

Title: A critique of social bonding and control theory of delinquency using the principles of Psychology of Mind

Author(s): Thomas M. Kelley

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Abstract:

The present paper first describes the refined principles of Psychology of Mind (POM) and shows how their logical interaction can help explain the comparative amounts of both deviant and conforming behavior engaged in by youthful offenders. The logic of these principles is then used to examine the major assumptions of social bonding and control theory of delinquency focusing predominantly on the formulations of Walter Reckless (1956) and Travis Hirschi (1969).

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Psychology of Mind (POM) is a new psychological theory derived from the work of Banks (1983, 1989); Mills (1990a,b, 1993); Mills & Pransky (1993); Suarez (1985); Suarez & Mills (1982); and Suarez, Mills, & Stewart (1987). In a recent article (Kelley, 1990), the author described the principles of Psychology of Mind and revealed how virtually all forms of delinquent and criminal behavior could be explained using the logic of these principles. In additional writings (Kelley, 1993a,b,c), the author applied these same principles to prevention and early intervention programs with at-risk youth and suggested how an accurate understanding of POM could advance the field of criminology.

Since these writings, the distinctions of Psychology of Mind have been clarified and simplified into three major principles: Mind, Consciousness, and Thought (Mills & Pransky, 1993). The present paper first describes the refined principles of POM and shows how their logical interaction can help explain the comparative amounts of both deviant and conforming behavior engaged in by youthful offenders.(1) Then the logic of these principles is used to examine the major assumptions of social bonding and control theory of delinquency focusing predominantly on the formulations of Walter Reckless (1956) and Travis Hirschi (1969).

The Principle of Mind

According to POM, mind is the source of an offender's thinking (how he interprets life), his emotions (how he feels about life), his perceptions (how things look to him), and his ability to experience his world through his senses. Practically speaking, the mind, according to POM, works like a movie projector through which an offender's thoughts are projected from the inside out to form his moment-to-moment idiosyncratic experience of life. Mills and Pransky (1993) warn of the difficulty in grasping a complete understanding of mind:

It is impossible to provide an easy-to-grasp description of the mind, because mind is the source of how things look to us. As such, it generates how we think about things. It operates before our thinking.

Therefore, it is impossible to intellectually have a complete picture or accurate model of the mind. Such a model would be a product of the mind's workings (p. 5).

Psychology of Mind defines an offender's mind as the neutral projector of all of his thoughts. POM proposes that, left to its own devices, each offender's mind is designed to work in a healthy way, operating as a neutral force toward innate mental health, which includes a natural wisdom, intelligence, intrinsic motivation, and high self-esteem.

The Principle of Consciousness

According to POM, consciousness is the offender's ability to be aware of external reality. Consciousness brings an offender's thoughts to life via his senses. Through consciousness, his thoughts are converted into his experience. Consciousness would be similar to the light in an activated movie projector. Thought creates images in an offender's head. Consciousness is the faculty or the power that makes these images appear real to his senses. The mind combines consciousness with thought to produce his ongoing moment-to-moment reality. Consciousness goes where an offender's thoughts go via his senses. It always brings to light what an offender is thinking.

The Principle of Thought

The power of consciousness would not exist without thought, or the offender's ability to think, sourced by the mind. In the POM paradigm, mind is a constant as the source of his thinking and experience. Consciousness is also a constant, as it brings to life whatever he is thinking. Thus, according to POM, the only variable in an offender's psychological functioning is thought. If mind is the projector, and consciousness the light, then thought represents the film which comes to life when the light shines through it. Psychology of Mind defines thought as an offender's ability to create images within his own head. For all human beings, including offenders, thinking, like breathing, is a natural life function. This continuous process of thought is the source of his changing experience of life from moment to moment.

Unconditioned and Conditioned Thinking

POM proposes two different and observable modes of thinking by which thoughts are generated and used by all offenders. These two distinct thought processes are called original or unconditioned thought, and reactive or conditioned thought. Original, or unconditioned thought is an innate, rational, and insightful thought process. It is also the source of positive change, high mental health, perspective, common sense, and understanding. Mills and Pransky (1993) describe their recognition of this thought process:

From observing the ups and downs of our clients, we concluded that there are two noticeably different processes by which thoughts are generated and used. People at times exhibited a rational, common sense, insightful thought process. This natural flow of thoughts that occur to people and simply come and go, appeared to be virtually unnoticed by most people.

In that thought process, people experience insights and practical ideas about their lives. They have perspective and an intelligence that leads to understanding. They take for granted the wisdom available to them. They might make the observation that they have "nothing on their mind" because their thinking is effortless and objective. This is the thought process we refer to as "original thought." Peoples' experiences from this original thought process will be fresh, impersonal, and interesting (p. 8).

According to Psychology of Mind, the original or unconditioned thought process has generally been overlooked and unacknowledged by most researchers because it is innate and ordinary. However, according to POM, original thought represents the way an offender's mind was intended to work. When engaged in this thought process, the offender learns primarily by a process of insight and realization. Once something is understood, his mind will utilize the brain's information processing, storage and retrieval mechanisms, in an objective and functional manner to store learned information in memory for later use at an appropriate time and manner. When original thought predominates, the primary process of learning is unconditioned (by insight).

Mills and Pransky (1993) describe the second process, which they refer to as reactive or conditioned thought:

The other thinking process, when people are actively drawing on experience or memories or attempting to apply their conditioned learning to circumstances, is what people generally describe as "thought" because it is noticeable; it requires deliberate effort. In that thought process people are working to find understanding and solutions, but they are not assessing creative ideas, objectivity, or a clearer perspective, because they are focused on what they already know, on what we would call their personal frame of reference. This is the thought process we refer to as "conditioned." Peoples' experiences from conditioned thinking process will be redundant and predictable. . . . The conditioned thought process, however, is that which has, singularly, been acknowledged and described as thought because it is how we learned to "use" our mind. Researchers focus on that thought process because it is apparent - and because it is, indeed, the way we were trained to think and what we have been taught to recognize as thinking (pp. 8-9).

When engaged in the conditioned or reactive thinking process, learning requires more deliberate or conscious effort and is generally more forced and stressful. In this mode, an offender will tend to process and store information in a more personal or idiosyncratic manner. In this mode, his learning is based more on interpretation or apparency than on insight and objectivity. Put another way, through conditioned habits of thinking, each offender develops an idiosyncratic view of reality or personal thought system. According to POM, a thought system is a sophisticated, interwoven, interdependent, network of conditioned thinking habits which take the form of fixed attitudes, preconceptions, expectations, and prejudices. An offender's thought system operates much like a psychological force field which, when engaged, will selectively and predictably organize external events and circumstances into specific perceptual patterns.

POM proposes further that offenders are mostly unaware of thought systems and their screening and translating function. Thus, most innocently believe that their thoughts, beliefs, and prejudices provide them with "true" representations of reality rather than idiosyncratic interpretations or apparencies. Therefore, according to POM, most offenders are prone to misuse a neutral function, their ability to think about their lives. As Suarez (1987) points out:

One basic premise of this principle is that people create their own thoughts and thought systems but are, to varying degrees, not aware of doing so. Thus, it is possible for people to experience reality, to varying degrees, only in terms of the end products of their thinking (images, beliefs, interpretations, expectations, etc.) and their associated perceptions, feelings, and behaviors. In other words, people can experience reality as being relatively independent of their functioning (pp. 5-6).

POM proposes that every offender has the capacity for both responsive (unconditioned) and reactive (conditioned) thinking. POM further states that it is the percentage of an offender's responsive vs. conditioned thinking that is the major determinant of his level of mental health, happiness, personal effectiveness, and, conversely, his level of risk for delinquency or criminality.

Feelings of Insecurity

According to POM, the factor that predisposes an offender toward one type of thinking or the other is his feelings of insecurity. POM proposes that the degree of reactive or conditioned thinking engaged in by an offender correlates directly with his experience of insecure feelings. According to POM, it is this relationship of conditioned thinking and insecure feelings through which all forms of delinquency or criminality are fostered and maintained. When an offender feels secure, having his emotional bearings, he will think more responsively using information and insights appropriate to the situation at hand. When an offender feels insecure, he will think more reactively and tend to experience urges to engage in some form of delinquent or deviant behavior either to bolster his diminished sense of self-worth or to temporarily relieve his insecure feelings (e.g., drug use).

In virtually every instance, POM proposes that insecure feelings and conditioned thinking are the forces behind delinquency and criminality in its many destructive varieties. When he is feeling insecure and fully engaged in conditioned thinking, an offender will feel compelled to do whatever it takes to prove or validate his personal view of reality. Being locked into this vicious circle, an offender will feel compelled to fight, steal, hurt people, set fires - to do whatever is necessary to be right.

Moods

The final question to be answered by POM is the source or origin of an offender's insecure feelings. POM proposes that an offender's insecurity

is not a function of his life events or circumstances, even such extreme conditions as poverty, racism, drug-addicted parents, and unsafe neighborhoods. Simple observation makes it clear that faced with such living conditions, offender "A" will remain secure and in responsive thinking, while offender "B" will lose his emotional bearings. Yet, offender "B" will keep his bearings under the same conditions at some later time. Thus, POM proposes that the origin of insecure feelings is inside the mind of an offender and occurs as a function of the phenomenon of moods. Mills and Pransky describe this final piece of the equation (1993):

The phenomenon of moods provided the remaining answer. Moods explained why person "B" got insecure in one instance and kept his bearing later under identical circumstances. We noticed that peoples' sense of well-being, their level of security, would vacillate dramatically even as their circumstances remained the same. . . . It was apparent that everyone had moods and everyone's moods were shifting up and down, however slightly, throughout the day. . . . When a person's mood dropped, he would feel less secure and would be tempted towards reactive, habitual thinking. When his mood rose, he would feel more secure, more relaxed mentally, and return to a responsive thinking mode. Responsive thinking could produce conditioned ideas, or it could produce original, unconditioned thought. What mattered was that the person's mood and level of security produced thinking that was responsive to the situation at hand, rather than being controlled by habit and conditioning (p. 22).

Thus, according to POM, the combination of moods, insecure feelings, and conditioned thinking creates a vicious cycle which explains virtually all forms of delinquent and criminal behavior. In lower moods, an offender will feel less secure and move into the conditioned thinking mode, which activates automatic thoughts and conditioned beliefs. In this mind state, the offender will experience a self-generated negative reality with little or no awareness of what has happened or how to stop it. It is in this condition that the likelihood of some form of delinquent, criminal, or self-destructive behavior increases markedly.

POM and Social Control Theory

Social control theorists assume that all youth would violate the law if they could just get away with it. Thus, control theory treats conformity as the real problem to be explained and focuses on investigating why youth do not engage in offending behavior. Put another way, control theorists assume that delinquency and crime are destined to occur for all persons unless they are prevented by strong social and personal controls. Control theories tend to focus more on social factors that curb delinquency than on those that promote delinquency, as do the positivistic theories of youth crime. Thus, control theories all assume that there are internal and external mechanisms which have the power to control a potential offender's behavior (Akers, 1994).

Psychology of Mind challenges the fundamental premise of control theory - the innate motivation in human beings to commit criminal and delinquent acts. In fact, POM proposes just the opposite innate human

propensity. According to POM, every physically healthy youngster begins life with a natural, inborn capacity for healthy psychological functioning. That is, at birth, youth do not have mind-sets which point them toward delinquency, drug use, or other forms of deviant behavior. On the contrary, each youth is born with an innate set of healthy attributes which include common sense, unconditional positive self-worth, a desire to learn for the satisfaction of learning, and a natural joy in the understanding and pro-social mastery of the environment (Suarez, 1985b; Suarez, Mills, & Stewart, 1987; Mills, Dunham, & Alpert, 1988; Kelley, 1993b).

According to POM, from this innate, healthy, psychological perspective, high self-esteem is automatic and effortless. It need not be taught, developed, or strengthened (Mills, 1990a,b; Mills et al., 1988; Kelley, 1993). Self-esteem in this mind state is not derived from outside activities or accomplishments, but serves instead as the motivation behind the desire to achieve. In this natural perspective, thinking is responsive and unconditioned, resulting in good common sense, a high capacity for insight, and genuine peace of mind. Furthermore, learning and performance are experienced as natural and effortless. According to POM, in biologically healthy youngsters, all of these capacities exists at birth in one cohesive package (Mills et al., 1988; Peck, Law, & Mills, 1987; Mills, 1987, 1990a,b; Kelley, 1993b).

Contrary to control theory, POM proposes that it is only in lower moods when youth feel insecure and begin to think reactively more of the time that their natural healthy functioning becomes compromised and the probability of deviant behavior increases. If our youth were taught to understand lower moods and to correct for the perceptual distortions, insecure feelings, and dysfunctional conditioned thought which occur during these times, then their urges toward deviant behavior would be both greatly reduced and less likely to be acted upon.

POM and Containment Theory

In his containment theory, Walter Reckless (Reckless et al., 1956; Reckless, 1961, 1967) refers to "pushes" and "pulls" toward delinquency, which he says must be countered by "inner" and "outer" containment if crime is to be prevented. According to Reckless, examples of "pushes" are inner psychological impulses and drives such as discontent, hostility, or aggressiveness, or environmental pushes such as poverty, deprivation, or blocked opportunities. Pulls would include bad companions, gangs, and delinquent sub-cultures. Outer containment devices might include parental and school supervision and discipline, strong group cohesion, and a consistent moral front (Akers, 1994).

Reckless places special emphasis on a good self-concept, which he says is the primary inner containment. Self-concept, therefore, is a key aspect of containment theory; good kids develop "insulated" self-concepts with which to withstand the influences that lead other peers into delinquency.

POM views Reckless's control mechanisms (e.g., pushes, pulls, inner, and outer containments, self-concept) as having no constant meaning outside

of personal interpretation. Put another way, the significance of these concepts is invented or "made up" through each person's thinking agency. For example, pushes, such as hostility, aggressiveness, and discontent, are simply the insecure feeling products of believed conditioned interpretations which occur in lower moods and more insecure states of mind. They are not, as containment theory suggests, the expressions of fixed inner psychological impulses and drives, just negative feeling habits kept alive moment-to-moment by believed conditioned thought. Likewise, the meaning of environmental pulls such as poverty, deprivation, and blocked opportunities is not constant. The significance of each will be different for each offender and for the same offender in different moods and states of mind. According to POM, pushes and pulls have no power to control a potential offender's behavior independent of his thinking and believing that they do.

Likewise, pulls such as bad companions, gangs, and delinquent sub-cultures only have power over youths who have acclimated to the distorted perceptions in chronic lower mood states and thus begin to view these associations as ways to cope with insecure feelings and blocked self-esteem. Nonoffending persons, values, and institutions tend to be rejected, as they are innocently misinterpreted by youthful offenders as being responsible for their insecure feelings. Viewed through a conditioned belief system, gang membership becomes desirable as a way to enhance self-image and reduce or avoid insecure feelings. Within the POM framework, the attraction to delinquent peers is predictable as a source of self-concept validation through shared dysfunctional conditioned attributions.

Reckless states that when motivations to deviance (i.e., pushes and pulls) are strong and containment is weak, crime and delinquency are to be expected. Inner and outer pushes and pulls will produce delinquent behavior unless they are counteracted by inner and outer containment (Akers, 1994). POM, on the other hand, would suggest that urges toward deviant behavior occur in lower moods or lower levels of mental health. POM proposes that the best way for offenders to avoid acting on such urges is to teach them that they are the product of conditioned thought and occur only temporarily in lower moods. When offenders genuinely understand this distinction, they can begin to intelligently avoid giving their dysfunctional thoughts power by believing them. By so doing they can more quickly regain their psychological equilibrium and avoid much destructive behavior. With such awareness or understanding, offenders will have less need for external supervision, threats of reprisal, or punishment (i.e., outer containments) to control their behavior. With such knowledge, offenders will be empowered to correct for their perceptual distortions and avoid the destructive urges that arise in lower moods.

It is not that POM sees no value in outer-containments (i.e., deterrents) such as supervision, restrictions, or threat of punishment. However, POM proposes that without an accurate understanding of its principles by offenders and criminal justice personnel alike, such containments will be used less sensibly and effectively. An example involving one of the author's psychotherapy clients is illustrative. David M., age 19, was referred by a district court for criminal sexual

conduct, forth degree. While intoxicated, David walked through a shopping mall and grabbed the buttocks of a passing female patron. Mall security responded and David was arrested. Ultimately, he was placed on two years probation, six months of electronic monitoring, random drug screening at home, and mandatory psychotherapy. This was the second such incident for David involving sexual misconduct and he had several prior unreported incidents of drunk driving and aggressive/assaultive behavior.

When David first came to treatment, he was extremely angry about the "outer-containments" applied by the court. He felt they were vindictive and unfair and stated that the court treated him "like scum." Nevertheless, David followed the rules to the letter, motivated by his fear of having his probation revoked and going to jail. However, it seemed quite clear that when these containments were removed or when David's mood got low enough, he would surely revert to his old behaviors.

In treatment, I worked with David in a very relaxed, nonthreatening, and respectful manner using the principles of POM to help him understand how human beings function psychologically. Slowly, David began to catch on that his drinking and acting-out behavior were expressions of his believed conditions thoughts and the insecure feelings (e.g., depression, anger, agitation) which he experienced in his chronic low mood states. He began to see that in these states, he tended to think reactively almost all of the time and therefore frequently misinterpreted the intentions of others around him. Having little awareness of his mood-related perceptual distortions, David innocently learned to interpret his world as a very dangerous place, had little trust of anyone, and related to the life he saw as a perennial victim.

As treatment progressed, David began to see more clearly this vicious cycle of insecure feelings, selective perception, and self-destructive behavior. Furthermore, we discovered that David had a bi-polar mood disorder. When he understood the impact of his bio-chemistry on his moods, he could see the value in taking anti-depressant medication. Also, he saw in a more detached manner the tremendous strength of his conditioned thoughts about alcohol and how they were so easily triggered by his past conditioning, especially during low moods. David described, for example, how his mouth would start to water when he would pass by the beer and wine section in a supermarket.

Finally, David began to understand how his Native American heritage had most likely predisposed him genetically to tolerate and crave alcohol differently from most people. With this understanding, David volunteered to take Antabuse and devised a plan by which his parents supported him daily in taking his "deterrent" medication.

Most importantly, David began to catch on to the fact that there was nothing wrong with him personally and that much of his natural capacity for mental health had been suppressed by some inherited biological glitches and his innocent misunderstanding of moods, insecure feelings, and conditioned thinking. With this awareness, David rapidly regained much self-esteem and began to use more common sense to find ways to correct for his mood-distorted perceptions when they occurred. As a result, his personal relationships improved dramatically, as did his

work performance. Furthermore, he began volunteering to do community service as a way of distracting his attention from self-conscious thoughts. Also, he began to understand his ex-wife's angry behavior toward him and his role in perpetuating it. Finally, understanding the incredible power of his moods, David requested that the court extend his probation period so that he could use the strength of his interpretations about jail to help override his mood-related urges to drink.

This case illustrates a whole new dimension of how what Reckless calls "outer-containments" could be used more wisely and responsibly by offenders and criminal justice personnel who understand the principles of POM. POM proposes that without these understandings, outer-containments will, at best, be temporary fear-producing deterrents which will lead to little or no intrinsic responsibility for offenders.

The idea of self-concept as Reckless's primary inner containment deserves special attention. POM distinguishes between self-concept and self-esteem. POM defines self-concept as a set of idiosyncratic beliefs and standards to which an offender, through conditioned thinking, learns to attach his personal worth and identity. POM views self-esteem as the innate healthy experience of competence and well-being that exists naturally in the presence of original or unconditioned thinking. POM points out that when people are in high moods, thinking primarily in the unconditioned mode, there is little or no awareness of self or self-concept. Put another way, when engaged in responsive thinking, an offender has little desire to prove anything, is not dependent or needy, and generally feels fulfilled. In this mind state there is minimal thinking about or purpose for delinquency or, for that matter, any other form of deviance. Here, crime, delinquency, and drug use would just interfere with the offender's moment-to-moment experience of natural self-esteem, peace of mind, and fulfillment.

It is only in lower mood states, when misunderstood by offenders, that the experience of self as a concept or object comes to life through conditioned thinking. In lower moods, unrecognized by offenders, enhancing self-concept is naively seen as a solution to insecure feelings and blocked self-esteem. Here, unenlightened offenders innocently misinterpret lower moods and insecure feelings to mean that there is something wrong with them, other people, the world. Not understanding that they are being deluded by mood-related perpetual distortions which would quickly pass if they would only relax and not take them seriously, most misuse their conditioned thinking to figure out how to right themselves when there is actually nothing wrong! By so doing, offenders innocently begin to design their lives more and more to cope with insecure feelings and perceptual distortions taken seriously. This process slowly builds on itself and the vicious cycle is generated. Ironically, the use of conditioned thinking to design a self-concept keeps offenders stuck in lower moods, which perpetuates insecure feelings and reactive thinking, which leads to more self-concept building or strengthening. Paradoxically, the stronger an offender's self-concept, the less time that offender will spend in healthy mental functioning!

Thus, POM would suggest that Reckless's proposal to strengthen or build an offender's self-concept will have the unintended effect of increasing the time he spends feeling insecure in lower moods, and therefore the likelihood of his involvement in deviant or criminal behavior. POM proposes that when an offender connects, through conditioned thinking, his appearance, toughness, power, money, influence, attractiveness, and possessions with his personal worth or self-concept, he inadvertently sets himself up for feelings of insecurity and self-consciousness. Thus, when his mood goes down he will feel less secure and worthwhile and will be inclined to do whatever he thinks it takes (often delinquency) to get more, better, or different things to which he has attached his self-worth.

This important distinction helps to explain several previously confusing facts, such as the criminality of white collar offenders, many of whom supposedly have good self-concepts as well as strong outer-containments during both childhood and adulthood. Paradoxically, it is the strong self-concepts or egos of these individuals which, according to POM, block out their natural, healthy functioning and lead to strong conditioned urges to do whatever it takes (including crime) to maintain or increase their wealth, power, or control.

POM and Social Bonding Theory

Hirschi's (1969) social bonding theory has become what most criminologists refer to today as the major control theory. It has come to occupy a central place in criminological theory and is probably the most frequently tested and discussed of all contemporary theories of crime (Stitt & Giacopassi, 1992). According to Akers (1994), it has been the dominant theory of delinquent and criminal behavior for almost three decades.

The main proposition of Hirschi's theory is that delinquency is the result of weak or broken bonds between the individual and society. These bonds are composed of four major elements - attachment, commitment, involvement, and beliefs. Hirschi defines attachment to others as the degree to which we admire others, feel affection for and identify with them, thus caring about their expectations. Commitment is the personal stake or investment of an individual in conforming and the perceived costs or losses suffered by involvement in deviant or law-violating behavior. Involvement refers to the level of one's participation in pro-social activities such as family functions, schoolwork, job, or church. Belief, according to bonding theory, refers to an individual's credence in societal norms and values - that laws and rules are necessary and should be followed. The stronger these social bonding components with pro-social significant others (e.g., parents, teachers) the more an individual's behavior will be directed toward conformity. To the degree that these elements are weak, the individual will be more likely to violate the law. Hirschi views these four elements as highly intercorrelated.

Within the POM perspective, a qualitatively different and distinct form of each of Hirschi's "elements" is part of the cohesive package of natural capacities that exists innately in healthy human beings.

According to POM, mentally healthy human beings naturally express each of these characteristics most of the time. However, unlike social bonding theory, POM would not view the natural expression of these attributes as important in controlling delinquency or maintaining conformity. According to POM, in healthy individuals these attributes and conforming behavior exist and co-vary together, but do not cause or determine one another.

Consider, for example, Hirschi's first element of social bonding: attachment. According to Hirschi, attachment is the extent to which a person has close affectional ties to others, admires them, and identifies with them so that he cares about their expectations. The more insensitive a person is to others' opinions, says Hirschi, the less he is constrained by the norms he shares with them; therefore, the more likely he is to violate these norms (Akers, 1994). POM distinguishes between two qualitatively distinct types of attachment which depend upon the type of thinking and learning that prevails (conditioned vs. unconditioned) as an individual matures. If the unconditioned thinking mode is predominant, a person's attachments to others will develop naturally as an expression of healthy psychological functioning which includes a natural capacity for intimacy and empathy. This experience of intimacy and trust forms the context in which healthy attachments effortlessly emerge. This form of attachment will be more unconditional, which means that the person's sense of personal worth or value will be less dependent on his attachments. Put another way, a healthy person, thinking predominantly in the unconditioned mode, will have a naturally high capacity for intimate attachments. Also, his self-esteem will be high, and less affected by fluctuations in his own moods or mental health, or those of the persons to whom he is attached. According to POM, in this healthy mind state, conformity is also present naturally and automatically. It is not caused or controlled by attachments.

On the other hand, if conditioned thinking and learning are predominant, a person's attachments will be more identity-connected - such attachments will be connected through conditioned thought with a person's self-concept or self-image. From this perspective, an individual's attachments are influenced more by moods and feelings of insecurity and are more likely to serve as a strategy for personal validation or approval. According to POM, conformity in this mind state tends to be motivated more by such concerns as worth, rejection, and disapproval, and therefore will exhibit greater mood-related swings.

According to POM, such conditioned identity-based attachments are "normal" in our culture and constitute what Hirschi suggests should be strengthened. According to POM, however, the strengthening of this form of attachment will predictably increase personal insecurity and unhappiness, as well as the likelihood of dysfunctional behavior such as crime and delinquency. According to POM, true conformity and unconditional attachments will both occur more effortlessly by teaching offenders how the mind works so that they can rekindle their natural healthy psychological functioning.

Although he often uses the phrase "attachment to conventional others," Hirschi maintained that it really did not matter to whom one was

attached. According to Hirschi, it is the fact of attachment, not the character of the people to whom one is attached, that determines adherence to or violation of conventional rules (Akers, 1994). Thus, even for juveniles attached to peers or persons who are delinquent, the stronger the attachments to these people, the less likely the tendency toward delinquency.

POM would strongly challenge this proposition. According to POM, it is not the fact of attachment that matters, but the type of attachments. It is not the fact of attachment that determines adherence to or violation of conventional rules, rather it is the natural capacity for intimacy, empathy, and trust, plus the common sense to use this capacity in a functional manner (unconditioned attachments), both of which flow naturally from healthy psychological functioning.

Healthy children use natural common sense in picking their friends. They tend to pick healthy ones. The involvement of children with delinquent peers represent the kind of conditioned attachment that becomes desirable only during prolonged periods of mood-related insecurity and dysfunctional conditioned thought. Becoming attached to delinquent peers makes sense only as a solution to the insecure feelings and distorted conditioned thinking which signal less healthy functioning. A physically healthy person will not choose to be close to people with contagious diseases unless his perspective is distorted. So too, conditioned attachments to delinquent peers result from extreme perceptual distortions. Psychologically healthy children may have genuine compassion for their delinquent peers, but they will not see attachments with such children as particularly valuable unless they have lost their own psychological bearings and do not understand what has occurred.

The same is true with regard to parental attachments. The literature is convincing that consistent and fair parental discipline, parents who know the activities and whereabouts of their children, parents who minimize conflict and turmoil, parents with a capacity for love and empathy, are among the best predictors of nondelinquent behavior. These findings would make sense within the POM perspective because they point to generally healthier, higher-mood families.

Commitment has been referred to by Toby (1957) as an individual's investment in or "stake in conformity" that would be placed at risk or lost by engaging in criminal behavior. The greater one's commitment or investment in conventional enterprises (e.g., educational, professional, religious), the greater the perceived risk of crime because one has more to lose. According to POM, it is only when a person's thinking is organized around maintaining a self-concept and coping with insecure feelings that he would tend to perceive things this way. It is only in comparatively low moods, and insecure states of mind that people are motivated by the fear of losing external possessions. It is only in such conditioned states of mind that people perceive their personal worth as connected to externals. In healthy mind states, people will display more self-expression, a natural enthusiasm, and intrinsic motivation to pursue conventional activities of all sorts. Furthermore, they will possess a natural inclination toward honesty, integrity, and inner fulfillment. In such mind states, deviance is less likely to occur as a

meaningful possibility.

It is only when people become stuck in lower moods with little understanding of what has occurred that their sense of worth appears to be attached to their conventional endeavors and external possessions. In such levels of functioning, POM would suggest that a person's free will or rational choice is clearly diminished. Put another way, POM proposes that, for the most part, deviant behavior is not chosen freely by its perpetrators. When offenders offend, their natural ability to choose freely and rationally is compromised by their conditioned or reactive frames of reference, a phenomenon powerfully illustrated by the recent O.J. Simpson tragedy. According to POM, within O.J.'s conditioned thought system, his allegedly brutal behavior appeared to make sense and to serve a worthwhile purpose. Believing the distorted projections of his own dysfunctional conditioned thinking, O.J. could not realistically weigh the rewards and costs of his actions. In such mind states, an offender's natural, healthy logic and wisdom are blocked out by his believed conditioned thought.

These distinctions help explain why the magnitude of relationships between social bonding and delinquency have ranged from moderate to low (Hindelang, 1973; Johnson, 1979; Wiatkowski, Griswold, & Roberts, 1981; Agnew, 1985; Liska & Reed, 1985; Akers, 1994). They explain further why high correlations and levels of explained variance are seldom found in the research literature on this theory (Akers, 1994). For the most part, even the healthiest people in this culture have innocently lost much of their natural capacity for healthy psychological functioning. Having little understanding of Psychology of Mind, even our "healthiest" people are often victimized by their ignorance of low moods, reactive thinking, and insecure feelings. This explains why even our most conforming children and adults with strong social bonds can quickly fall into conditioned insecure states of mind and impulsively engage in very serious forms of crime and delinquency. Conversely, it also explains why at certain times even chronic delinquents will behave in more mature, sensible, noncriminal ways (Stewart, 1985; Dodge & Frame, 1982; Patterson, Chamberlain, & Reid, 1992).

Thus, genuine choice or "response-ability" can occur for offenders only when they begin to understand how the mind functions to combine thought (both conditioned and unconditioned) with consciousness to create dynamic personal realities that are only appearances and not "the truth." Until offenders possess this awareness or understanding, they will continue to experience and be motivated by dysfunctional urges and habits such as delinquency, drug abuse, and other health-damaging behaviors. According to POM, true free will can emerge only through an accurate understanding of these simple principles. Only then will offenders begin to see that they have been innocently deluded into seeing delinquency and crime as sensible behaviors. Only then will they begin to see the huge cost of this unfortunate misunderstanding in lost free will and psychological health.

1 The purpose of the present paper is to describe the three principles of the Psychology of Mind paradigm. For interested readers, a detailed discussion of empirical evidence supporting the principles of this model

using relevant etiological studies, cross-sectional research programs, longitudinal studies, and youth panel surveys can be found in the author's previous writings (Kelley, 1990; 1993a,b) and the works of Roger Mills (1987, 1988, 1990a,b) cited in the reference section.

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Reprint requests to Thomas M. Kelley, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Criminal Justice, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan 48202.

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