

social bond theory essay sample



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Social bond theory was created by Travis Hirschi and it is a form of social control theory. Social control theorists are more interested in explaining why someone is not being deviant rather than why they are. In this theory it is expected that deviance will occur at some point. Hirschi's social bond theory explains that deviance is expected to occur because crime is easy to do; you do not need any special skills to commit crimes. Everyone has the same amount of motivation to participate in deviance. Social bond theory is made up of four bonds; attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. Each bond is a bond to conformity and that keeps individuals from doing deviant behavior. Hirschi argues that the strength of social control a person has is what differentiates people who commit offenses from those who do not.

The first bond is attachment. Attachment is the emotional bond that an individual has. This is usually the bond that a younger person may share with an adult; like the bond between a child and their parent. Usually with a bond like this an individual will stop and think about how someone that they are strongly attached to will react to their actions. If they think that their actions will upset their loved one then often times they are less likely to do deviant behaviors. The next bond is commitment. Individuals are less likely to become deviant because the commitment to conventional society that they have allows them to look at the pros and cons of their future actions on their own. If a person knows that they have a lot going for themselves at the moment and one of their actions could potentially mess that up then they will be more likely to conform to the rules and norms of society.

Involvement is the third bond and this involves how much an individual participates in conventional activities. Conventional activities include things

such as after school sports, focusing on education or working. The more time a person spends engaging in conventional activities then the less time they will have to be deviant. The last bond Hirschi describes is belief. Belief is the bond that says if a person is more aware of the rules and norms of a society then they are less likely to break them. Also if a person has a better understanding of the rules then they are less likely to break them as well because they are aware and have an understanding of the things that they should and should not do.

It is possible that the bonds listed in social bond theory could possibly lead to deviance as well as preventing it. For example if a teenaged girl lives with her mother and they do not get along very well then that girl can be deviant and not worry about the reactions of her mother because a bond of attachment will most likely not exist. The girl might also be doing poorly in school and not care to participate in after school clubs and other conventional activities. Due to her lack of conventional activities, she will probably have no commitment to society. Her lack of conventional activities will give her more time on her hands to become deviant.

Her lack of commitment to conventional society will make her not care about being deviant because she'll feel like she has nothing to lose. The bond of belief may not exist either. It is possible that since the individual does not have a good relationship with her mom that they talk less. This girl may be unaware of rules and norms in her community because of that. If she gets caught drinking because she is unaware of the drinking age then she could end up in a lot of trouble. This teenager's strength of social control may not be very good so she will be more likely to be deviant than others.

Hirschi's social bond theory explains the bonds that may exist and prevent deviance from occurring. Each bond has something in it that makes an individual less likely to be deviant. Hirschi also looks at how social bond theory differentiates those who are offenders from those who are not. Even though social bond theory is looked at as a theory that can prevent deviance, it can also lead to it as well.