) thesis concerning the effect of one's definition of the situation on their behavioral choices. The accounts of the offenders show that their definition of the situation was a strong determinant of their violent behavior. On the other hand, the results show that because of the spontaneity of the situation, it is highly unlikely that the offenders reflected on their self-concept before committing their respective crime.

Similarly, few accounts appeared to reflect efforts by the offenders to restore or maintain a favorably situated identity. Thus, the accounts provide little or no support for Luckenbill (1977) and Felson and Steadman (1978) impression management thesis. In their encounter with the victim the offenders seemed more concerned with justice, or with getting or protecting what they felt they were entitled to, than with maintaining a favorable self-image.

The results of this study should not be generalized to homicides committed in large metropolitan areas. It may be that violent subcultures and impression management explanations are more applicable to violence in densely populated urban settings of the United States. However, based upon an almost complete sample of persons convicted of
homicide in a small, Midwestern state, these factors do not appear to be important in the etiology of violent acts committed in rural areas and small cities.
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SECTION III. PERCEPTIONS OF CONVICTED OFFENDERS:

AN EXERCISE IN RETROSPECTION
SECTION III

SECTION III. PERCEPTIONS OF CONVICTED OFFENDERS: 
AN EXERCISE IN RETROSPECTION

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INTRODUCTION

The etiology of criminal behavior has been the focus of a large number of sociological investigations. However, previous research has neglected the inherent differences in the origins of different types of criminal behavior. The purpose of the present study is to determine the effect of the frequency of occurrence and perceived importance of selected social factors on types of crime (i.e., violent or nonviolent).

The U.S. Department of Justice (1983) reported that one index offense occurred every 3 seconds. Additionally the report indicated that a violent crime occurred every 26 seconds, while a property crime occurred every 3 seconds. Overall, an estimated 12 million crime index offenses were committed in 1983.

Despite years of study there is no single, agreed upon explanation for criminal behavior. Preferred explanations for criminal behavior depend on the theoretical slant of the writer. Nevertheless, the most frequent theoretical constructs employed to explain criminal behavior are generally based on the underlying assumptions of structural, subcultural, social learning, and/or interactional models.
Structural Factors

Structural theories assume that an individual's particular socioeconomic location in society is a major determinant of his/her criminal behavior. These models stress the saliency of various structural based pressures that force the individual into aberrant behavior. In general, criminal behavior is seen as the reaction to conditions that facilitate a state of normlessness.

The most frequently cited structural variables in studies of crime are socio-economic status (SES) and blocked opportunity structures (Cernkovich, 1978). A review of the early writings of structural theorists, however, suggests that it is primarily property crimes and not violent offenses that are seen as resulting from relative economic deprivation (Engels, 1950; Bonger, 1916; Marx, 1859; Merton, 1938).

In contrast, Coser (1963) expressed the view that there is a causal link between social structures and violence. He argued that economic inequality may or may not be perceived as unjust by lower status persons. Nevertheless, he pointed out that when lower SES persons perceive economic inequality as being unjust, the results are likely to be in the form of frustration and/or aggression. More importantly, Coser stated that the violent or aggressive behavior could be directed
towards one's self, repressed or sublimated, or channeled towards others. He hypothesized that violent crime rates will be particularly high for categories of persons who experience disproportionately "structured induced frustration" (i.e., blocked opportunities).

The results of recent studies have provided partial support for hypothesized relationships between poverty and violence (Quinney, 1966; Humphries and Wallace, 1980); and income inequality and other forms of deprivation and violence (Loftin and Hill, 1974; Bailey, 1984; Blau and Blau, 1982).

Additionally, the impact of structural factors on different types of criminal behavior has been the focus of recent studies (Linholm, 1981; Najman, 1980; Hoivik, 1977; Choldin, 1979). Smith and Parker (1980) distinguished between primary homicide and nonprimary homicide. The former referred to those homicides in which the victim is known to the perpetrator, whereas the latter refers to homicides involving strangers. They concluded that structural variables, especially poverty, were strong predictors of differences in primary homicides rates, but were less important for explaining variation in nonprimary rates.
Subcultural Factors

Additionally, literature on the etiology of criminal behavior is encompassed by the subcultural perspective. Subcultural theorists argue that violence and other criminal acts are encouraged by certain status requirements. The most salient causal factors are value orientations that encourage criminal behavior. The term "values" has an ambiguous meaning. However, values are the determining factors for both attitudes and behavior (Williams, 1971; Parsons and Shils, 1962; Kluckhohn, 1962; Rokeach, 1973).

Violent behavior within the subculture is often an attempt to "save face" (Miller, 1958). Miller substantiated his argument with interview data from gang members. He reported the following statement from a gang member: "We can't chicken out on this fight; our rep would b shot!" It seems that within certain groups, violent behavior is sanctioned by normative structures.

Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) are credited with popularizing the notion of a subculture of violence. They argued that there are subcultures in which values encourage the use of violence in both interpersonal relationships and group interactions. More importantly, they contended that violence within these subcultures is not accompanied by guilt
or remorse because the behavior is perceived as a legitimate means to an end.

Erlanger (1979) assessed the validity of the subculture of violence thesis. He analyzed qualitative data on Chicano gangs in East Los Angeles. The results of his study show that within particular subcultures, there were value orientations (i.e., machismo) that supported and perpetuated the use of violence. Additional support for the existence of a subculture of violence has been found in several studies (Hartnagel, 1980; M. Smith, 1979; Green and Wakefield, 1979; McCleary, 1975).

In contrast, Ball-Rokeach (1973) conducted a study to determine the effect of values on violent behavior. She concluded that there was an extremely weak relationship between values and criminal violent behavior. Similarly, Erlanger (1974) concluded from a study conducted under the directions of the Presidents' Commission on the Cause and Prevention of Violence that there was no tendency for specific groups to be violent or favorable to violence. Thus, the results of studies on the existence of a subculture of violence are mixed rather than conclusive.
Interactionists agree that an individual's behavior is determined by his/her definition of the self and of the situation. First, the person may define himself as dangerous, as a drug addict, a trouble-maker, or an alcoholic. The person will then act toward himself and others according to the meanings he/she has for him/her "self."

The image that each person holds of him/her self is a result of a social process. The process involves the procedure by which we view ourselves and give our "self" meaning from the perspective of relevant others. This process is analogous to what Mead referred to as "the self as a social construct" (Mead, 1934) and Cooley (1902) labeled "The Looking-Glass Self."

Symbolic interactionism was the foundation upon which more recent theories of crime have been constructed. For example, labeling theory has become one of the most popular explanations of criminal behavior. The results of recent studies have supported the thesis that labels may influence behavior (Chassin and Young, 1981; Gold, 1970; Simons et al., 1980; Ray and Downs, 1986).

The labeling perspective is based on the premise that criminal behavior is a result of an individual accepting a

Lemert (1967) expressed the view that when an individual's criminal behavior becomes incorporated in his/her self-image, their behavior is considered normal and a natural part of their role. When behavior is based on the label that one attaches to his/her self-concept, the behavior is defined as secondary deviance (Lemert, 1967).

Labeling theory has also been used to explain violent behavior. Faulkner's (1973) study of hockey players' violent behavior provided evidence for the applicability of the labeling perspective to violence. He concluded that violence among hockey players was partially determined by several subjective themes including "showing yourself."

Athens (1980) pointed out that the self-concept of individuals who commit violent criminal acts falls into three categories: violent, incipient violent, and nonviolent. Further, he argued that there was a relationship between the type of self-concept that individuals hold of themselves and the type of definitions they give to situations in which they employ violence. Thus, it appears that the labels (e.g., hood, trouble-maker, drug addict, tough, aggressive and con) that people attach to their self-concept influence our behavior choices.
Parenting Factors

The most frequently referenced cause of adult violent behavior is exposure to parental abuse and/or neglect as a child. Bandura's social learning theory is often used as a theoretical framework in studies conducted to explain the hypothesized relationship between parental abuse and subsequent adult violent and nonviolent behavior. Bandura (1977) pointed out that, "most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling. . . . From observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action."

Additional arguments for the effects of social learning on criminal behavior can be found in the work of Sutherland (1947). He stated that through one's interaction with others an individual learns how and when to commit criminal acts. Glaser (1956) supported Sutherland's thesis. However, Glaser argued that Sutherland's theory needed to be reconceptualized to include the effects of identification with criminals as a salient factor in explaining criminality. Glaser (1956) expressed the view that identification is, "the choice of another from whose perspective we view our own behavior." In sum, he argued that, "a person pursues criminal behavior to the extent that he/she identifies himself with real or
imaginary persons from whose perspective his criminal behavior seems acceptable."

Social learning theory was the impetus for the emergence of the "cycle of violence" thesis. This perspective specifies a process whereby violent behavior is transferred from one generation to the next. The results of numerous studies have provided support for the cycle of violence thesis (Barnett et al., 1980; Hunner and Walker, 1981; Straus et al., 1980; Pagelow, 1984).

The results of several studies have shown a positive association between being abused as a child and subsequent enactment of lethal violence (Frazier, 1974; Sendi and Blomgren, 1975). For example, King (1975) interviewed juveniles convicted of homicide. He found that a substantial number of the offenders had been the victim of physical abuse at an early age.

Parental abuse and neglect has also been associated with delinquency and/or nonviolent deviance (Glueck and Glueck, 1962; Welsh, 1978). For example, Hirschi (1969) found that delinquents were much less attached to their family than were nondelinquents. Similarly, the results of a study that compared the family environments of both delinquents and nondelinquents showed that delinquents' childhood experiences were more unpleasureable than nonoffenders (Medinnus, 1965). Based on the results of the studies cited above, it seems
apparent that parenting variables should be one of the major ingredients in a theoretical model of both violent and non violent criminal behavior.

The Effects of Alcohol and Drugs

The theories mentioned above are not mutually exclusive. The elaboration of their interrelatedness is beyond the scope of this paper. However, structural, subcultural, labeling, and social learning theorists have also alluded to the importance of alcohol consumption and drug abuse in explaining criminal behavior.

The results of numerous studies have shown that alcohol consumption and drug abuse are related to criminal behavior (Wolfgang and Weiner, 1984; Slawinska, 1981). Lenoir (1980) examined the relationship between crime and blood alcohol concentration (BAC) in perpetrators and their victims. The results of his study revealed that in 78% of 82 criminal offenses studied, the perpetrator, the victim, or both were intoxicated; in 16% only the victim was intoxicated; in 17% only the perpetrator; and in 45% both victim and aggressor were intoxicated.

Goode (1984) expressed the view that in this society, being under the influence of alcohol is a legitimate occasion for criminal behavior, especially violent, aggressive acts.
He contended that alcohol and violence are often seen together, and that, "the more violent the crime, the greater the likelihood that the offender was drunk while committing it" (1984:131).

The results of other research have provided evidence for the argument that drug use is also related to violence (Heller, 1983). Wolfgang and Weiner (1984) argued that drugs influence violent behavior. They pointed out that some drugs have the capacity to influence the brain function sufficiently to stimulate the nucleus or center of violent behavior in the brain. In terms of opium-related drugs, they maintained that these drugs have an indirect effect on violence due to the illegal efforts (i.e., assaults, manslaughter, and/or murder) often needed to support one's habit. It seems apparent then that drugs might also have an indirect effect on nonviolent crimes (i.e., robbery and burglary).

In addition, the combination of alcohol and drugs has also been hypothesized as a causal factor in explaining criminal behavior. Langevin et al. (1982) compared the use of alcohol and drugs at the time of the offense in 109 killers and 38 nonviolent offenders seen for psychiatric assessment. They found that more killers than nonviolent offenders used alcohol and drugs at the time of their offense.

The objective of the present study is three-fold. First, it is intended to determine the offenders' ratings on the
theoretical constructs mentioned above in terms of their influence on criminal behavior. Secondly, the analysis is designed to determine whether or not the offenders' importance ratings differ significantly by type of crime. Finally, a logit model is employed to determine the relative effect of the selected social factors on the odds of a respondent being a property offender rather than a violent offender. Similar analytical procedures are employed to determine the theoretical significance of the offenders' perceptions with regards to the frequency with which they encountered the social factors included in this study.
METHODS

From October, 1984 to October, 1985, the author interviewed 120 inmates incarcerated in a midwestern correctional institution. The respondents were housed at the State's classification center. The classification process was designed to assess the inmates health status, educational level, psychological make-up, and security level.

A purposive sample was obtained through a systematic process. The respondents were selected on the basis of their offense type (i.e., violent or nonviolent). Respondents in the nonviolent category were selected randomly from a list that included all the inmates housed at the institution. There were fewer violent offenders (assault, manslaughter and/or murder) housed at the facility. Therefore, efforts were made to interview all of the violent offenders. Overall, only about ten offenders contacted to be included in the study refused. They did so because of pending appeals or some other personal reasons.

Nonviolent offenders (i.e., burglary and/or robbery) represented 51.7% (n=62) of the sample. Violent offenders (i.e., assault, manslaughter or murder) comprised 48.3% (n=58) of the respondents included in this study. Twenty-seven percent (n=32) of the respondents were female. In terms of
the racial composition, only 18% (n=21) of the respondents were black or a member of another minority group.

Data for the study were obtained with questionnaires. The data collection process followed a structured sequence of events. First, the inmates selected to be included in the study were escorted to an interviewing room by a correctional officer. The officers were not present during the interview sessions. The offenders were asked if they committed the crime for which they were now serving time. If the offenders answered in the affirmative they were given additional information concerning the objectives of the study. On the other hand, the interview was terminated if the inmate denied his guilt (n=3).

The data collection session for each offender ranged from 30 minutes to 1 1/2 hours. First, the respondent was given a card which contained response categories for items included on the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of items that were intended to measure the frequency or extent to which the offenders had experienced social factors that have been associated with the various criminological theories. (See Appendix C for a listing of the items included on the instrument.) In addition, the offenders were asked to rate the relative importance of the above mentioned factors in causing their criminal behavior. Additional data were obtained from the offenders' personal history files.
Measurement of the Variables

Parental abuse

The three items included in this scale are designed to measure the extent to which the offenders had been physically and mentally abused by their parents. (See items 1, 2, and 3 in Appendix C.) The responses were coded on a Likert-type scale. The response categories for the frequency items ranged from 1=never to 4=all the time, while the response categories for the importance rating ranged from 1=not at all important to 4=very important. Cronbach's alphas for the frequency scale and the importance scale were .58 and .61, respectively (see Table 1). High scale scores were coded as "Yes" or "Important" respectively, and low scale scores were coded as "No" or "Unimportant".

*****Place Table 1 about Here*****

Blocked opportunities

This variable is defined as the awareness of blocked or limited access to legitimate means by which the offenders could achieve culturally induced goals. An index of perceived blocked opportunities was developed by summing frequency of perceptions across four items (see items 12 through 15 in
Appendix C). Possible scale scores range from 4 to 16. Coefficient alpha for the frequency scale was .84, while alpha for the importance scale was .63. Low scale scores indicated a "No" or "Unimportant" response and high scale scores were interpreted as a "Yes" or an "Important" response.

**Subterranean values**

This variable is defined as cultural norms that serve as the guiding mechanism for actors in choosing among alternative behaviors. Additionally, these rules also limit the range of acceptable behaviors, and they provide justifications for action (Parsons and Shils, 1962). Specifically, the purpose of this three item scale is to determine whether or not the offenders had values that supported criminal behavior (see items 11, 19, 28, and 29 in Appendix C). Miller (1958) expressed the view that individuals engage in criminal behavior because of adherence to subterranean values involving excitement, trouble, and recognition by friends. In each case, low scale scores were coded as "No" or "Unimportant", respectively and high scale scores were coded as "Yes" or "important", respectively. Cronbach's alpha levels for the two scales were .68 and .63 respectively.
Labels

This variable is conceptualized as the extent to which the offenders perceived themselves as a criminal or trouble-maker from the perspective of their significant others. The respondents were asked if they were labeled a "hood" or trouble-maker" by their friends, teachers, and community (see items 10, 20, and 21 in Appendix C). Again, a low scale score was coded as a "No" and "Unimportant" and a high scale score was coded as a "Yes" or "Important."

Cronbach's alpha levels for the two scales were .72 and .71, respectively.

Alcohol and drugs

This scale is composed of two items that were used to measure the extent to which the offenders were high or low consumers of alcohol and drugs just prior to committing the crime for which they had been imprisoned (see items 16 and 17 in Appendix C). In addition, an importance index was also formed for this variable. Scale scores ranged from 2 to 8. Low scale scores were coded as a "No" or "Unimportant", and high scale scores were coded as a "Yes" or "Important."

Cronbach's Alphas for the frequency and importance scale for this variable were .54 and .58, respectively.
**Type of crime**

The sample is divided into two categories: 1=nonviolent offense and 2=violent offense. The first category includes offenders (n=62) who were convicted of a nonviolent criminal act (i.e., burglary and/or robbery). The second category, violent offenders (n=58), consists of those respondents who were convicted of assault, manslaughter or murder.
RESULTS

The first step in the analysis was to determine the offenders' ratings of the various factors in terms of their importance in causing their criminal behavior. Mean scores were obtained for each scale. Standardized scores were obtained by dividing the sum of each scale by the number of items comprising the scale.

Table 3 contains means and standard deviations for each scale examined in this analysis. The mean (2.45) scale score indicates that the offenders rated alcohol/drug use as a more important cause of their criminal behavior than any other factor included in this study. Based on its mean scale score (2.34), it appears that the offenders ranked perceived blocked opportunities second in terms of its importance. The remaining items, in terms of their perceived importance, in descending order included criminal values, perceived criminal labels, and parental abuse, their mean scale scores were 2.25, 1.96, and 1.79, respectively.

*****Place Table 3 Here*****

Table 4 shows the means and standard deviations for the frequency of occurrence measures. The alcohol/drug use mean
scale score (2.45) was the highest indicating that the offenders rated this item first in terms of its frequency of occurrence. The mean scale score (2.32) for frequency of perceived blocked opportunities indicates that the offenders rated this item second in terms of occurrence. The mean scale score for perceived criminal labels (2.14) and parental abuse (1.86) show that the offenders perceived these factors as occurring less frequently than the other factors included in this study.

*****Place Table 4 Here*****

The second step in the analysis was designed to determine whether or not the offenders' mean scores for the importance scales and the frequency of occurrence scales differed significantly by type of crime. Tables 5 and 6 contain the scales, mean scores and significance level for the tests. For both perceived importance (Table 5) and reported frequency (Table 6) there were no significant differences between violent and nonviolent offenders' scale scores.

*****Place Tables 5 and 6 Here*****

There was a tendency for the violent offenders to be higher than the property offenders on reported frequency and
perceived importance of alcohol and drug consumption but the differences were not statistically significant at the .05 level.

The objective of the final phase of the analysis was to determine the odds of an offender being in the nonviolent category rather than the violent category as a function of the independent variables included in this study. Because the variables included in this analysis are coded categorically, the data are in a contingency table format. Fienberg (1980) stated that log-linear models were designed to analyze data in multidimensional contingency tables.

It is instructive to note that the SPSSx log-linear procedure calculates estimates for all effect parameters included in the model. However, the parameter estimates displayed are the actual lambdas, not twice lambda (Norusis, 1985). To obtain regression-like beta coefficients multiply the estimates by 2 (Haberman, 1978:294). See Table 7.

Knoke and Burke (1980) pointed out that by using the additive equation, the log-linear technique becomes analogous to ordinary regression. Further, they stated that the parameter estimates generated in each model can be interpreted in a fashion somewhat analogous to regression coefficients. Positive values indicate that the independent variable increase the odds on the dependent variable, while negative logits reflect a decrease in the odds.
The antilog of the logit coefficients can be employed to transform the logit coefficients into odds. When the model is interpreted in terms of the odds a multiplicative model rather than a regression-like additive model is employed.

Importance of Social Factors

Table 7 contains parameter estimates for main effects included in the importance model. The test statistics ($L^2=10.26$, DF=26; $P=.997$) show that the model provides a good fit. The logit coefficient (.008) for importance of perceived criminal labels shows that this factor had relatively no effect on type of crime (see Table 7). Similarly, the antilog (.99) for the importance of criminal labels coefficient shows that offenders who stated that perceived criminal labels were unimportant odds of being a property offender rather than a violent perpetrator is .99 to 1. In other words, the effect is negative.

****Place Table 7 Here*****

The largest logit coefficient is associated with the perceived importance of alcohol and drug use on the type of crime. The logit coefficient .158 indicates that the offenders' perceived importance scores for alcohol and drug use
had the strongest effect on the odds of type of crime. Translated into multiplicative odds, the antilog (1.17) of the logit coefficient for perceived importance of alcohol and drug use on criminal behavior indicates that the odds of an offender who states that alcohol and drug use was unimportant in determining his/her behavior being a nonviolent offender rather than a violent offender is 1.17 to 1. However, again the difference is not significant at the .05 level.

Frequency of Occurrence

The following results are based on a hypothesized causal relationship between type of crime (dependent variable) and the frequency of occurrence of the following effect variable: 1) criminal values; 2) blocked opportunities; 3) criminal labels; 4) parental abuse; and 5) alcohol and drugs. A logit model was selected that provided the best fit for the data. Table 8 contains the effect parameter coefficients, antilogs of the coefficients, and Z-values for each parameter estimate. The chi-square ratio ($L^2 = 12.82, DF = 26; P = .985$) show that the model provides a good fit for the data.
The logit coefficients in Table 8 show that the selected factors included in this model have little or no effect on the odds of an offender being in either category of the dependent variable. For instance, the absence of a criminal value orientation had an extremely weak positive effect (logit=.008) on the odds of type of crime. Translated into multiplicative odds terminology, 1.04 is the net effect of weak criminal values on type of crime. Controlling for other variables in the model, an offender with weak pro-crime values odds of being in the nonviolent category to the violent category is 1.04 to 1. These results suggest that criminal value orientations do not have a substantive nor a statistically significant effect on the type of crime.

The strongest logit coefficient was associated with the impact of offenders use of alcohol and drugs on their criminal behavior. The logit coefficient (.186) shows that low alcohol and drug use increases the odds of an offender being in the nonviolent category, but the increase is not statistically significant at the .05 level. Similarly, the antilog (1.20) of the logit coefficient associated with alcohol and drug use indicates that the odds of an offender, who stated that he/she did not use drugs and/or alcohol, being a nonviolent offender
rather than a violent offender is 1.20 to 1. The relative
effects of the other variables included in the model can be
interpreted in a similar manner.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study show that criminals perceived
their involvement with alcohol and drugs as the most important
causes of their criminal behavior. It seems that
alcohol/drugs have a liberating effect on individuals' behavior choices which facilitated their criminal behavior. In addition, blocked opportunities were also rated as an important cause of the offenders' behavior. These results suggest that the offenders were pressured into committing their respective crimes because they did not believe that they could obtain their goals through available legitimate means.

Criminal values were ranked as the third most important cause of the respondent's criminal behavior. These results partially support the subculture explanation of antisocial behavior.

Parental abuse and criminal labels were perceived as the least important causes of the offenders' criminal involvement. A possible explanation for these findings might be that parental abuse and negative labeling affect career criminals more than first-timers. The offenders included in this study
tended to not have had a previous arrest record.

In terms of the reported frequency of occurrence of the selected factors, it appears that the offenders ranked consumption of alcohol and drugs as the factor occurring most frequently. These results are not surprising given the pervasiveness of activities and norms encouraging the use of these substances. The respondents ranked perceived blocked opportunities second in terms of frequency of occurrence. Thus, these results suggest that the offenders included in this study were either unemployed, underemployed or relatively uneducated.

The offenders' ratings of the frequency and importance of factors included in this study did not differ significantly by type of crime. This finding is consistent with the review of literature cited above where each theory had been shown to be related to both violent and nonviolent criminal behavior. Furthermore, the results are consistent with longitudinal research showing that adolescent and adult criminals tend to have been aggressive kids (Magnusson and Duner 1983; Ensminger et al., 1983; Hogh and Wolf, 1983; Farrington, 1983), and that there is little specialization among offenders. Most violent offenders have also been arrested for property crimes (Guttridge et al., 1983; Hartstone and Hansen, 1984; Magnusson and Duner, 1983) and vice versa.

These findings suggest that too much is made of the
differences between property and violent offenders, because no unique set of causal factors seem to be associated with either type of crime. Rather, concern should be with identifying those factors which produce these aggressive nonconforming kids who commit most adolescent crimes (violent and property) and some of whom continue to pursue adult criminal careers. The present study suggests that when inmates are asked which factors are important they cite drugs, alcohol, blocked opportunities, and criminal values.
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<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Details</th>
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Green, E. and R. Wakefield  

Guttridge, Patricia, William F. Gabrielli, Jr., Sarnoff A. Mednick, and Katherine Teilmann Van Dusen  

Haberman, S. J.  
Hartstone, Eliot and Karen V. Hansen

Hartnagel, T. F.

Heller, M. S.

Hirschi, Travis

Hogh, Erik and Preben Wolf

Hoivik, T.

Humphries, Drew and Don Wallace

Hunner, Robert J. and Yvonne Elder Walker

King, Charles

Kituse, John L.
Kluckhohn, C.

Knoke, David and Peter J. Burke

Langevin, R., D. Paitich and B. Clarke Orchard

Lemert, Edwin M.

Lenoir, L.

Linholm, Charles

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Magnusson, Hakan Stattin and Anders Duner

Marx, Karl

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Rokeach, M.  

Rubington, Earl and Martin Weinburg  

Schur, Edwin M.  

Sendi, Ismail and Paul Blomgren  

Simons, R. L., Miller, M. G., and S. M. Aigner  

Slawinska, J.  

Smith, Dwayne and Robert Parker  

Smith, Michael D.  

Straus, Murray, Richard Gelles, and Suzanne Steinmetz  

Sutherland, Edward H.  

U.S. Department of Justice  
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Table 1. Reliability for importance scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scalea</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th># of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X1</td>
<td>I engaged in criminal activities for excitement</td>
<td>0.6276</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My friends encouraged my criminal behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I often did things that were against the law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I did things to gain respect from my friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2</td>
<td>There were no good paying jobs available for me</td>
<td>0.8429</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There were only dead-end jobs available for me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I did not have enough education to get a good job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I did not have the training to get a good job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X3</td>
<td>My teachers labeled me a trouble-maker or hood</td>
<td>0.7157</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My close friends labeled me a trouble-maker or hood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My parents/community labeled me a trouble-maker or hood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X4</td>
<td>My parents provided me with little supervision</td>
<td>0.6122</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My parents didn't care what happened to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My parents beat me severely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X5</td>
<td>I drank heavily</td>
<td>0.5211</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I would get loaded on marijuana or other drugs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scales were coded in the following manner: X1=values; X2=strain; X3=labels; X4=parents; and X5=alcohol.
Table 2. Reliability of frequency scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th># of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X1</td>
<td>I engaged in criminal activities for excitement</td>
<td>0.6834</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My friends encouraged my criminal behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I often did things that were against the law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I did things to gain respect from my friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2</td>
<td>There were no good paying jobs available for me</td>
<td>0.8437</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There were only dead-end jobs available for me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I did not have the training to get a good job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X3</td>
<td>My teachers labeled me a trouble-maker or hood</td>
<td>0.7249</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My close friends labeled me a trouble-maker or hood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My parents/community labeled me a trouble-maker or hood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X4</td>
<td>My parents provided me with little supervision</td>
<td>0.5832</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My parents didn't care what happened to me.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My parents beat me severely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X5</td>
<td>I drank heavily</td>
<td>0.5301</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I would get loaded on marijuana or other drugs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The scales are coded in the following manner: X1=values; X2=strain; X3=labels; X4=parents; X5=alcohol.*
Table 3. Importance scales means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Means&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Standard Deviations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imaldrg</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imlabels</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>.891</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impabuse</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>.786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imnomie</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imvalues</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>.771</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>The scales were standardized by dividing each scale score by the number of items included in the scale. Scale mean ranged from 1 to 4. The response categories were coded as follows: 1=Not at all important, 2=Somewhat important, 3=Quite important, and 4=Very important.

Table 4. Frequency of Occurrence mean scale scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Means&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>.737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anomie</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>.965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pabuse</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>.732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labels</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>.917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aldrg</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>.954</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>The scales were standardized by dividing each scale score by the number of items included in the scale. Scale mean ranged from 1 to 4. The response categories were coded as follows: 1=Never happened, 2=Happened some, 3=Happened a lot, and 4=Happened all the time.
Table 5. T-Tests of differences between group means on importance ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>T-Value</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imaldrg</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>-1.11</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imlabels</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>.698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impabuse</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imnomie</td>
<td>9.73</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>.334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imvalues</td>
<td>9.24</td>
<td>8.76</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>.393</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a* Group 1=nonviolent offenders (n=62). Group 2=violent offenders (n=58).

Table 6. T-Tests of differences between group means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>T-Value</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>8.95</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>.779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anomie</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>.673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pabuse</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>.489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labels</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>.568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aldrg</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>-1.03</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>.303</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a* Group 1=nonviolent offenders (n=62). Group 2=violent offenders (n=58).
Table 7. Logit Analysis of odds of type of crime by perceived importance of selected social factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Coefficient*2</th>
<th>Antilog</th>
<th>Z-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levio</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.066^a</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>.370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imvalues</td>
<td>-.061</td>
<td>-.122</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>-.668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imanomie</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>-.070</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>-.391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imlabels</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>-.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impabuse</td>
<td>-.025</td>
<td>-.050</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>-.280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imaldrg</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>.881</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likelihood Ratio Chi-square=10.256  DF=26  P=.997

^aParameter values reported for level 1 of each of the variables included in the model. l=not important. Coefficients are significant at the .05 level when the associated Z-value is 1.96 or higher.

Table 8. Logit Analysis of odds of type of crime by selected social factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Coefficient*2</th>
<th>Antilog</th>
<th>Z-value^a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levio</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anomie</td>
<td>-.017</td>
<td>-.034</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>-.187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labels</td>
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<td>-.094</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>-.489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabuse</td>
<td>-.043</td>
<td>-.086</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>-.478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aldrg</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>.993</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likelihood Ratio Chi-square = 12.82  DF=26  P= .985

^aParameter values reported for level 1 of each of the variables included in the model. Coefficients are significant at the .05 level when the associated Z-value is 1.96 or higher.
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The two studies, though independent in terms of theoretical focus and methodology, revealed similar findings. For example, alcohol/drugs and blocked opportunities were identified as important causal factors in both studies. These findings suggest that the factors cited above should be included in any model employed to explain criminal behavior. More importantly, the results of this research project can be used to help policy-makers implement prevention programs and to increase the effectiveness of existing treatment models.

Prevention

Trying to decrease crime rates by relying on the criminal justice system is analogous to relying on therapeutic or curative medicine rather than preventive medicine to combat disease (Conklin, 1985). According to his writings on the effectiveness of the criminal justice system, Conklin (1985) viewed treatment as the least effective method for dealing with the crime problem. He expressed the view that although sick people do need help, research into the causes of the disease in the long-run may lead to more effective treatment models as well as insights into the prevention of the disease.
Following this line of reasoning, it seems apparent that research conducted to determine the cause of criminal behavior is likely to be more effective in terms of prevention than waiting for a crime to occur and then implementing traditional programs to treat the offender. Based on the results of the two studies included in this project, prevention strategies should be focused on at least three factors. For example, a nationwide push to encourage membership in self-help groups to assist individuals in dealing with their problems in more effective ways than drugs and alcohol should be initiated. In addition, some alternative to drugs and alcohol should be used to help stimulate the party spirits such as games and athletic competition.

Another factor that was present in the lives of the offenders was perceived blocked opportunities. Policy-makers should be encouraged to implement job programs and educational assistance to help individuals achieve culturally induced goals. Specifically, a variety of work-related training programs should be implemented in high unemployment areas. Additionally, the government should be actively exploring means to create jobs. Although some may have the skills and knowledge to be competent employees, they are still likely to be unemployed because of the paucity of jobs.

The delinquent subculture thesis argues that criminal behavior is endorsed by certain social groups. Support for
the subcultural explanation is based on research that focused attention on delinquent gangs. Thus, prevention strategies should address issues concerning the structure (i.e., norms, values, and role expectations) of high risk, adolescent groups.

Overall, the results of this study show that violent and nonviolent offenders have similar perceptions regarding the causes of their criminal behavior. It was shown that a number of social factors that have been related to criminal behavior were present in the lives of both groups of offenders. Thus, the objective of any crime prevention program should focus on means of eliminating social factors that pressure individuals into committing criminal acts.

Treatment

As stated earlier, the results of this study can also be used by correctional treatment personnel. Treatment models utilized in correctional institutions are fundamentally psychological in terms of their assumptions regarding the causes of antisocial behavior. The most frequently employed treatment modalities in correctional institutions include psychotherapy, transactional analysis (TA), and reality therapy. A detailed description of these models is beyond the purpose and scope of this discussion. More important are the
treatment possibilities suggested by the findings of the present research project. Correction administrators argue that the effectiveness of treatment programs is largely due to the matching of offenders with appropriate models. Thus, the starting point for correctional officials is to discover what works for whom and in what context.

Sechrest et al. (1979) and the Panel on Research on Rehabilitative Techniques, pointed out that treatment programs must be based on sound theoretical constructs. They added that the theoretical bases of most treatment models have been neglected. This neglect has led to several problems.

Bartollas (1985) claimed that treatment programs are seen as a cure-all for criminal behavior. He maintained that treatment is employed as if it were some medication that could cure the disease. Such a narrow and deterministic view of treatment modalities causes treatment specialists to overlook the social conditions that are likely to contribute to the offenders' involvement in criminal activities. Additionally, Bartollas (1985) expressed the view that treatment personnel often do not consider the match between the offender and treatment model. He suggested that greater care should be taken to ensure that the theory of criminal behavior on which the treatment is based is appropriate for a particular group or individual.

To match the offender with the most effective treatment
model, the Panel of Rehabilitative Techniques suggested the use of a "template-matching technique." This technique was originally proposed by Bem and Funder (1978). The objective of a template-like program is to create indices of behavior traits or a set of descriptors of people who according to underlying theoretical assumptions are likely to benefit from it. Because rehabilitative resources are scarce, it seems natural to attempt to match offenders with treatment.

As noted earlier, blocked opportunity structures were identified as an important cause of criminal behavior. Therefore, treatment programs should be designed to help offenders acquire the knowledge and skills needed to obtain and retain a meaningful job or career. This model would increase the emphasis now being placed on higher education and advanced technological training in correctional institutions.

Alcohol and drug use also appeared to be a common denominator in the equation to explain both violent and nonviolent behavior. Thus, treatment programs should be designed to determine the causes of alcohol/drug overuse. The present treatment programs for alcoholics involve group therapy sessions guided by Alcohol Anonymous (AA). However, inmates often complain about having to sit through sessions listening to other offenders talk about their problems. It was suggested that the group sessions are transformed into a meeting of "tall tales." Participants become engaged in a
form of competition, where the winner is the offender whose account reflects the worst conditions and/or saddest story.

Even though the etiology of alcohol/drug use is complex and multifaceted, it seems likely that offenders' use of these substances was caused by one or more of the other factors included in the study. For example, an offender's alcohol/drug use behavior might be a result of his/her perceptions of blocked opportunities or even being labeled as an "alcoholic" and/or "drug addict" by significant others. Thus, the temporal order in which offenders experience the factors included in this study should be the focus of future research in this area.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bartollas, Clemens

Bem, D. and D. Funder

Conklin, John E.

Reiss, Albert J., Otis Dudley, Paul K. Hatt and Cecil North

Sechrest, Lee, Susan White, and Elizabeth D. Brown
APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHICS OF OFFENDERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Nonviolent Offenders</th>
<th>Violent Offenders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependents</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES(^1)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\)Reiss et al. (1961)
## APPENDIX B: PEARSON CORRELATION BETWEEN INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Pearson Correlation coefficients between importance scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>X1</th>
<th>X2</th>
<th>X3</th>
<th>X4</th>
<th>X5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X1 Imvalues</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2 Imnomie</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X3 Imabuse</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X4 Imlabels</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X5 Imaldrbg</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1Two-tail Significance Level.
Pearson correlation coefficients between frequency of occurrence variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>X1 Values</th>
<th>X2</th>
<th>X3</th>
<th>X4</th>
<th>X5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X1</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.2534</td>
<td>0.2808</td>
<td>0.5806</td>
<td>0.3471</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>0.0030</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>X2</td>
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<td>0.2129</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
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<td>Labels</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>0.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>X5</td>
<td>Alcohol/drugs</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup> Two-tail significance level.
APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE
I am going to read some factors that some people believe influence individuals to get into trouble. After I read the factor would you please rate, first, the extent to which you have experienced the situation described (1=never, 2=happened some, 3=happened a lot, and 4=happened all the time); and then, second, rate the item in terms of its importance in causing you to commit the crime for which you are now serving time (1=not at all important, 2=somewhat important, 3=quite important, and 4=very important).

1. My parents provided me with little supervision.
2. My parents didn't care what happened to me.
3. My parents often beat me too severely.
4. My teachers were not concerned about me.
5. My teachers treated me unfairly.
6. I was not interested in school and usually did not do the work.
7. I had a hard time completing school work; I often didn't understand it.
8. I was often harassed by other kids in school.
9. I was not accepted by other kids in school.
10. I was labeled a hood or trouble-maker by teachers.
11. I was often bored with little to do and engaged in illegal acts for excitement.
12. There were no good paying jobs available to people like me.
13. All of the jobs available to people like me were dead end, offering little chance for getting ahead.
14. I lacked the education necessary to get a good job.
15. I didn't have the training necessary for a good job.
16. I drank heavily.
17. I would get loaded on marijuana or other drugs.
18. I had to take actions to defend myself against people who were treating me unfairly.
19. My friends encouraged my involvement in illegal activities.
20. The people in my community labeled me a hood or trouble-maker.
21. My close friends labeled me a hood or trouble-maker.
22. I could not find a job that paid enough to support myself/family.
23. I thought about getting caught by the police.
24. The benefits that I got from the illegal activities were greater than the possible costs (i.e., imprisonment, fines).
25. I knew what the penalties were for the offense that I was committing.
26. I was denied financial opportunities because I did not own any property.
27. My employers were unwilling to pay me the wages that I deserved.
28. I did things that were against the law.
29. I did things to gain respect from my friends.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, of all I would like to thank the Iowa Corrections Department and the personnel at the Iowa Medical and Security facility at Oakdale for their help and cooperation in this research. Secondly, I would like to thank Dr. Ronald Simons, without whose guidance and understanding this dissertation would never have been written. In addition, I am grateful to the members of my committee, Dr. Motoko Y. Lee, Dr. Martin Miller, Dr. Vern Ryan and Dr. Fred Borgen.

I am also extremely grateful to my parents, Mr. John Ray and Mrs. Missouri Ray for their unyielding support, guidance, and motivation.

And to my dearest "friend," Phyllis, I extend my greatest appreciation and thanks for your warmth, love, advice, and companionship which kept me striving in the eye of the storm.

Finally, I must thank Mr. Charles Ramsey II (Doc), without whose diligent efforts, guidance, and support graduate school and this dissertation would have been nothing more than a dream.