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EFFECTS OF RELIGION ON CRIME IN HAMPTON ROADS

by

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B.A. May 2018, University of Mississippi

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ABSTRACT

EFFECTS OF RELIGION ON CRIME IN HAMPTON ROADS

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Old Dominion University, 2020
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The influence of religion in society has been debated for hundreds of years. Renowned scholars like Max Weber and Émile Durkheim formed frameworks in which to study the relationship between religion and crime. The frameworks are based on the idea that religion promotes desirable behavior in society, while also controlling undesirable behavior. Although religion can be studied across many disciplines, this report examines the relationship between religion and crime. More specifically, the impact of religion on crime in the Hampton Roads area in Virginia. It has been thought that religiosity decreases crime. Using social bond theory as the theoretical perspective, this research suggests otherwise. Findings from this report show that religious commitment is positively related to crime, while at the multivariate level no relationship was found between religion and crime.

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This thesis is dedicated to my family without whom I would not be where I am today.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil” (the Lord’s Prayer).

Imagine you are in church listening to someone preach. You pray, worship, and believe. You are taught to obey the ten commandments in which you shall not kill, covet, steal, bear false witness, or commit adultery. You believe that after death there is heaven and hell. Heaven is a place where “hunger [is] no more, neither thirst anymore, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 21:15-17). Hell is a place for the “cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars” (Revelations 21:8). Whether you go to heaven or hell depends on if you follow the teachings of the scripture. If you live a good life, you will be rewarded; thus, the choices you make in life matter. In this way, religion guides decisions; it functions as a control mechanism keeping believers both conformed to moral behavior and away from deviant behavior with the promise of everlasting life in heaven (O’Dea and O’Dea Aviad 1983). Religion as a social control mechanism becomes clearer when looking at it through a historical lens.

Anthropological research suggests that modern religion developed as a “solution to solve problems of trust and cooperation at a time in history when society was struggling with the challenges of scarcity, size, and complexity” (Vedantam 2018:5). As populations grew, modern states were formed complete with much larger centralized and unified cities (Biggs 1999). Against this background, the birth of religion becomes salient. In order to police these larger groups of people, a system of superhuman force and vastness formed (O’Dea and O’Dea Aviad 1983). Religion created a collective identity in society that functioned as a control mechanism. In

fact, religion became so prolific that it was found in every human society on record (O’Dea and O’Dea Aviad 1983). As religion’s shared beliefs and practices grew, scholars began to study religion’s impact on society. For example, foundational scholars, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim, provided theoretical frameworks which have guided studies examining the impact of religion and social control.

Max Weber theorized that religion answers the “problem of meaning” and becomes ingrained in social structures that affect our daily lives (O’Dea and O’Dea Aviad 1983). In this way, Weber argued that religion contributed to the formation of goals, rules, and value systems that affect decisions-making (Weber 2009). Weber explained his ideas about religion in his book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Here, Weber attempted to decipher why Protestants had greater participation in the “ownership of capital, in management, and the upper ranks of labour” than other pious people (Weber 2009:15). He argued the disparity was because the ethic borne out of the Protestant religion propelled followers to accumulate capital for the sake of salvation. Weber discussed that religion can promote *desirable* behaviors.

In another work, Émile Durkheim theorized religion takes place when society divides the world into two domains: the sacred and the profane (Durkheim 1915). He defined religion as a “unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – belief and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them” (Durkheim 1912:21). According to Durkheim’s definition, beliefs, rituals, and church were imperative to the formation of religion (Ritzer and Stepnisky 2018). Durkheim argued that these elements were less complicated and more focal in primitive religions, which is where his research focused (Ritzer and Stepnisky 2018). Through these mechanisms, Durkheim claimed that religion controls undesirable behavior.

Writings by Weber and Durkheim elicited two frameworks for studying religion: how religion promotes *desirable* behaviors and how religion controls *undesirable* behavior. These frameworks prompted academic work examining the impact of religion on behavior. For example, findings from Salgado which reviewed empirical studies on the impact of religion, showed that individuals who practice religion experience a greater sense of purpose, psychological well-being, quality of life, and self-esteem (2014).

Having established that religion influences people, scholars investigated how religion acts as a control mechanism in society for crime (Bair and Wright 2001). Literature, in this area, has been highly contested (Adamczyk, Freilich, and Kim 2017, Bair and Wright 2001, Johnson and Jang 2010). For decades, researchers have debated what element of religion influences behavior: church attendance, belief, bonds, membership, threats of hellfire, or promises of paradise (Burkett and White 1974; Cochran, Wood, and Arneklev 1994; Corcoran, Pettinicchio, and Robbins 2017; Cretacci 2003; Evans, Cullen, Dunaway, and Burton Jr. 1995; Higgins and Albretch 1976; Hirschi and Stark 1969; Johnson, Jang, Larson, and Li 2001; Stark, Kent, and Doyle 1982; Sumter, Wood, Whitaker, and Berger-Hill 2018; Ross 1994). Nevertheless, the underlying principle of this research remains constant: religion might explain why people do not commit crimes.

Hundreds of years later, the question continues to be debated. Does the religion control crime? To answer this question, it is important to look whether people still believe in religion. The Pew Center published findings examining Americans' belief in God that found the American public belief in God decreased four percentage points from 92% in 2007 to 89% in 2014 (Pew Research Center 2015). Despite this slight drop, the percentage of Americans who believe in God decreased more precipitously for Millennials. "Only about half of Millennials say

they believe in God with absolute certainty” (Pew Research Center 2015). These statistics reveal that perhaps with the advent of the 21st century, America is becoming more secular. If religion’s influence is fading along with its ability to control crime, how will public safety be impacted?

These statistics are accompanied by a litany of research literature examining the relationship between religion and crime. After a period of dwindling research effort, academic work investigating the relationship between religion and crime reemerged, due in part, to the publication of Hirschi and Stark’s article in 1969 (Ross 1994, Johnson and Jang 2010). The reemergence of research, however, produced mixed results (Adamczyk et al. 2017; Burkett and White 1974; Cochran et al. 1994; Corcoran et al. 2017; Cretacci 2003; Evans et al. 1995; Higgins and Albretch 1976; Hirschi and Stark 1969; Johnson et al. 2001; Stark et al. 1982; Sumter et al. 2018; Ross 1994).

In their article, *Hellfire and Delinquency*, Hirschi and Stark (1969) recognized that religious sanctioning systems, historically, helped maintain conformity (Hirschi and Stark 1969). The purpose of their research was to investigate the reliability of this principle in contemporary society. Hirschi and Stark concluded that “the church is irrelevant to delinquency” (Hirschi and Stark 1969:212-213).

Many scholars refuted Hirschi and Stark’s conclusions (Adamczyk et al. 2017). Critics pointed to issues with the operationalization of crime/delinquency, lack of secular control variables, and lack of ecological measures (Burkett and White 1974, Evans et al. 1995, Higgins and Albretch 1976). The push to provide a counterargument to Hirschi and Stark’s findings fueled subsequent studies that reported a variety of results. Available research suggests three reasons for conflicting results regarding the relationship between religion and crime.

First, Burkett and White (1974) argued that results vary due to what crime is being tested. They found that church attendance maintained a strong negative relationship to alcohol and marijuana use but not for personal or property crimes. Cochran et al. (1994) and Corcoran et al. (2017) found similar results.

Second, Evans et al. (1995) argued results vary due to the presence, or lack thereof, of secular controls in studies. Ross (1994) revealed that religious measures were not significant among secular controls, Johnson et al. (2001) revealed that religion acts indirectly through secular controls to control crime, and Cretacci (2017) found no clear relationship between religion and crime amid secular controls.

Third, Higgins and Albretch (1976) argued that results vary due to the religious climate of the community where the study took place. Findings from Stark et al. (1982) and Evans et al. (1995) support this idea.

More recently, Sumter et al. (2018) suggested other shortcomings in the literature. These include inconsistent measures of religion that fail to account for the diverse multitude of religious, a lack of research at the macro-level, the absence of conceptualization and operationalization of self-control and social control influences, and a lack of longitudinal studies (Sumter et al. 2018).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of religion on crime in Hampton Roads Virginia. This study was guided by four questions. They are as follows.

1. Does commitment to attending public church services affect the relationship between religion and crime?

2. Does involvement in individual prayer/meditation outside of services affect the relationship between religion and crime?
3. Does an individual's belief that they are a religious person affect the relationship between religion and crime?
4. Does attachment to a specific religious denomination affect the relationship between religion and crime?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research adds to the current literature by explaining the relationship between religion and crime in the Hampton Roads area in Virginia. A review of this literature showed that this area in Virginia has not yet been tested. Hampton Roads is a unique setting for this research because it consists of seven different cities (Hampton, Chesapeake, Norfolk, Suffolk, Newport News, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach) each with its own demographic. The variety of experiences and circumstances in the landscape of Hampton Roads not only provides a well diverse sample, but also allows this research to examine the religion and crime relationship across different types of communities using the same dataset. Additionally, this research will better inform practitioners about the effects of religion on crime in Hampton Roads which could be used in crime control efforts.

The current study also adds to the literature regarding the operationalization of social bond theory in religion and crime studies. Adamczyk et al. found that social control theory tended to be the most used theoretical perspective in religion and crime research (2017). Despite this, the literature reviewed in this study showed that studies rarely examine all four elements of social bond theory concurrently.

This research examined the relationship between religion and crime using separate and distinct measures for each element of social bond theory: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. By examining all four elements simultaneously, this research shows which religious social bond element influences crime the most in the Hampton Roads area.

The next chapter reviews the research literature examining the relationship between religion and crime, as well as, provides an overview of the theoretical framework guiding the current study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents research examining the relationship between religion and crime. The chapter begins with a discussion of the research addressing the non-victim crime thesis, the secular control thesis, and the moral community thesis. Next is a discussion of social bond theory, the theoretical perspective used in the study. Afterward, the chapter offers a summary and critique of the literature, along with a presentation of the research questions guiding the present study. The chapter ends with an overview for the next chapter.

NON-VICTIM

Research presented in this section discusses the non-victim theme that emerged from the research examining the relationship between religion and crime. Prior research indicates that results vary in the religion and crime relationship depending on the type of crime and how it is measured (Burkett and White 1974, Cochran et al. 1994, and Corcoran et al. 2017).

Burkett and White (1974) examined the effects of religion on alcohol and marijuana use amongst 434 male and 421 female high school seniors in the Pacific Northwest. Students were asked to respond to items targeting not only offenses against persons and property but also alcohol and marijuana use. Using church attendance to measure religiosity, Burkett and White revealed that church attendance did not influence offenses against persons and property; however, they found that church attendance had a relatively strong negative relationship with alcohol and marijuana use (1974) In other words, the more these high school seniors attended church the less likely they used alcohol and/or marijuana.

Cochran, Wood, and Arneklev's (1994) results mirrored Burkett and White (1974). Cochran et al. tested the religion and crime relationship controlling for arousal and general social control theory elements. They used self-report data from approximately 1,600 high school students, male and female, aged 15 to 21 years old from Oklahoma. Their results showed religion was not significant regarding “assault, theft, vandalism, illicit drug use, and truancy;” however, religion did maintain significant negative effects on “alcohol and tobacco use after controls for arousal and social control have been added to the model” (1994:114).

In another study, Corcoran, Pettinicchio, and Robbins (2017) took the non-victim thesis one step further. Corcoran et al. examined the relationship between religiosity and violent crime rates on an international scale using data from a Gallup World Poll (GWP) dated 2009-2012 that included measures for religious intensity, religious belief, and violent crime rates for 100 countries from all continents except Antarctica. The sample consisted of 1,000 individuals from each country tested, aged 15 years and older while controlling for males between 15 and 24 years old, inequality, poverty, and lack of guardianship (Corcoran et al. 2017). Their study elicited three findings: (1) religion was not significantly associated with intentional homicide, (2) religion was positively and significantly associated with assault, and (3) belief in an active God, explicitly, was negatively and significantly associated with assault and had a stronger effect than other structural variables (Corcoran et al. 2017). Corcoran et al. concluded that “religion may both decrease *and* increase crime depending on how it is measured” (2017:9). The researchers concluded that the religion and crime relationship is not static across all types of crime.

SECULAR CONTROLS

Research presented in this section discusses the thesis of the secular control that emerged from the research examining the relationship between religion and crime.

In their article, *Hellfire and Delinquency*, Hirschi and Stark recognized that religious sanctioning systems, at one time in history, helped maintain conformity (1969). However, the purpose of their research was to investigate the reliability of this principle in contemporary society. In 1969, Hirschi and Stark used school and police records in conjunction with 4,077 completed questionnaires filled out by public high school students from Western Contra Costa County, California. The sample varied by race, sex, school, and grade (Hirschi and Stark 1969).

The questionnaires included measures for delinquency, religiosity, morality, worldly authority (respect for the law and the police), and supernatural sanctions. Delinquency was measured by six questions representative of the following delinquent acts: “petty and grand larceny, auto theft, vandalism, and assault (Hirschi and Stark 1969:204). Religiosity was measured exclusively by church attendance. Morality was measured by student responses when asked if they agreed or disagreed with these two statements: “To get ahead, you have to do some things that are not right” and “suckers deserve to be taken advantage of” (Hirschi and Stark 1969:205). Lastly, worldly authority was measured by student responses when asked if they agreed or disagreed with these two statements: “it is all right to get around the law if you can get away with it” and “I have a lot of respect for the (local) police” (1969:206).

The results of these tests suggested that belief in supernatural sanctions was the only variable that was affected by church attendance; however, it was not significantly related to delinquency. Secular controls like morality and respect for the law/police subdued delinquency but was not influenced by religion. In short, there was no significant relationship between

religion and delinquency. Thus, Hirschi and Stark resolved that religion did not decrease crime (1969).

Findings from Ross (1994), which examined 271 undergraduate students at Seton Hall University, a Catholic University, in New Jersey, revealed that neither total religiosity nor frequency religiosity to be significant inhibitors of delinquency amid secular controls. The sample consisted of participants aged 17 to 23 years old, predominantly white, Catholic, freshmen students from middle-income households whose parents are mostly college-educated (Ross 1994). Ross used two measures of religiosity: total religiosity and frequency religiosity. The total religiosity variable constituted a multidimensional measure and was comprised of five dimensions of religiosity: experiential, ideological, ritualistic, intellectual, and consequential. The frequency religiosity variable constituted a unidimensional measure of religiosity and was measured by church attendance. Delinquency was measured by self-reported delinquency including “attacks against persons, vandalism, and theft” (Ross 1994:74). Ross concluded that “the hypothesis that one’s level of religiosity is a significant independent variable among social control variables in explaining deviance” must be rejected (1994:79).

In another study, Cretacci (2003), using an Add Health dataset sample totaling 6,500 surveys completed by seventh through twelfth graders from across the United States, revealed that religion did not account for violence when other secular controls were introduced (2003). The sample was stratified across region, urbanity, and racial makeup. The purpose of this research was to investigate whether social bond theory, including religion, impact violence across developmental stages (Cretacci 2003). Cretacci tested religious social bond variables (parental religious attachment, religious commitment, and religious beliefs) and secular influences (maternal attachment, school attachment, peer attachment, school commitment, family

commitment, peer commitment, and general belief) against violence across developmental stages. Cretacci found that for early adolescence (10-13 years old) only peer commitment was significant, for middle adolescents (14-16 years old) school attachment, general belief, social and peer commitment were significant, and for late adolescents (17-19 years old) school attachment and school commitment were significant. None of the religious social control variables managed to maintain significance in any development stage among secular controls.

To add to the literature on secular control thesis, Evans Cullen, Dunaway, and Burton Jr.'s (1995) findings measuring urban Midwesterners aged 18 or older revealed that religion had a significant negative effect on crime. The purpose of their research aimed to resolve the issues associated with the variation of results in prior research. Evans et al. (1995) measured religiosity in three ways: religious activity (church attendance, reading of religious materials, and listening to religious broadcasts), religious salience (the extent to which religious beliefs or a religious community have an impact or are used in daily behavior), and beliefs in supernatural sanctions (1995). Crime was measured by how often participants committed 43 diverse criminal acts over the past year. The negative relationship between religion and crime changed when Evans et al. controlled for secular constraints. When controlling for secular constraints, they showed that personal religiosity no longer influenced delinquency. Evans et al. also revealed that when controlling for both secular and ecological constraints religion no longer held a significant impact on crime.

Johnson et al.'s (2001) study analyzed "whether the effects of religiosity on delinquency are spurious or completely indirect via social bonding, social learning, and/or sociodemographic variables" (2001:22). In slight contrast to the previous literature regarding secular controls, Johnson et al. revealed, using a sample of 1,725 individuals aged 11 to 17 from the National

Youth Survey, that religion maintained significance among secular controls but did not act independently from them (2001). Unlike other research, Johnson et al. used latent variables over a longitudinal dataset. Their results showed “not only the significant effects of religiosity on delinquency independent of social bonding and social learning, as well as, sociodemographic variables, but also the effects were partly mediated by nonreligious variables of social control and socialization” (2001:22,39). Johnson et al. showed that religion acts through social control, rather than independently and directly, to control crime.

MORAL COMMUNITY

Research presented in this section discusses the moral community theme that emerged from the research examining the relationship between religion and crime. The moral community thesis asserts that the variation among results on the religion and crime relationship is caused by ecological factors.

Findings from Higgins and Albretch (1976) which examined the religiosity and delinquency of 1,383 tenth graders in Atlanta, showed that church attendance exhibited a moderately strong negative relationship between church attendance and delinquency (1976). These findings stand in stark opposition to the findings of the Hirschi and Stark (1969) done in California. Higgins and Albretch reported that “the region in which the data were collected may account for the differences in results” (1976:957). In this study, religiosity was measured by church attendance and delinquency was measured by 17 items that “ranged from ‘skipped school’ to ‘sold narcotics’” (Higgins and Albretch 1976:953).

Additional research examining the ecological thesis measures the religion and crime relationship evaluated the religious climate of communities. Initial findings from Stark, Kent,

and Doyle (1982) which used “church membership rates per thousand population for the major census regions” revealed that the West South-Central United States as having the highest participation in church, while the Pacific had the lowest (1982:8). To expand this point, Stark et al. examined church membership in two United States cities: Provo, Utah and Seattle, Washington. Provo was representative of a strong religious community. “The Provo-Orem metropolitan area stood first among American cities in terms of church membership, with a startling rate of 966 per 1,000” (Stark et al. 1982:9). Seattle was representative of a city with a weak religious climate. “Of 216 metropolitan areas for which we have rates, Seattle stands 211th in terms of church membership, with only 280 members per 1,000 population” (Stark et al. 1982:11). Stark et al. found a strong negative relationship existed in Provo between church attendance and delinquency, while a weak relationship existed in Seattle using the same factors. These findings suggest that the effects of religion on crime depends on the moral climate of the community being assessed (Stark et al. 1982).

These findings aid in understanding the difference between results by Hirschi and Stark (1969) which found no significant relationship between religion and crime in California, and Higgins and Albretch (1976) which found a significant relationship between religion and crime in Atlanta. According to Stark et al. (1982), the study conducted in California was done in the region of the United States that had the lowest church participation, and the study conducted in Atlanta was done in the region with higher church participation. Using similar research methods, the Hirschi and Stark (1969) and Higgins and Albretch (1976) studies found opposing results. The moral community thesis could explain this difference.

The final finding from Stark et al. (1982) focused on the relationship between individualistic religiosity and delinquency across the United States. Stark et al. measured tenth-

grade boys' religiosity and delinquency from 87 different high schools from across the country and found that "there are substantial correlations between religiousness and delinquency in the nation as a whole" (1982:15). Next, Stark et al. tested whether national results were influenced ecologically (1982:15). Stark et. al. revealed that "correlations between religiousness and delinquency will vary according to the moral climate of the communities in which they are examined" (1982:17). Stark et al. reported that individuals who live in religious communities are more likely to be religious and less likely to be delinquent, while individuals that live in secular communities, including devout citizens, are no less delinquent than the irreligious (1982). This finding implies that the religious climate of communities is important when researching the effects of religion on individuals' likelihood of deviant behavior.

Moreover, returning to, Evans et al. (1995) research of urban Midwesterners suggested that the religion and crime relationship is reduced to non-significance when secular constraints and ecological conditions are introduced. When the effects of religion were tested on crime controlling for secular constraints and ecological conditions, the results showed that religion no longer held a significant impact on crime (Evans et al. 1995). Evans et al. did not control for ecological conditions by itself, but the analysis is still noteworthy for the moral community thesis since it suggests that ecological conditions, in some part, inhibit the effect of religion on crime.

The three articles reviewed in this section lend to the moral community argument in which scholars claim that the impact of religion on crime is contingent upon the moral makeup of the community in which the study is conducted.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This section provides an overview of social control theory. The discussion begins with social process theories. Then, an overview of social control theory is presented. The section concludes with a more in depth look into Hirschi's social bond theory.

Social Process Theory

Instead of viewing criminality as a function of people's biology or psychology, social process theories view criminality as a function of people's interactions with various organizations, institutions, and processes in society (Akers and Sellers 2013). Social process theories work from the impetus that "criminals are made, not born" (Akers and Sellers 2013). Individuals learn criminal behavior through socialization with others. A variety of theories have been developed using this foundation. The mainstream social process theories are social learning, social control, and labeling theory (Akers and Sellers 2013).

First, social learning theory argues that criminal behavior is learned through interactions within intimate personal groups (Akers and Sellers 2013). Moreover, criminal behavior is learned when a person embraces more criminal definitions than anti-criminal definitions (Akers 2017). Second, social control theory states that we conform to societal norms that urge obedience to the law. Thus, criminal behavior emerges when people's bonds to society are weakened or broken (Hirschi 1969). Lastly, labeling theory contends that those "who are labeled deviant are likely to take on self-identity as a deviant and become more, rather than less, deviant than if they had not been so labeled" (Akers and Sellers 2013:158).

Social Control Theory

Unlike most criminological theories, social control theory answers the question why people do *not* commit crime (Akers and Sellers 2013). In other words, these theories study what

constrains people to conform to societal expectations, rather than what motivates them towards crime. Specifically, social control theory attempts to explain how social controls like family, school, the criminal justice system, and peer associations regulate criminal behavior.

Social control theory promotes the expectations of society while suppressing idiosyncrasies. Across control theories are the idea that conformity results from sufficient social constraints, and deviance results from insufficient constraints (Hirschi 1969). If members of society internalize norms, they are more likely to conform. If individuals do not internalize the norms of society then they do not care about societal expectations and are more likely to deviate (Hirschi 1969).

Early control theories included Reiss's and Nye's theories of internal and external controls (Akers and Sellers 2013). Reiss (1950) defined personal controls as "the ability of the individual" to adhere to norms, and social controls as "the ability of social groups" to instill adherence to norms (Reiss 1950:196). Reiss showed that a combination of personal and social control measures generated a more useful prediction of delinquent recidivism than social controls alone (Reiss 1950).

Nye expanded Reiss's research to include three categories of social control: direct control, indirect control, and internal control. Nye emphasized the role of family. He argued that the more indirect controls are met by the family the less likely delinquent behavior will result (Akers and Sellers 2013). Around the same time that Nye was constructing his control theory, Reckless proposed his theory called containment theory which argued that if pushes and pulls toward delinquency were not counteracted by inner and outer containment then delinquency would result (Akers and Sellers 2013).

Another social control theory was established by Sykes and Matza (1957) in which they argued that delinquents employ neutralization techniques that they think validate deviance. Sykes and Matza called these neutralization techniques rationalizations. They included denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of the victim, condemnation of the condemners, and appeal to higher loyalties (Sykes and Matza 1957).

The present study uses social bond theory to examine the influence of religion on crime; it is explored next.

Social Bond Theory

Social bond theory states that “individuals are predisposed to commit crime and that conventional bonds [attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief] prevent or reduce offending” (Schram and Tibbetts 2018:279). Social bond theory posits that social connections prevent people from committing crime; therefore, it provides an explanation as to why people do not break socially constructed laws.

Hirschi gathered various elements from previous control theories and combined them to make social bond theory (Akers and Sellers 2013). As a result, social bond theory consists of four elements: attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief. The stronger these elements are within the individual, the greater conformity and internalization of societal norms, and the less likely deviance will occur. The weaker these elements, the more likely deviance will occur.

Attachment to others is the “extent to which we have close affectional ties to others, admire them, and identify with them so that we care about their expectations” (Akers and Sellers 2013:117). Hirschi argues that the strength of the attachment is more important when assessing the tendency of this element to control one’s behavior than the character of the people to whom

one is attached (Akers and Sellers 2013). For the purposes of this paper, religious attachment refers to the denomination an individual's community is affiliated.

Involvement refers to "one's engrossment in conventional activities, such as studying, spending time with the family, and participation in extracurricular activities" (Akers and Sellers 2013:118). The more one is involved in extracurricular activities, the less time they have to pursue deviant acts. Individuals are restrained from deviance simply because they are too busy. For the purposes of this paper, religious involvement refers to how often an individual prays or meditates outside of religious services.

Commitment refers to "the extent to which individuals have built up an investment in conventionality or a 'stake in conformity' that would be jeopardized or lost by engaging in law violation or other forms of deviance" (Akers and Sellers 2013:118). Specifically, educational and occupational bonds build up commitment. The higher level of commitment to society an individual possesses, the greater risk of losing it if they violate norms (Akers and Sellers 2013). For the purposes of this paper, religious commitment refers to how often individuals attend public religious services.

Lastly, belief is "defined as the endorsement of general conventional values and norms, especially the beliefs that laws and society's rules, in general, are morally correct and should be obeyed" (Akers and Sellers 2013:119). Here belief refers to an individual's belief in the morality of conventional norms and laws are moral and whether should be followed. "The less a person believes he should obey the rules, the more likely he is to violate them" (Hirschi 1969:26). For the purposes of this paper, religious belief refers to the extent an individual considers themselves a religious person.

Overall the application of Hirschi's social bond theory implies that if an individual possesses strong bonds to parents, adults, school, peers, etc. they are more controlled and less likely to participate in wrongdoing. The application of social bond theory in the present study involves examining if there is a relationship between all four measures commitment, involvement, belief, and attachment and total crime. Each of these four elements serves as the foundation for the research questions presented at the end of this chapter.

SUMMARY

Based on the research presented in this review, three themes emerged from the literature examining the relationship between religion and crime: the non-victim thesis, the moral community thesis, and the secular controls thesis.

Burkett and White (1974) revealed the first thesis in the literature. Research literature examining non-victim crimes showed that religiosity is significant when looking at marijuana, alcohol, and tobacco use, but not more serious, victim crimes (Burkett and White 1974, Cochran et al. 1994). Research by Corcoran et al. also addressed how the operationalization of crime can increase or decrease the impact of religion.

The second thesis elicited from the literature was secular controls. This thesis asserted that secular controls interfere in the religion and crime relationship. Religion's influence was weakened or broke when secular controls are added to the analysis. Research revealed that the relationship between religion and crime was either weakened or broken when secular constraints were introduced.

Research by Higgins and Albretch (1976) revealed the final thesis in the literature, the moral community thesis. Studies showed that communities with strong religious climates

resulted in less delinquency and communities with weak religious climates results in more delinquency; therefore, the setting of research can influence results.

The theses in the religion and crime literature presented in this chapter argued that the variations historically seen in religion and crime studies are influenced by what type of crime is researched, where the sample is taken, and the presence of secular control measures.

CRITIQUE OF THE LITERATURE

Two common issues throughout the literature deal with the operationalization of the term religiosity and the majority of the studies examining the relationship between religion and crime concentrated on juveniles.

There has yet to be consensus on how to measure religion. Some scholars used unidimensional measures of religiosity, while others used multidimensional measures. For example, scholars vacillate between operationalizing religiosity by religious attendance, scripture study, subjective religiosity, religious commitment, religious beliefs, and religious experience (Johnson and Jang 2010). The inconsistent operationalization of religiosity is problematic because it means scholars are measuring different things jeopardizing the reliability and validity of results across studies. The objective of this research is to build on previous knowledge, and to do so, scholarly work and the terms used therein must be comparable with each other.

A limitation more specific to this literature was that most of the work reviewed analyzed the relationship between juvenile religiosity and crime instead of the relationship between adult religiosity and crime. This limits the explanatory power of the religion and crime relationship. A more comprehensive look at the relationship that extends into adulthood or across the life course is needed.

Considering the limitations identified, the present study attempted to contribute to this literature in three ways. First, I operationalized religion based on all four elements of Hirschi's social bonding theory. Second, I looked at the relationship between adult religiosity and crime. The research questions listed below guided this study.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the literature presented in the preceding sections, several research questions are put forward. They are as follows:

1. Does commitment to attending public church services affect the relationship between religion and crime?
2. Does involvement in individual prayer/meditation outside of services affect the relationship between religion and crime?
3. Does an individual's belief that they are a religious person affect the relationship between religion and crime?
4. Does attachment to a specific religious denomination affect the relationship between religion and crime?

This chapter provided an overview of the work that examined the religion and crime relationship. Next, the social bond theoretical perspective used in the current study was reviewed. Limitations of previous work and research questions guiding the current study were offered. The next chapter presents the research methodology that was completed for the current study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology that was used to explore the religion and crime relationship. The chapter begins with a discussion about the research design, followed by a presentation of the research questions. Next, the data source is reviewed, followed by a discussion of the variables in the study, while the chapter concludes with a discussion of the data analyses employed.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research consisted of a cross-sectional research design exploring the influence of religion on crime rates. The unit of analysis was the individual. The sample consisted of 681 respondents in the Hampton Roads area in Virginia that includes the following cities: Chesapeake, Hampton, Norfolk, Newport News, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach. The majority of those surveyed were from Virginia Beach (30.4%), followed by Chesapeake (17.7%), Newport News (14.7%), Norfolk (11.5%), Portsmouth (10.2%), Hampton (9.3%), and Suffolk (6.2%). The sample included a gender distribution in which males accounted for 52 percent of the respondents and females accounted for 48 percent. Additionally, 53 percent of the respondents described their race/ethnicity as white. The remaining 46.3 percent of respondents within the study described their race/ethnicity as black /African American (35.2%) or other (11.1%). The average age of the sample was 44 years of age. Most respondents aged 18 to 24 were black (54.7%) and male (66.4%).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the literature presented in the preceding chapter, several research questions are put forward. They are as follows.

1. Does commitment to attending public church services affect the relationship between religion and crime?
2. Does involvement in individual prayer/meditation outside of services affect the relationship between religion and crime?
3. Does an individual's belief that they are a religious person affect the relationship between religion and crime?
4. Does attachment to a specific religious denomination affect the relationship between religion and crime?

DATA SOURCE

The data for this research study was taken from a larger survey study called the Life in Hampton Roads (LIHR) Survey by the Social Science and Research Center (SSRC) at Old Dominion University (ODU) designed to gauge residents' satisfaction of life in Hampton Roads. More specifically, the study sought to "determine attitudes and perceptions of citizens regarding local issues, economics, government, as well as other key issues" (Social Science Research Center 2010). To gather items for the survey, Dr. Xiushi Yang, Director of SSRC, sent an email to ODU faculty members inviting them to submit questions of interest for the survey. The list of collected questions was narrowed down by SSRC staff. Of the 206 questions submitted, 106 made it to the final questionnaire. The questions were exhaustive; they ask about media and news consumption, arts, culture, environmental issues, housing, education, healthcare,

spirituality/religiosity, neighborhood crime, attitudes toward law enforcement, military life, and basic socio-demographic information (Social Science Research Center 2010).

The study was conducted from May 26, 2010, to July 8, 2010. Over this period, a total of 12 interviewers used telephone numbers generated by a random digit dial system to interview residents of the Hampton Roads area Monday through Friday mostly during evening hours and sometimes during the day. The interviewers input participants' responses in a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system.

A total of 681 completed surveys were collected. The majority of those surveyed were from Virginia Beach (30.4%), followed by Chesapeake (17.7%), Newport News (14.7%), Norfolk (11.5%), Portsmouth (10.2%), Hampton (9.3%), and Suffolk (6.2%). Demographically, the respondents were nearly evenly split between genders in which males accounted for 52 percent of the respondents and females accounted for 48 percent. Additionally, demographics for the total population identified the following races/ethnicities: White (53%); Black (35.2%); Hispanic or Latino (3.9%); American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.5%); Asian (0.9%); Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.2%); multiracial (3.3%); and other (2.3%). Race/ethnicity categories that were not white and black were collapsed into one category labeled *other* constituting 11.1 percent of the sample. In terms of age, the average age of the sample is 44. For male respondents, approximately 76.4 percent of male respondents were aged 18 to 54. For female respondents, approximately 86.3 percent of female respondents were aged 24 to 64. The marital statuses of respondents in the study revealed that the majority of respondents were married (56.2%). The next highest category regarding marital statuses was single, not living with a partner, making up 23.8 percent of the sample. Additionally, 9 percent of the respondents were divorced, and another 5.3 percent were widowed. The highest

concentration of respondents (23%) made a yearly income of anywhere between \$40,000 and \$70,000. The second highest income bracket followed close behind the highest income bracket which consisted of 22.6 percent with respondents earning anywhere between \$10,000 and \$40,000. For religion, approximately 28 percent of respondents indicated Baptist as their religious preference. This was followed by 24 percent of respondents who identified as other and 14.4 percent of the sample that declared Catholic religious affiliation. Respondents aged 25 to 34 constituted the largest percentage (31%) of people that selected other as their religious affiliation.

VARIABLES IN THE STUDY

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable for this study was crime rates. As an interval variable, the dependent variable will be operationalized using the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Report data based on crime statistics supplied by each city in Hampton Roads for 2010. The measure includes both violent and property calculated as a raw number.

Independent Variables

The independent variable, religion, was constructed using the four theoretical concepts of social bond theory. These theoretical concepts included attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief. In order to create more consistent measures, commitment, involvement, and belief were recoded to reflect more religiosity with higher scores.

The theoretical construct commitment measured how often individuals attend public religious services. Commitment was measured using responses from respondents to the question "How often do you attend public religious/spiritual services (in small or larger groups)?" and

coded as 8=more than once a day, 7=once a day, 6=a few times a week, 5=once a week, 4=a few times a month, 3=once a month, 2=less than once a month, and 1=never.

The theoretical construct involvement measured how involved the respondents were in prayer/mediation outside of formal religious services or activities. Involvement was measured using responses from respondents to the question “How often do you engage in private prayer and/or mediate other than during religious/spiritual services with other people?” and coded as 8=more than once a day, 7=once a day, 6=a few times a week, 5=once a week, 4=a few times a month, 3=once a month, 2=less than once a month, and 1=never.

The theoretical construct belief measured the extent an individual considers themselves a religious person. Belief was measured using responses from respondents to the question “To what extent do you consider yourself a religious and/or spiritual person? Are you...” and coded as 6=very religious but not spiritual, 5=moderately religious and somewhat spiritual, 4=equally religious and spiritual, 3=moderately spiritual and somewhat religious, 2=very spiritual but not religious, and 1=Not religious at all and not spiritual at all.

The theoretical construct attachment measured how attached the respondents were to church. Attachment was measured using responses from respondents to the question “To what denomination or group is your congregation or local faith community affiliated?” and coded as 1=Baptist, 2=Catholic, 3=Jewish, 4=Methodist/United Methodist, 5=Presbyterian, 6=Episcopal, 7=Muslim/Moslem, 8=Jehovah’s Witness, 9=Buddhist, 10=African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E), 11=Lutheran, 12=UCC/Reformed, 13=Pentecostal, 14=Independent, 15=Seventh Day Adventist, 16=Mormon, 17=Other.

Control Variables

The control variables in this study included age, race, marital status, employment, education, gender, and income. All the control variables in this study were recoded into dichotomous variables. Age was measured as a numerical value anywhere from 18 to 99 years old. Age was dichotomized into ages 18 to 44 coded as 0 and respondents aged 45 to 99 coded as 1. Employment was measured by whether the respondent was employed or not. Respondents who answered that they were unemployed were coded 0 and those who answered that they were employed were coded 1. Education was measured by the highest level of school respondents had completed categorized by the following: 1=some grade school, 2=some high school, 3=high school diploma/GED, 4=complete trade/professional school, 5=some college, 6=associate's degree, 7=bachelor's degree, 8=graduate degree, 9=other. Education was dichotomized into no college coded as 0 and some college coded as 1. Gender was measured by the binary male and female distinctions. Females were coded as 1 and males were coded as 0. Race was measured by asking how the participants would describe their race or ethnicity. Respondents were only allowed to select one of the following: 1=white, 2=black or African American, 3=Hispanic or Latino, 4=American Indian or Alaskan Native, 5=Asian, 6=Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 7=Multiracial, 8=other. Race was dichotomized into non-white coded as 0 and white coded as 1. Respondents were given the following options regarding marital status: 1=single, not living with a partner, 2=single, living with a partner, 3=married, 4=divorced/ separated, 5=widowed, 6=don't know. 7= more than \$60,000 to \$70,000, 8= more than \$70,000 to \$80,000, 9= more than \$80,000 to \$90,000, 10= more than \$90,000 to \$100,000, and 11= more than \$100,000. Income was dichotomized into \$0 to \$50,000 coded as 0 and more than \$50,000 and higher coded as 1.

Table 1. Variables in the Study

DEPENDENT	OPERATIONALIZATION	CODING
Total Crime	Raw number	Interval
INDEPENDENT	OPERATIONALIZATION	CODING
ATTACHMENT	To what denomination or group is your congregation or local faith community affiliated?	1=Baptist, 2=Catholic, 3=Jewish 4=Methodist/United Methodist, 5=Presbyterian, 6=Episcopal, 7=Muslim/Moslem, 8=Jehovah's Witness, 9=Buddhist, 10=African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E), 11=Lutheran, 13=Pentecostal, 14=Independent, 15=Seventh Day Adventist, 16=Mormon, 17=Other
INVOLVEMENT	How often do you engage in private prayer and/or mediate other than during religious/spiritual services with other people?	8=more than once a day, 7=once a day, 6=a few times a week, 5=once a week, 4=a few times a month, 3=once a month, 2=less than once a month, 1=never
COMMITMENT	How often do you attend public religious/spiritual services (in small or larger groups)?	8=more than once a day, 7=once a day, 6=a few times a week, 5=once a week, 4=a few times a month, 3=once a month, 2=less than once a month, 1=never
BELIEF	To what extent do you consider yourself a religious and/or spiritual person? Are you...	6=very religious but not spiritual, 5=moderately religious and somewhat spiritual, 4=equally religious and spiritual, 3=moderately spiritual and somewhat religious, 2=very spiritual but not religious, 1=Not religious at all and not spiritual at all
CONTROLS	OPERATIONALIZATION	CODING
<i>Employment</i>	Are you employed?	0 = no, 1 = yes
<i>Education</i>	What is the highest level of school you have completed?	0 = no college, 1 = some college
<i>Age</i>	What is your age?	0 = ages 18 – 44, 1 = ages 45 to 99
<i>Race</i>	How would describe your race or ethnicity?	0=non-white, 1=white
<i>Marital Status</i>	What is your marital status?	0=not married, 1=married
<i>Gender</i>	I need to confirm your gender, you are...	0=male, 1=female
<i>Income</i>	What was your family household income last year?	0=\$0 to \$50,000, 1 = more than \$50,000 and higher

Marital status was dichotomized into not married coded as 0 and married coded as 1.

Finally, income was measured by the participants family household income the previous year:

1=less than \$10,000, 2=more than \$10,000 to \$20,000, 3=more than \$20,000 to \$30,000, 4=more than \$30,000 to \$40,000, 5= more than \$40,000 to \$50,000, 6= more than \$50,000 to \$60,000,

DATA ANALYSIS

Several statistical techniques were utilized in this study to provide descriptive, bivariate, and multivariate analyses.

Descriptive Statistics

The measure of central tendency, the mean, the measure of dispersion, and the standard deviation were the most appropriate statistics for interval level variables (Sweet and Grace-Martin 2008).

Bivariate Analysis

For bivariate analysis, Pearson's correlation coefficient, which summarizes the linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, was the statistical technique used in this study (Sweet and Grace-Martin 2008). The Pearson's correlation coefficient illustrates a statistical technique appropriate for variables measured at the internal level (Sweet and Grace-Martin 2008). Given that the dependent variable, crime rates, is an interval variable this statistical technique will be the most appropriate. Pearson's correlation coefficient were used to measure the strength between religion and crime (Sweet and Grace-Martin 2008).

One bivariate correlation matrix was produced using Pearson's correlation coefficient in this study. The model examined the relationship between each, separate social bond element, attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief, and crime rates.

Multivariate Analysis

For multivariate analysis, multiple linear regression was used to examine the relationship between the dependent variable, the independent variables, and the control variables. This statistical technique is the most appropriate because the dependent variable is interval. Furthermore, multiple linear regression accounts for the effects of each independent variable on the dependent variable while holding all other variables constant, thus adjusting for the potential confounding effects of other variables in the analysis (Sweet and Grace-Martin 2008).

Two separate models were used in this analysis. The first model examined the dependent variable, crime rates, against the four independent variables associated with social bond including attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief. The second model examined the dependent variable, crime rates, the four independent variables including attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief, and the control variables.

Significance Level

Based on prior research literature, the p-value for this study was 0.05, which will reveal results that only a 5 in 100 chance that a pattern this strong would appear by chance (Sweet and Grace-Martin 2008).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Several limitations are present in this study. First, the study utilized secondary data that examined the life of Hampton Roads residents, not exclusively the religion-crime relationship.

As such, the ability of this study to examine the relationship between religion and crime was hindered. A second limitation involved the cross-sectional design, in which, only the year 2010 was examined, reducing the reliability of the study. The last limitation was that in using a secondary data source, the operationalization of theoretical constructs was difficult to accurately capture.

This chapter presented the research design, research questions, the data source, the variables in the study, the data analysis, and the limitations of the study. The next chapter presents the findings for this research study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of this research design. It begins with the presentation of the descriptive analysis. Next, the results of the bivariate analysis are presented. The chapter ends with the presentation of the multivariate analyses.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

This section presents the results of the descriptive statistics conducted for this study. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the dependent, independent, and control variables. The dependent variable is presented first, followed by the independent and control variables.

Total crime consisted of 2,313 responses. The reported minimum amount of crime through the seven cities was 4,645 and the maximum was 29,174. The disparity between the minimum and maximum is large suggesting that crime occurs at very different frequencies throughout the seven cities of Hampton Roads. The mean for this item was 19902.76 (s.d. = 7981.19) indicating that crime collectively occurs at a high rate for the Hampton Roads area.

Commitment, involvement, and belief were recorded to indicate greater religiosity. For these items, the higher the score, the more religious participants were. Commitment consisted of 2,283 responses. The reported range was 7 with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 8. The mode for commitment was 5 which indicates most respondents attended public religious/spiritual service once a week. Involvement consisted of 2,285 responses. The reported range was 7 with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 8. The mode for involvement was 7 which indicates most

respondents engaged in private prayer and/or mediate other than during religious/spiritual services with other people once a day.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
TOTAL CRIME	2313	24529	4645	29174		19902.76	7981.19
COMMITMENT	2283	7.00	1.00	8.00	5.0		
INVOLVEMENT	2285	7.00	1.00	8.00	7.0		
BELIEF	2211	5.00	1.00	6.00	4.0		
ATTACHMENT	2218	17	1.00	18.00	1.0		
EMPLOYMENT	2312	1.00	.00	1.00	1.0		
EDUCATION	2311	1.00	.00	1.00	1.0		
AGE	2313	1.00	.00	1.00	0.0		
RACE	2299	1.00	.00	1.00	1.0		
MARITAL STATUS	2309	1.00	.00	1.00	1.0		
GENDER	2313	1.00	.00	1.00	1.0		
INCOME	1945	1.00	.00	1.00	1.0		

Belief consisted of 2211 responses. The reported range was 5 with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 6. The mode for belief was 4 which indicates most respondents consider themselves equally religious and spiritual. Attachment consisted of 2218 responses. The reported range was 17 with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 18. The mode for attachment was 1 which indicates most respondents affiliated with Baptism.

Finally, Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the control variables in this study to include: employment, education, age, race, marital status, gender, and income. Employment consisted of 2312 responses and had a range of 1. The mode for employment was 1 indicating that most respondents were employed. Education consisted of 2311 responses and had a range of 1. The mode for education was 1 indicating that most respondents had some college experience. Age consisted of 2313 responses and had a range of 1. The mode for age was 1 indicating that most respondents were aged 18 to 44. Race consisted of 2,299 responses and had a range of 1. The mode for race was 1 indicating that most respondents were white. Marital status consisted of 2309 responses and had a range of 1. The mode for marital status was 1 indicating that most respondents were married. Gender consisted of 2313 responses and had a range of 1. Income consisted of 1945 responses and had a range of 1. The mode for gender was 1 indicating that most respondents were female.

Overall, the descriptive statistics indicate that total crime is varied greatly throughout the seven cities of Hampton Roads, but overall the crime occurred at a high rate for the Hampton Roads area in 2010. The descriptive statistics for the independent variables indicate that most respondents attended public service once a week, prayed once a day, considered themselves equally religious and spiritual, and affiliated with Baptism. Lastly, the descriptive statistics for the control variables indicate that most respondents had a family household income more than \$50,000, were aged 18 to 44, were married, white, female, have completed some college, and were employed.

BIVARIATE ANALYSIS

This section presents the results of the bivariate analysis conducted for this study. Table 3 shows the bivariate analysis between the independent variables and the dependent variable, total crime, using Pearson's R correlation. Correlations test the strength of linear relationship between two variables (Sweet and Grace-Martin 2008). In this report, it was used to test the linear relationship of the independent variables and total crime.

In Table 3, the results show that only commitment was statistically significant at the bivariate level ($r = .043^*$, $n = 2283$, $p = 0.041$). Involvement, belief, and attachment were not significant against total crime. The correlation between involvement and total crime was not significant ($r = .039$, $n = 2285$, $p = 0.062$). The correlation between belief and total crime was not significant ($r = .008$, $n = 2211$, $p = 0.699$). Lastly, the correlation between belief and total crime was not significant ($r = .021$, $n = 2218$, $p = 0.341$).

The correlation between commitment and total crime revealed a statistically significant positive correlation. This indicates that the more participants attend public religious/spiritual services, the more likely they are to commit crime.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
(1) TOTAL CRIME	Pearson Correlation	1											
	Sig. (2-tailed)												
(2) COMMITMENT	Pearson Correlation	.043*	1										
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.041											
(3) INVOLVEMENT	Pearson Correlation	.039	.427**	1									
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.062	.000										
(4) BELIEF	Pearson Correlation	.008	.257**	.254**	1								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.699	.000	.000									
(5) ATTACHMENT	Pearson Correlation	.021	-.069**	-.046*	-.249**	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.314	.001	.029	.000								
(6) EMPLOYMENT	Pearson Correlation	.029	-.045*	-.086**	-.039	.048*	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.157	.033	.000	.070	.025							
(7) EDUCATION	Pearson Correlation	.095**	.048*	.174**	.043*	.025	.179**	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.021	.000	.042	.247	.000						
(8) AGE	Pearson Correlation	-.059**	.076**	.062**	.073**	-.132**	-.169**	-.031	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.000	.003	.001	.000	.000	.132					
(9) RACE	Pearson Correlation	.027	-.131**	-.016	-.096**	.056**	.081**	.163**	.215**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.189	.000	.441	.000	.008	.000	.000	.000				
(10) MARITAL STATUS	Pearson Correlation	.027	-.002	.015	.035	-.025	.125**	.171**	.100**	.250**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.193	.912	.462	.101	.244	.000	.000	.000	.000			
(11) GENDER	Pearson Correlation	.042*	.003	.146**	.057**	-.065**	-.071**	.079**	.019	-.067**	-.037	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.045	.893	.000	.007	.002	.001	.000	.357	.001	.077		
(12) INCOME	Pearson Correlation	.002	-.106**	-.038	.043	-.056*	.244**	.175**	.024	.284**	.437**	-.090**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.915	.000	.099	.062	.015	.000	.000	.284	.000	.000	.000	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

This section of the report shows the results of two multivariate models. The first model includes the independent variables (commitment, involvement, belief, and attachment) and the dependent variable (total crime in the Hampton Roads area). The second model includes the independent variables (commitment, involvement, belief, and attachment), the dependent variable (total crime in the Hampton Roads area), and the control variables (employment, education, age, race, marital status, gender, and income). Table 3 presents the results from the first multivariate model and the second multivariate model. First, the results from Model 1 are examined. Then, the results from Model 2 are examined.

Table 4 shows the results from the multivariate analysis separated into two models. Model 1 regressed the independent variables (commitment, involvement, belief, and attachment) against the dependent variable (total crime in the Hampton Roads area). Model 1 was not statistically significant ($F = 2.92$, w/ 4 d.f.) explaining approximately 0.4% of the variance in total crime. When regressing the independent variables against the dependent variable, none of the independent variables were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$): commitment (0.176), involvement (0.092), belief (0.622), and attachment (0.069). Whereas commitment was significant at the bivariate level, it was cancelled out at the multivariate level.

Model 2 regressed the independent variables (commitment, involvement, belief, and attachment), the dependent variable (total crime in the Hampton Roads area), and the control variables (employment, education, age, race, marital status, gender, and income).

Model 2 was statistically significant ($F = 3.623$, w/ 11 d.f.) explaining 1.6% of the variance in total crime. None of the independent variables were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$): commitment (0.212), involvement (0.943), belief (0.251), and attachment (0.064). As it relates to

control variables, only education and age were significant. Education and age were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$): education (0.000) and age (0.025). Marital status, gender, and income were not statistically significant ($p < 0.05$): marital status (.124), gender (.101), and income (.615).

Table 4. Multivariate Analysis

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Model 1 (n=2123)</i>	<i>Model 2 (n=1829)</i>
COMMITMENT	.033 (.176)	.033 (.212)
INVOLVEMENT	.041 (.092)	.071 (.943)
BELIEF	.012 (.622)	.030 (.251)
ATTACHMENT	.041 (.069)	.046 (.064)
EMPLOYMENT		-.015 (.549)
EDUCATION		.094† (.000)
AGE		-.055* (.025)
RACE		.030 (.241)
MARITAL STATUS		.040 (.124)
GENDER		.039 (.101)
INCOME		-.014 (.615)
Adjusted R squared	.005	.021

a. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, † $p < 0.001$

The next chapter presents discussion, conclusions, limitations of the current research and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents discussion, conclusions, limitations of the current research and recommendations for future research. The purpose of this study was to add to the current literature by examining the relationship between religion and crime in the Hampton Roads, an area in Virginia. In doing so, Hirschi's social bond theory was used to guide this research. Several statistical techniques were used to examine the relationship between religion and crime at the univariate, bivariate and multivariate levels. Next, a discussion of the results is presented.

Results from the bivariate analysis suggest that only commitment or church attendance was significant at the bivariate level. Consistent with research by Hirschi and Stark (1969) that revealed church attendance did not decrease delinquency, this research found that church attendance did not decrease crime (Hirschi and Stark 1969). In fact, the current findings showing that church attendance increases crime which is not as surprising when looking at Hirschi and Stark's (1969) conclusion that church attendance does not necessarily promote morality or respect for the law and police. However, a caveat to this discussion is that there were some differences in the methodologies used by Hirschi and Stark (1969) and the current study. First, Hirschi and Stark sampled juveniles and the current study sampled adults. Second, Hirschi and Stark used primary data that was intentionally collected to examine the relationship between religion and crime and the current study used secondary data that was not intentionally collected to examine the relationship between religion and crime. As a result, the operationalization of the measures used in the current study for the social bond elements of religion were sufficient

enough to run the current study, but they were not ideal and caused measurement errors that should be approached with caution.

The only other study that mirrors the current bivariate findings is Corcoran (2017) that also found a positive relationship between religion and assault. While the findings of the current study and the study conducted by Corcoran (2017) are consistent, there are some limitations to this discussion. First, the sample used in the two studies were different. Corcoran (2017) used a sample of respondents ages 15 years and older from 150 different countries, while the current study used a sample of respondents ages 18 years and older from a single area in the United States. Second, Corcoran (2017) examined assault as a separate measure of crime, while the current study had only one measure of crime that included violent and property crimes.

The remaining nine studies reviewed examining the relationship between religion and crime for this study were inconsistent with the bivariate findings of the current study because they found either negative relationship between religion and crime or no relationship at all. The inconsistency with the current findings and the majority of the literature examined in this study might be the result of how religion and crime were operationalized in the studies. First, findings from the literature reviewed in this study showed that “religion may both decrease *and* increase crime depending on how it is measured” (Corcoran et al. 2017:9). In this study, religion was measured using secondary data that was not collected with the intention of examining the relationship between religion and crime which caused measurement errors because religion had to be operationalized using data that did not accurately capture the social bond elements. This is different from the literature reviewed in this study that collected primary data with the intention of examining the relationship between religion and crime thus measuring religion more accurately. Differences in the operationalization of religion help explain why the results of the

current study are not consistent with the majority of the research reviewed. Second, findings from Burkett and White (1974) and Cochran et al. (1994) suggest that results vary depending on what type of crime is measured. For this study, total crime was measured using the FBI's Uniform Crime Report data based on reported crime statistics including both violent and property crimes. This is different from most of the studies reviewed in this study that measured minor crimes using self-report data. Differences in the operationalization of crime help explain the differences in the findings from the current the study and most of the literature examined in this study.

Additionally, the inconsistency with the current findings and the majority of the literature examined in this study might be the result where the data was collected. Research by Higgins and Albretch (1976), Stark et al. (1982), and Evans et al. (1995) found that the religious climate of the community being sampled is important in deciphering results concerning the relationship between religion and crime. The sample for this study was taken from Hampton Roads Virginia, but the samples for the literature reviewed in this study were taken from a variety of different places around the world that did not to include Hampton Roads Virginia. Differences in where the data was collected help explain the differences in the findings from the current the study and most of the literature examined in this study.

Results from Model 1 revealed that when regressed together without control variables, commitment, involvement, belief, and attachment were not significant. Of the ten studies reviewed examining the relationship between religion and crime for this study, three – Cretacci (2003), Evans et al. (1995), and Johnson et al. (2001) – mirrored the current study's social bond theoretical perspective. However, the three studies that mirrored the current study's theoretical approach did not include a regression of social bond measures against each other without control

variables; therefore, Model 1 of the current study cannot be examined using literature reviewed in this study. Despite not having applicable literature to examine the findings from Model 1 of the current study still need to be examined. Following findings by Hirschi and Stark (1969), the findings from Model 1 could indicate that involvement, belief, and attachment work together to promote people's morality and respect for the law and police enough to render the positive relationship between commitment and crime null. Although, this explanation of the results should be met with careful consideration because the current study did not examine morality or respect for the law and police in Hampton Roads; and therefore, using morality or respect for the law and police to examine the results from Model 1 is limited.

Congruent with findings from Model 2 from the current study that revealed religion was not significant amid control variables, findings from Ross (1994) revealed religion was not significant amid secular control variables. An examination of Ross' (1994) findings in relation to the current findings reveals that secular control variables could have interrupted the relationship between religion and crime causing religion to be not significant to crime. A caveat to this discussion is that Ross (1994) used primary data collected from undergraduate students at a Catholic university. The current study sampled adults 18 years old to 99 years old from Hampton Roads. Additionally, Ross (1994) employed measures of religion and crime different from the current study. The differences in methodology between Ross (1994) and the current study dictate that the examination of the aforementioned findings should be met with caution.

Returning to the studies reviewed examining the relationship between religion and crime in this study that used social bond theory as their theoretical perspective, Cretacci (2003) revealed findings consistent with the current study that showed that commitment, belief, and attachment were not significant among secular control variables. This finding needs to be

approached cautiously as Cretacci (2003) sampled adolescents aged 10 to 19 and included measures of secular commitment, attachment, and belief in their analysis.

The two other studies reviewed that also used social bond theory as their theoretical approach revealed findings inconsistent with the current study. First, Evans et al. (1995) findings revealed that of the three social bond elements they operationalized – involvement, belief, and attachment – involvement maintained significance amid secular control variables. One explanation of why findings by Evans et al. (1995) are inconsistent with the current study could be that Evans et al. (1995) included measures of social ecology in their analysis of the social bond elements while the current study did not. Another possible explanation for the inconsistency of findings by Evans et al. (1995) and the current study might be because Evans et al. (1995) gathered self-report data from participants ages 18 and older in midwestern urban areas of the United States, while the current study used secondary data collected from a southeastern area of the United States.

Second, Johnson et al. (2001) findings reveal that the one measure of religion they operationalized to include the four elements of social bond theory maintained significance amid secular control variables. Three possible explanations of why findings by Johnson et al. (2001) are inconsistent with the current study could be that (1) Johnson et al. (2001) employed one measure of religion instead of four separate measures like the current study, (2) Johnson et al. (2001) sampled longitudinal data from persons ages 11 to 17, and (3) Johnson et al. (2001) did not include the same control variables as the current study. For example, Johnson et al. (2001) employed five control variables, while the current study employed seven, with only three (age, race, and income) were used in both Johnson et al. (2001) and the current study. The differences

in the samples, modeling techniques, and variables employed could explain why findings from Evans et al. (1995) and Johnson et al. (2001) are inconsistent with the current findings.

Education and age were two control variables from Model 2 that were significant. The studies from this review of the literature did not use education as a control variable; however, some of the studies did employ age as a control variable. Findings from Evans et al. (1995) and Johnson et al. (2001) concerning age were consistent with the current study's finding that older respondents are less likely to commit crimes.

The findings from this study are different from most of the literature reviewed examining the relationship between religion and crime for the current study for several reasons. First, bivariate findings from the current study revealed that greater religious commitment is related to more crime. This goes against the conclusions in most of the literature that revealed that greater religious commitment is related to a reduction in crime albeit using different measures of crime and religion. Second, this research is different from other studies reviewed because the operationalization of religiosity included each element of social bond theory.

Although this study may be limited in some respects, the results support the idea that with the advent of the 21st century and differences in generational religiosity, the impact of religion on crime is changing. Instead of religion reducing crime as evidenced by previous literature examining the relationship between religion and crime reviewed in this paper, results from the current study suggest that church attendance increases crime. At the same time, several limitations of this study must be acknowledged. First, the study utilized secondary data that examined the life of Hampton Roads residents, not intended to examine the relationship between religion and crime, hindering the validity of the religion measures in this study. A second

limitation involved the cross-sectional design, in which, only the year 2010 was examined, reducing the reliability of the study across time.

Future research might benefit from analyzing the differences in the relationship between religion and crime in each of the seven cities in Hampton Roads. Another suggestion for future research is examining if there is a significant relationship between religion and less serious crime in Hampton Roads. For instance, testing the impact of religion on alcohol and/or marijuana use could be enlightening. Finally, future research examining religion and self-reported crime in Hampton Roads as opposed to reported crime might prove informative. One might also examine the intersectionality of generational groupings, religion, and crime.

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