Rampage school shooters and their social relations

Testing the explanatory power of the social control theory

Jeroen Hermans
Bergen op Zoom, the Netherlands
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Supervisor: Mw. Dr. V.L.M. Malkki
Second reader: Mw. Dr. M.C.A. Liem

Preface

This thesis is written as a completion to the Master program Crisis and Security Management as part of the Master Public Administration at Leiden University College The Hague. The Master program focuses on a broad range of (in)securities and crises within the social and political dimensions of governance, such as natural disasters, policing, organized crime and terrorism threats. Over the years, my attention and interest has gone out to school shootings occurring all over the world. Since it falls within the scope of the Master's field, I decided to write my thesis about it. This thesis specifically focuses on various rampage school shooting cases within both the United States and Germany in the period of the last fifteen years. The research project was quite challenging, but intriguing at the same time due to the application of a criminological theory, which had not been done before.

I would like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to those who have added to the thesis-writing process over the last couple of months. Special thanks go out to my thesis supervisor Dr. Leena Malkki for her guidance and enthusiasm, but also her feedback and valuable insights during the process of this thesis. I am very grateful for her flexibility and willingness to give helpful guidance during the process of writing in order to complete this research project. Furthermore, I would like to thank my parents and girlfriend for their unconditional support.

Jeroen Hermans
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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the explanatory power of Travis Hirschi's Social Control Theory on rampage school shooting cases within the United States and Germany in the time frame of 1999 to 2014. These rampage school shootings are characterized by: (1) the relationship between the perpetrator(s) and the institution, (2) targeting of victims, directed or random, and (3) selection of target by symbolic significance.

The research was based upon an in-depth multiple-case study design, in which the cases were assessed and analyzed following the indicators of Hirschi's framework of his Social Control Theory. Data for the case studies was gathered by triangulation of methods, using multiple independent data sources and cross-checking them with one another. Based upon the criteria as introduced above, six rampage school shooting cases were selected, presented and analyzed in chronological order: (i) the Columbine High School massacre; (ii) the Erfurt massacre; (iii) the Red Lake shootings; (iv) the Emsdetten school shooting; (v) the Virginia Tech massacre; and (vi) the Winnenden school shooting.

Based on the analyses and assessment of the various rampage school shootings cases, the conducted case study analysis provides mixed results and therefore does not provide clear indication of the explanatory power of the Social Control Theory. Although the ratings of the indicators fluctuate between the perpetrators, at least one indicator may be considered necessary but not sufficient and appears to affect the behavior of rampage school shooting perpetrators. In the end, further research by, for example, extending the amount of cases is highly recommended.

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1. Introduction

Throughout history, school violence in general and school shootings specifically have occurred within formal education (Rocque, 2012). Over the last few decades especially, school shootings are recognized as a considerable social problem and have increasingly received more and more attention by the state, media and the public. All this attention has led it to be the subject of extensive academic, social and political debate (Langman, 2009a). Particularly in the beginning, the discussion was centered on the American perspective. However, in the United States as well as in many European countries, violence at schools has come to the forefront in both crime prevention plans as well as public discourses (Elliot, Hamburg & Williams, 1998; Smith, 2004).

1.1   The school shooting phenomenon

Although violence at schools is of all times, the specific focus of this thesis lies with the more 'recent' rampage school shootings. Although school shootings are not at all a new phenomenon, they gain widespread media attention due to the magnitude of the events (Langman, 2009a). Even prior to the founding of the United States, school shootings occurred, with the earliest recorded 1764 Enoch Brown massacre (Glenn, 2014). While documentation of such events can be found over a long period of time, Langman (2009a) noted the statistically rarity of these types of shootings. However, there have been at least 170 documented reports of school shootings since 2013 in the United States alone (e.g. 2013, 38 shootings; 2014, 58 shootings; and 2015, 64 school shootings), including cases where no one got hurt despite of a gun being fired (Everytown, 2016).

Due to various highly publicized events such as Heath High, Westside Middle, Pearl High, Thurston High and Columbine High, the school shooting phenomenon already received increasing national attention, and continues to do so with this latest peak of events. The phenomenon has gained huge amounts of public interest, due to the effects they have on national and school policies (Muschert, 2007). At one point it was even said that Americans no longer believed in schools being safe havens for their sons and daughters, although empirical evidence proved that schools are often safer than children's neighborhood surroundings and even their homes (Fox & Burstein, 2010; Muschert, 2007).

Violence like school shootings thus have become a grave matter within countries as the United States and Germany during the past twenty years (Bondü & Scheithauer, 2015). While the 1990s were greatly influenced by this type of violence, the occurrence of general school

violence and school shootings in particular were not new to the history of education (Rocque, 2012). One of the most prominent and fatal – among a numerous amount of other incidents – United States school shootings, was the 1966 University of Texas massacre. More than 30 people were wounded and 17 people killed by the hands of Charles Whitman, a 25-year-old University of Texas engineering student (Governor's Committee, 1966). The 1990s, however, marked an unusual series of events, with the involvement of preteen and teen school shooters (Newman, Fox, Roth, Mehta & Harding, 2004). It was during this period of time that the term 'school shootings' came into existence, due to the rare swirl of events of school attacks (Böckler, Seeger, Sitzer & Heitmeyer, 2013). With the tragic event of the Columbine High School massacre on April 20th 1999, rampage school shootings became recognized nationwide in the US (Mongan, 2013).

1.2   Different types of school shootings

Generally, a distinction of five subcategories can be made of school shootings: school-related mass murders, government shootings, targeted shootings, terrorist attacks and rampage shootings. The common characteristic shared by these school shooting subcategories, is that the attacks are all school-related, meaning they take place at educational institutions or events (Muschert, 2007). Other than that, there is a lot of variation between the categories. Since the focus specifically lies with rampage school shootings – only one of the subcategories of school shootings – all of the subcategories are briefly defined and explained in order to get an understanding of the different types of school shootings. However, from the beginning of research towards school shootings, the various types of school shootings were subjected to conceptual confusion. This presented researchers of school shootings with considerable challenges, due to the fragmentation of research toward the phenomenon (Harding, Fox & Mehta, 2002). To prevent confusion, the descriptions as explained below are maintained.

The first category of school shootings, school-related mass murder, is in many aspects much the same as the rampage school shootings. Although, the perpetrators of these attacks have never attended these schools neither as a student nor as an employee (Newman et al., 2004). However, they do share almost every other connection with rampage school shooters – which will be described later on – as well as selecting educational institutions for their symbolic significance. Within government shootings, the perpetrators have no previous connection with school (i.e. former student) and the events are mainly targeted at restoring order and peace by responding to riots or student protests. While targeted school shootings do involve students or former students of the school, the attacks are specifically directed at a certain group or

individual. This type of shooting, however, generally has not a symbolic meaning behind it like the rampage school shooting. Terrorist attacks then, are clearly the opposite of targeted shootings, since educational institutions are chosen for their symbolic meaning. Perpetrators also do not have a former connection with these institutions (Muschert, 2007).

1.3   Definition of the rampage school shooting

The final subcategory of school shootings, as particularly focused on within this research, consists of the so-called rampage school shootings. Following definition will be used for rampage school shootings: "an institutional attack that takes place on a public stage before an audience, is committed by a member or former member of the institution, and involves multiple victims, some chosen for their symbolic significance or at random. This final condition signifies that it is the organization, not the individuals, who are important" (Newman, 2004:231).

According to Muschert (2007) rampage school shootings differ distinctly, based on a couple characteristics, from the other subcategories (i.e. mass murder, government, targeted and terrorist attack). Rampage school shootings are characterized by: (1) the relationship between the perpetrator(s) and the institution, (2) targeting of victims, directed or random, and (3) selection of target by symbolic significance. From this point onwards, when the term school shootings is used it refers to the specific type of rampage school shootings, unless indicated otherwise.

This extreme form of violence (i.e. rampage school shootings) was tried to be understood by various scholars across several disciplines such as criminology, psychology, education, psychiatry, medicine and sociology (Harding, Mehta & Newman, 2003). Though rampage school shootings happened way prior, it was not until the late 1980s that scholarly literature mentioned any other category than targeted school shootings (Collison, Bowden, Patterson & Snyder, 1987). Since then, researchers attempted to profile rampage school shooters and establish theories around the events and perpetrators (Brown, 2015). The most dominant and advanced theories of school shooters revolve around psychological theories (i.e. mental illness), sociological/cultural theories such as – bullying, violent media and availability of guns – and risk factor categories (Rocque, 2012). Not often are rampage school shootings combined with criminological theories. In this research, Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory will be applied to multiple cases from Germany and the United States, to see whether or not and to what extent social bonds may influence violent behavior in schools.

1.4   Research question

The research thus focuses on the assessment and analyses of various rampage school shooting cases, while testing the explanatory power of the Social Control Theory. The concept of Social Control Theory by Hirschi (1969) is often brought forward by sociological and criminological literature and can play an important role in approaching, and in turn explaining, various social problems. Social Control Theory argues that when an individual's socialization process or social bonds are weakened, broken or absent, the individual may display unusual, mostly criminal or deviant, behavior. Main view of the theory is not why perpetrators do the things they do or "why do they do it", when it comes to delinquency and crime, but rather about "why don't we do something" (Hirschi, 1969:34). The core of the theory can be described as "elements of social bonding including attachment to families, commitment to social norms and institutions (i.e. school, employment), involvement in activities and the belief that these things are important" (Hirschi, 1969:16). Four basic elements that tie the Social Control Theory together are: involvement in conventional activities, commitment, attachment and a person's belief or values. Hirschi (1969) argues that strong bonds with one's environment or society discourages deviant or criminal behavior, because of a sense of responsibility. In fact, he states that everyone is a potential law violator, however, most of them are prevented by their social bonds. When integrating Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory with various rampage school shooting cases within Germany and the United States, it leads to the following research question:

"To what extent can the Social Control Theory explain rampage school shootings within Germany and the United States between 1999 and 2014"?

While current research mainly focuses on psychological, cultural and sociological theories regarding rampage school shootings, involving another theory can lead to additional perspectives on the matter. With the use of Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory, a comparative analysis can be made between various rampage school shooting cases. Eventually, something can be said about to what extent strength of the social bonds contribute to the exhibition of rampage school shootings. Because, according to the theory, when a perpetrator's social capital diminishes and the bonds to society are weakened, deviant or criminal behavior often occurs. According to another research, by Newman, Fox, Harding, Mehta and Roth (2004), a total of five factors – found in the late 1990s shootings of Jonesboro and West Paducah

– show a feeble bond between society and the perpetrator and emphasizes Social Control Theory as a leading contributing theory to school shootings. Briefly described, these factors involve gun availability, lack of identifying troubled teens, cultural prescriptions for behavior, a perpetrator's perception of viewing themselves as not fitting in the social worlds that matter to them and psychosocial issues that intensify this view (Newman et al., 2004). Although these factors differ from Hirschi's (1969) theory, they indicate an interesting link worth researching. The research therefore aims to provide more insight in the complexity behind school violence, particularly rampage school shootings, which then offers opportunities to better address certain issues.

1.5 Academic and societal relevance

Research into rampage school shootings is crucial for various reasons, but mainly to gain a more complete understanding of the contributing and underlying factors that lay at the foundation of school shootings and consequently how to manage the subject. Currently, scientific researchers from varying types of disciplines (i.e. criminology, psychology, education, psychiatry, medicine, sociology) and theories deriving from these disciplines (i.e. risk factors, cultural/sociological, psychological) have examined the phenomenon of rampage school shootings (Harding, Mehta & Newman, 2003; Rocque, 2012). However, criminological and sociological theories have been far less incorporated than for instance psychological theories (Rocque, 2012). To date, research regarding rampage school shootings from the perspective of Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory has not been done yet. The incorporation of the strength of a perpetrator's bonds to society may lead to new insights regarding school shootings, as for instance policy recommendations. Current prevention efforts and policies that are aimed at the subject might even be enhanced or weakened by the research into a shooter's social capital. The research may provide public administrators, politicians and policy makers with the ability to develop approaches, prevention programs and strategies in countering school violence. Therefore, the research will ultimately lead to a more comprehensive approach toward rampage school shootings.

1.6 Outline of the thesis

First, the history and definition of rampage school shootings is briefly described as well as the research question. Chapter two provides a literature review, presenting the most relevant and prevailing theories on school shootings thus far. Also, it also provides the theoretical framework, where necessary concepts and explanations are presented that form the basis of the

thesis. This framework is based on Travis Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory that is used in assessing and analyzing the various rampage school shooting cases. Chapter three discusses the research methodology of the thesis, presents the research design, methods of data collection and the selection of cases. In chapter four, the rampage school shooting cases are assessed and analyzed as well as the results of these analyses are presented and put forward. The results of the analyses are discussed in the fifth chapter. The final chapter, chapter six, concludes the thesis and gives an answer to the research question.

2.   Literature review and theoretical framework

In this chapter, the existing literature on school shootings in general and rampage school shootings in particular is reviewed and the theoretical framework on which this research builds is laid out. Starting with the build up of scholarly literature on the phenomenon of school shootings, eventually leading to a categorization of theories and explanations. The literature on these individual categories is then discussed. From there, moving on to another field of expertise from which the theory is derived. Finally, the Social Control Theory with all its elements is discussed as part of the framework.

Although it seems that efforts in explaining rampage school shootings have rapidly increased over the last few decades, still little systematic theories have been developed by researchers (Levin & Madfis, 2009). According to Levin and Madfis (2009) it is unclear whether separate explanations are justified for rampage school shootings, with the identification and examination of single factors for the most part, since they may be seen as unique incidents or that these events can be accounted for by traditional criminological theories such as control theories. With the application of the Social Control Theory to school shootings, the explanatory power of theories on ordinary criminality and delinquency can be tested on rampage school shootings. Other traditional criminological theories have also proven to be able to provide an explanation to some extent to the phenomenon of school shootings, as briefly discussed in chapter 2.2. Therefore, with the application of the Social Control Theory, it can contribute to not only the literature on rampage school shootings, but also to the development of criminological theories and social control theories in specific.

2.1   Three major categories of theories and explanations

Up until the 1990s, rampage school shootings were relatively spread out over periods of time. But, by the end of the last century an unexpected rise occurred in the amount of rampage school shootings. Due to this sudden increase national recognition of the phenomenon was a fact (Mongan, 2013). Towards the end of the 1990s, the phenomenon gained vast media attention on a national and global level (Muschert & Carr, 2006). It was during this time phase that scholarly literature started to develop, for only a small number of theories on rampage school shootings existed prior to the 1990s. Since then, more refined theories were developed by various scholars. Generally, a distinction of three significant categories of explanations and theories can be made on the subject, although the phenomenon is not confined to these categories alone (Rocque, 2012). According to Rocque (2012) these three major categories

consist of: psychological theories of school shooting perpetrators, risk factor approaches and cultural of sociological theories and explanations.

2.1.1   Psychological theories

Perhaps the most frequent elaborated theories and explanations in understanding school shootings are the psychological theories on school shooters. Theories revolving around mental illness are by far the most commonly developed theories on school shootings within this category (Rocque, 2012). Case studies on rampage school shooters by Harding et al. (2003) and Langman (2009) disclose troubled youths and teenagers, who often tend to be depressed or suffer from various personality disorders. It is also noted that a large number of culprits are diagnosed with mental illness after committing the act, but preceding the shootings mental illnesses are seldom acknowledged (Newman et al., 2004). Although teenagers are increasingly diagnosed with psychological disorders, mental illness is rejected by Newman et al. (2004) as a simple or straightforward indicator of rampage school shootings. Nevertheless, the diagnosis of mental illness with numerous school shooting perpetrators is at least noteworthy (Rocque, 2012).

Peter Langman (2009; 2013) developed a typology based on the analysis of ten rampage school shooters. Three types of rampage school shooters were categorized: traumatized shooters (Evan Ramsey, Bethel; Mitchell Johnson, Jonesboro; Jeffrey Weise, Red Lake); psychotic shooters (Michael Carneal, West Paducah; Seung Hui Cho, Virginia Tech; Kip Kinkel, Springfield; Andrew Wurst, Edinboro; Dylan Klebold, Columbine); and psychopathic shooters (Andrew Golden, Jonesboro; Eric Harris, Columbine). The first type of shooters has suffered from traumatizing experiences, such as sexual, physical or emotional abuse. According to Newman et al. (2004) the shooters all came from unstable and fragmented families, where at least one of the parents had either a criminal history or was dependent on addictive substances. Psychotic shooters, however, did not experience a variety of abuses and all came from loving and supportive families. They did suffer from psychotic disorders, such as schizophrenia or other personality disorders and often displayed odd behavior, paranoia and severe anxieties (Harding et al., 2003; Langman, 2009a; Newman, 2004). Like psychotic shooters, the last category of psychopathic shooters also came from stable or unbroken families, that showed no history of neglect or abuse. Though, there are differences. Psychopathic shooters often demonstrate a lack of empathy, are unable to feel remorse or guilt, are narcissistic, have a sense of superiority and show sadistic behavior (Langman, 2009a). Andrew Golden for example, was

fond of torturing cats and also frequently threatened neighborhood kids with a knife (Fox, Roth & Newman, 2003; Newman, 2004).

Suicidality seems to be a recurring theme throughout the rampage school shootings. McDowell (2012) noted that the homicidal plans of rampage shooters were typically accompanied by their suicidal plans. They already had the idea of killing themselves, but found it either difficult to do so or wanted to make a great scene of the act (Langman, 2009a; Newman et al., 2004). Suicidality reflects the hostile intent of rampage school shooters, and their tendency to turn to lethal force (Langman, 2009a; Preti, 2006; Vossekuil et al., 2002). Rocque (2012) argues that, homicide-suicide events, like rampage shootings and suicide may be inseparably linked, due to the fact that they release a lot of hostile behavior at one point in time. The linkage with suicide fits the description of the classroom avenger, who is a potential rampage school shooter candidate. The classroom avenger is described as usually Caucasian, depressed and suicidal, perpetrating multiple killings in an educational environment (McGee and DeBernardo, 1999).

2.1.2 Risk factor approaches

In the search of explaining – or at least some aspects of it – school shootings, various researchers have used so-called risk factor approaches in order to identify and compose lists of developmental risk factors for aggressive behavior used for crime prediction (Farrington, 2007; Lipsey & Derzon, 1998; Shader, 2001). These factors, known to predict harmful outcomes, then can be used for preventative purposes through the development of practices and policies (Shader, 2001; Wike & Fraser, 2009). Risk factor approaches also serve another purpose, by helping to explain delinquent conduct (Vossekuil et al., 2002).

During the peak of school shootings in the US at the end of the 1990s, the 'Safe School Initiative' was commissioned by the US Department of Education and US Secret Service in order to examine nearly 40 school shootings within the US between 1974 and 2000 (Wike & Fraser, 2009). Specific focus lied with the examination of behavioral factors for the identification of risk factors, which then could be used towards preventative measures and forestalling future attacks (Vossekuil et al., 2002). On top of that, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) released a report on multiple risk factors and characteristics of potential school shooting perpetrators (O'Toole, 2000). According to Wike and Fraser (2009) goals of both the FBI and the Safe School Initiative were to eliminate inaccurate information about school shooters characteristics. While the FBI-report did not provide a psychological profile, it did indicate several risk factors or warning signs of potential perpetrators. Although a

description could be made of the shooters through the risk factors, a better understanding of school shootings could not be provided (O'Toole, 1999; Verlinden, Hersen & Thomas, 2000; Vossekuil et al., 2002). The risk factors, as defined by the FBI, are mostly utilized for threat assessment (Cornell, Sheras, Kaplan, McConville, Douglas, Elkon, McKnight, Branson & Cole, 2004).

Another study by Verlinden et al. (2000) focused on risk factors as a future predictor of aggressive behavior and violence during one's teenage years. The study covered a total of nine school shooting cases, where common risk factors were identified. The risk factors were clustered in several categories: individual factors (mainly biological and medical factors), family factors (childhood abuse, lack of support/ supervision), school and peer factors (bullying and social exclusion), societal and environmental factors (influence of violent media and access to firearms) and situational factors like stressful events (Verlinden et al., 2000). They state that the individual factor is likely to be the most accurate predictor of early hostile behavior and later violence. Like Verlinden et al. (2000), Hawkins, Herronkohl, Farrington, Brewer, Catalano & Harachi (1998) found that hostile behavior at a young age is a strong predictive of violence at a later age. Although it is a predictive factor, youth violence does not necessarily lead to violent behavior in later life, and thus can not be considered an explanatory factor (Hawkins et al., 1998). The study of Verlinden et al. (2000) also shows that risk factors of youth violence are likely to differ from school shooting risk factors. Concluding, there is no uniform school shooter profile. In fact, Krauss (2005) has said that predictive instruments are infamous predictors of school shooting violence.

Risk factor approaches are according to Fox and Burstein (2010) not concerned with theory and thus do not possess explanatory functions. These approaches do not give us a clearer understanding of the phenomenon, of the how and why school shooters attack. Rather, they try to identify and describe who exactly these school shooters are (Verlinden et al., 2000). However, FBI reports suggest that identification of potential school shooters is nearly impossible, due to the inaccuracy of risk profiles (Vossekuil et al., 2002). While certain characteristics of school shooters would certainly match such profiles, the profiles would include much more students than those at true risk of committing such acts and at the same time exclude some of the potential perpetrators (Wike & Fraser, 2009).

2.1.3 Cultural or sociological theories and explanations

The most controversial and divisive explanations in scholarly literature concerning rampage school shootings are based on cultural factors, as in the availability of guns, violent media

consumption, bullying, imitation and masculinity (Bondü, Cornell & Scheithauer, 2011; Mongan, 2013; Rocque, 2012). The first factor in this category that is regularly discussed within the United States is gun availability.

The availability of guns in the US is one of the most frequently mentioned contributing factors in rampage school shooting literature (Rocque, 2012). As seen within recent school shootings, Springhall (1999) noted that it was less difficult to obtain guns, than to buy petrol or beer. Although guns are easily accessible by youths and contribute to the increase of chances of these events, the availability of guns represents just one side of the story (Rocque, 2012; Stolinsky, Barham, Needles, Adami, Ehrenworth, McIntyre, Duell & Kassirer, 1998). One of the counter arguments is that throughout recent years there was no increase in the amount of people with guns, even though the amount of guns has grown (Newton et al., 2004). However, in America exists the cultural script or view of guns as problem solvers (Larson, 1995). In achieving desired ends, the use of guns has become a feasible manner (Wilkinson & Fagan, 1996). Therefore, Rocque (2012) argues that rampage school shootings may be linked to such a cultural attitude.

Often considered to be a cause of rampage school shootings is the consumption of violent media, like video games and movies. Literature addresses the negative effects on youth that violent media consumption has and that it increases aggression on the part of children (Anderson & Bushman, 2001; Anderson, 2004). Case studies by Langman (2009) and Newman et al. (2004) show the popularity of violent video games, like 'Doom' and 'Counter-Strike', and violent movies among rampage school shooting perpetrators. However, other factors may be at play, since millions of people do not become murderers while still enjoying watching violent movies or playing violent video games (Langman, 2009a). Although the link between violent media consumption and committing violent acts is frequently addressed, it is suggested that aggression in children can even come from violence in cartoons (Kirsh, 2006). While the phenomenon of violent media consumption leading to violent behavior has been studied, Ferguson (2008) argues that these studies contain methodological errors, ignoring contradictory data. In these studies, the effects of violent media are presented as strong and consistent, when in fact there is a huge gap with actual scientific data on the effects (Ferguson, 2008). Firm conclusions are therefore precluded.

The social-psychological concept of imitation is, according to Rocque (2012), another factor often used by researchers to help explain rampage school shootings. Within this notion of imitation, often referred to as the copycat effect, high profile school shootings are attempted to be mimicked by others (Fox & Burstein, 2010; Newman et al., 2004). Intense media coverage

of high-profile cases, like Virginia Tech and Columbine, can contribute to achieving a celebrity-like status of the perpetrators, and can then heighten the risk of copycat events (Fox & Burstein, 2010; Sumiala & Tikka, 2011). Social learning theory for example argues that media coverage can generate a contamination effect, by allowing potential perpetrators a stage to make a statement from. From this view, those at risk of committing school shootings are stimulated into imitating other school shootings perpetrators actions (Newman, 2004; O'Toole, 2000; Wike & Fraser, 2009). Social learning is relevant to a number of rampage school shooting cases, since peers can affect each others behavior and have done so in certain cases where one has convinced another to partake in the event (Langman, 2009a). However, social learning theory does appear less relevant to single perpetrator acts (Rocque, 2012).

Another factor most commonly associated with and seen as a possible cause of rampage school shootings is peer bullying and harassment (Rocque, 2012; Safran, 2007). According to Burgess, Garbarino and Carlson (2006) bullying impacts all those involved and has negative consequences on both the short and the long run. Leary, Kowalski, Smith and Phillips (2003) have noted in their study that the shooting perpetrators were often either socially rejected or bullied by their peers. In fact, research shows that most of the school shooting perpetrators have experienced bullying at some point in time (Newman et al., 2004; Vossekuil et al., 2002). Social rejection due to school hierarchy is one form of bullying regularly associated with rampage school shootings and the impact of these hierarchies is often discussed (Fox & Harding, 2005; Klein, 2006). In some studies, bullying was found as a key in most of the events. But even without obvious evidence of bullying in particular events, bullying was often quickly singled out by the media (Leary et al., 2003). Yet, research provides no clear relationship between school shootings and bullying. In some of the cases, the perpetrators enjoyed a notable amount of popularity among their peers or were even considered bullies themselves (Langman, 2009a; Mongan, 2013; Rocque, 2012).

Researchers also point to a fifth cultural factor, that of masculinity or masculine identity, and may be considered an explanation to rampage school shootings (Rocque, 2012). According to Newman et al. (2004) a particular stereotype of masculine identity exists in American society, of one that is fearless and bold. This cultural script is promoted by the media, where violence and aggression is associated with masculinity and seen as ways allowed to achieve one's own goals (Böckler, Seeger & Heitmeyer, 2011). Often, as viewed by various authors, perpetrators felt like they did not live up to the normative ideas of masculine identity and wanted to experience dominance, power and superiority over others by showing their masculinity

through a form of violence (Katz & Jhally, 1999; Kimmel, 2008; Larkin, 2007; Neroni, 2000; Newman et al., 2004).

Meanwhile, other researchers pointed out that there might be a better way in examining the phenomenon, by identifying characteristics that are necessary but not sufficient for the act to happen for "negative cases do not provide relevant information" (Harding, Fox & Mehta, 2002:179). As briefly described in the introduction, based on the view of Harding et al. (2002), Newman et al. (2004) developed an approach in which five factors necessary for rampage school shootings identified. Newman et al. (2004) stated that an individual must meet certain factors in order for a rampage school shooting to occur: have access to guns, the presence of cultural scripts that enable violence in achieving their goals, have psychosocial issues that are not necessarily consist of mental diseases, poor identification of troubled youth and potential perpetrators within the educational system, the individuals are marginalized, considered a social outcast and are unable to alter their social position. These factors were compared with rampage school shooting cases and Newman et al. (2004) concluded they fare well. However, their theory is a collection of contributing school shooting factors and does not explain causality or how these factors interrelate to one another (Rocque, 2012).

Although various theories, like the one of Newman et al. (2004) contains social elements of a perpetrators relations, it differs for example from Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory. While Newman et al. (2004) elaborate on the social exclusion or marginalization of the perpetrator, it only encompasses a single factor of the social relations as discussed in Hirschi's (1969) theory. Without discrediting previously suggested causes, the interest of the thesis is mainly about the role that interpersonal bonds with society may play in rampage school shootings. Therefore, Hirschi's (1969) theory goes much further than just social marginalization and will be discussed more in-depth later on in the chapter.

2.2   Criminological theories

Another field of expertise that examines the phenomenon of rampage school shootings is criminology and even though this field is less evolved than for instance the psychological field, there are criminological theories that seek to explain school shootings. Criminology is mainly concerned with the causes, prevention, consequences and control of criminal behavior. The individual level as well as the social levels are often discussed (McDowell, 2012). In the ongoing debate of how criminal behavior should be prevented and handled, it is through the criminological perspective very important to examine why people exhibit such behavior. Over the years, many theories have emerged in the criminological field and are continuously being

explored in order to find crime reducing solutions. Criminological theories include, but are not limited to, routine activities theories, strain theories and control theories (Levin & Madfis, 2009; McDowell, 2012). These traditional theories are also used to seek explanation as to why youths commit these types of crimes in the first place. The general strain theory considers a range of disappointing and stressful events, difficulties or negative experiences regarding social relationships that ultimately lead to frustration, anger and crime (Agnew, 1992). In relation to school shootings, according to various researches, many students who killed their teachers and schoolmates have experienced chronic strain (Fox & Levin, 2005; Newman et al., 2004; Mendoza, 2002a; Vossekuil et al., 2004). The routine activities theory states that crime is most likely to occur with the presence of a motivated offender, absence of capable guardians and the availability of suitable targets (Cohen & Felson, 1979). With most school shooters these three factors are present, since mostly there is an absence of armed officers at school, students are closely together and available in large numbers and the perpetrator is dedicated in committing the rampage directed at his fellow students and teachers (Levis & Madfis, 2009). Furthermore, control theories also seek to explain rampage school shootings and since they form the basis of this research, they will be briefly discussed below.

2.2.1 Control theories

Control theories state that when one's social capital decreases, their bonds to society are weakened and may become perpetrators of events like rampage school shootings (Weatherby, Strachila & McMahon, 2010). One definition of social control involves "all the sanctions and constraints used in an effort to control another individual's behavior (to make him or her conform to social norms) that fall outside of formal, legal, and bureaucratic systems" (Kramer, 2000:126). He argues that social control can be reduced due to poverty, which leads parents away from their homes. Therefore, social support structures for children are affected and can lead to them feeling excluded. Creating bonds with children are much harder when parents have little time to spend with them, due to the fact that they are away from home (Kramer, 2000). Kramer (2000) states that youth crime is often related to "child-parent involvement", where activities are shared and one can confide and communicate (p.127). These things could strengthen the social control, but could also mean that bonds to society are weakened when absent. Cullen (1994) moves the perspective of Kramer to a larger scale by arguing that crime rates will go up in communities if there is little social support.

Also, the argument that criminal behavior is the result of weakened social bonds is enhanced by Welsh (2000). He states that "social bonding is the mechanism by which effective

controls and constraints are learned" and that these weakened social controls and constraints arise through poorly transferring of values by the educational system or family and thus leads to criminal behavior as contended by control theorists (Welsh, 2000:91). Welsh's (2000) research, in which he examined five school climate variables, concurred for a great deal with Hirschi's (1969) control theory. He researched fairness of rules, clarity of rules, respect for students, planning and action and student influence on decision making. He found that those who did good at school, believed in the rules of the school and were affiliated with peers that showed non deviant behavior, indicated less offending. Also, he found that a strong predictor of misbehavior was based on not believing in school rules (Welsh, 2000). Like Welsh (2000), McCabe and Martin (2005) believed that school violence is linked to social control and that weakened bonds can lead to criminal behavior. And, as previously discussed, the five factors distinguished by Newman et al. (2004) suggest that school shootings are linked to social control due to the weakened bond with society. However, Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory handles a perpetrators relation with his surroundings more in-depth as will be discussed below.

2.3   Hirschi's Social Control Theory (1969)

Ever since its presentation in 1969, the social bond theory or social control theory of Travis Hirschi has become and continues to be one of the most important paradigms in the criminological field (Pittaro, 2007). According to Pittaro (2007) there are not many theories besides Hirschi's theory, that have caused this much debate or have generated as much empirical notion within the field of criminology. For over four decades, Hirschi has been one of the leading figures in criminology and also one of the most cited (Wright, 2002).

Criminological theories that try to define and establish reasons as to why people break the law are among the most widely supported theories as opposed to social control theories, whose primary interest lie with understanding and determining why the rules of society and the law are adhered to by people (Curran & Renzetti, 2001). Control theorists argue that when the ties or bonds of an individual to conventional social institutions like one's community, family or school are enfeebled or broken, criminal or deviant behaviors appear. These weakened or broken links ensure that the individual is more likely to be influenced by the temptations of delinquent behavior (Curran & Renzetti, 2001).

Among all social control theories, the most widely accepted and recognized theory is that of Hirschi (1969) which assumes that when social bonds are completely or partly impaired, this leads to the emergence of delinquency. Contrariwise, as suggested by the theory, youths are less likely to participate in delinquency acts due to a solid bonding to social surroundings

like community, family and school (Curran & Renzetti, 2001). Although the Social Control Theory typically focusses on juvenile offenders, who may have different backgrounds than rampage school shooting perpetrators, it is interesting to see to what extent the theory might be applicable.

According to Hirschi (1969), the fundamental premise of nearly every present theory in the criminological field is faulty: these theories say that the creation of some sort of delinquent motivation is is required for delinquent behavior. The opposite premise is presented by Hirschi (1969): given the fact that everyone, from birth, possess a preoccupation with self-indulgence and act in self-centered and hostile ways can lead to delinquent behavior. For example, children do not need prolonged exposure to deviant norms and values or deviant behavior of fellow peers to act in an aggressive and impulsive manner. Also, long-term consequences are rarely considered in these circumstances. However, this is part of our human nature and these types of behavior are therefore completely natural (Hirschi, 1969). Most importantly, according to Hirschi (1969), is that the majority of people is able to manage these innate urges.

According to Hirschi (1969), the bonds that people form to prosocial institutions, prosocial people and prosocial values can give an answer to this question. When attracted to partake in deviant or criminal acts, our behavior ends up being controlled by these bonds. Central to the theory are four elements of the social bond and explain why some youths turn to delinquent behavior. Hirschi (1969) described his four elements as: belief, commitment, involvement and attachment. These elements are further discussed below.

2.3.1 Involvement

Involvement can be seen as the first type of social bonds by Hirschi (1969). Involvement relates to how time is being spent by people associated with the opportunity costs. Idleness is seen as an opportunity to engage in criminal or delinquent behavior, and therefore "idle hands are the devil's workshop" (Pratt, Gau & Franklin, 2011:58). This philosophy is based on the idea that when people participate in and spend their time on prosocial and conventional activities, then they are by definition not participating in antisocial or nonconventional activities. Status objectives and socially valued success can be achieved when participating in conventional, prosocial activities (Wiatrowski, Griswold & Roberts, 1981). Heavy youth involvement in athletic, social or academic school-related activities, means that during the participation in these prosocial activities, at the same time, their time is not spent stealing or destroying property or demonstrating other deviant behavior (Hirschi, 1969). In preventing delinquency, it is important that there are clear objectives and future goals and a high-level quality of conventional activities

for youths (Wiatrowski et al., 1981). However, this does not mean that these types of behavior cannot occur before or after such activities. Nevertheless, criminal or delinquent acts will not be committed at least during these activities (Hirschi, 1969).

2.3.2 Attachment

Out of the four elements, attachment is considered to be the most important element by Hirschi (1969). Attachment refers to "the level of psychological affection one has for prosocial others and institutions" (Pratt et al., 2011:58). Attachment indicates one's empathy and sensibility toward others and corresponds with affective bonds to significant others formed by youths. In this respect, especially peers, schools and parents are viewed as critically important social institutions for an individual. Since socially acceptable behavior is taught by parents, who are viewed as role models by their children, the family environment therefore acts as an important source of attachment (Wiatrowski et al., 1981). Like parents, schools influence and exercise a degree of social control. According to Hirschi (1969), the importance of the element of attachment is indisputable. Sympathetic pity and concern and empathy toward others as well as the development of one's moral sense of right and wrong is facilitated by this element and is often absent with perpetrators of school shootings (Hirschi, 1969).

2.3.3 Belief

Belief can be defined as "the moral validity of the central social-value system" (Hirschi, 1969:203). Belief refers to the extent to which a person adheres to the values related with lawful behavior or behavior within the confinements of the law. Central to the social control theory is the difference in acceptance of rules of the social-value system, because Hirschi (1969) suggested that people are more likely to break the rules when they feel less rule bound. The assumption is that participation in deviant or criminal behavior is less likely to happen, when the degree of social values are considered more important by a person. For example, when youths decide to skip school but do not value the notion that is is probably not a good idea, and instead value spending the day with their friends at the mall, playing videogames or smoking weed, will probably do just that. Contrariwise, when there is a shared belief among youths that the use of addictive substances is wrong, there is a less likely tendency to engage in such behavior (Hirschi, 1969). Hirschi (1969) in this sense, addresses the link between behavior and attitudes. Engaging deviant or criminal behavior is not motivated by attitudes, but this type of behavior is rather constrained by social bonds and prosocial attitudes.

2.3.4 Commitment

The final type of bond is referred to as commitment and considered to be "the importance of the social relationships that people value, which they would not want to risk jeopardizing by committing criminal or deviant acts" (Pratt et al., 2011:58). In essence, with the prospect of potentially losing something, people tend to behave in order to prevent this from happening. This can relate to the accordance with accepted norms and the fear of losing their social bonds with conventional people and conventional institutions (Hirschi, 1969). For youths, the opinion of teachers, parents or friends often matters to them and they do not want to look bad in front of them, thus stops them from criminal behavior. For this reason, adults, for example, would not engage in deviant or criminal acts because they fear it would damage their social bonds like marriage or employment (Hirschi, 1969). According to Wiatrowski et al. (1981) commitment is an investment in conventional behavior and related to attaining a high social status. With the participation in deviant behavior, this investment and possible future goals are threatened.

Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory provides the framework for the analysis of the multiple rampage school shooting cases. The presence of each indicator and dimension, as provided by the Social Control Theory, are analyzed throughout the various cases. The indicator of attachment, however, consists of multiple dimensions which are clarified in the next chapter. Furthermore, the dimensions of attachment to parents, attachment to peers or friends, attachment to school, involvement, commitment and belief are discussed extensively within the analysis. Next chapter elaborates on the operationalization of these indicators and dimensions.

3. Methodology

The purpose of the study is to examine rampage school shootings within the United States and Germany with time parameters ranging from 1999 through 2014 with the intent to establish to what extent these shootings are influenced by weakened or broken social bonds. This chapter describes the methodological aspect of the research. Firstly, the relevant concepts are explained and operationalized in order to develop clear indicators. Next, the type and purpose of the research is explained, followed by the method of research.

3.1 Concepts and operationalization

In Hirschi's book *Causes of Delinquency* (1969), he developed and described for his research toward the causes of delinquency a number of four elements of the social bond: involvement, commitment, attachment and belief. However, Hirschi (1969) made a distinction for conventional attachment and specified three particular positions within this element. Therefore, conventional attachment consists of attachment to peers, school and parents and influences Hirschi's (1969) model of the social bond. The model thus not only exists of four social elements or bonds, but in fact is comprised with at least six social elements or bonds. The elements are therefore: involvement in conventional activities, commitment to conventional lines of action, peer attachment, attachment to school (teachers), parental attachment and the belief in conventional morals and laws and regulations. These elements can also be considered as the six indicators of the model, because they refer to the concept of the social bond (Hirschi, 1969). It is important to consider the fact that these elements and thus the indicators of Hirschi's social bond are intertwined. He states "in general, the more closely a person is tied to conventional society in any of these ways, the more closely he is likely to be tied in the other ways" (Hirschi, 1969:27). First, the four elements are briefly described, followed by the additional indicators, where after the manner in which they are measured is described.

Attachment is the first, and probably the most important element of the social bond. It refers to an individual's level of emotional attachment, sensibility and empathy towards others, such as peers, teachers and parents (Hirschi, 1969). People are less likely to commit crimes, when they are tied to members of a specific society and bound by their rules. However, as Hirschi (1969) states "we are moral beings to the extent that we are social beings", committing crimes becomes a lot easier when not tied or bound to those societies (p. 18).

As said before, there are three positions within the element of attachment. The first is attachment to parents, which also holds three dimensions: affectional identification, intimacy of communication with parents and virtual supervision (Hirschi, 1969). Affectional identification is, according to Hirschi (1969), about the child's value of their parent's opinions and wanting to be like their father or mother. Discussing important matters frequently relates to the intimacy of communication between child and parents. Finally, virtual supervision, relates to the fact of being psychologically present to children. This means that children consider their parents as aware of their whereabouts, activities, but also aware of who their friends are and who they hang out with (Hirschi, 1969). In analyzing a rampage school shooting perpetrator's attachment to parents, when for example evidence suggests that the perpetrator has systematically not shared his emotions or thoughts with his parents, this is interpreted as a sign of weakened attachment to parents.

Attachment to school is the second indicator within the element of attachment. Although there is an overlap between involvement and commitment to education and school attachment, Hirschi (1969) treated attachment to school as a separate indicator of the social bond. Like the previous indicator, this one also distinguishes several dimensions: accepting the school's authority in setting behavioral rules, concern for the opinions of teachers, liking of school and performances and academic abilities. Hirschi (1969) argued that when an individual performs better academically in school, they tend to like school better, because their performances are rewarded. Also, the ones that like school and are concerned about their teacher's opinions of them, agree to the legality of the school as an authority (Hirschi, 1969). When evidence suggests that the perpetrator displayed good academic abilities and performance throughout his most recent years in school in combination with the acceptance of the school's authority for instance, this is interpreted as an indication of having a strong attachment to school.

The final indicator of this element concerns the attachment to peers or friends. Hirschi (1969) found that while having a strong bond with their conventional peers or friends, individuals were less likely to behave deviant and in a delinquent manner. Among boys, attitudes and activities are often congruent with the type of peers they have befriended (Hirschi, 1969). Therefore, when evidence suggests that the perpetrator has befriended one or multiple conventional peers with large stakes in conformity, they are less likely to commit delinquent acts and is interpreted as a strong attachment to peers or friends. Conversely, when the perpetrator has delinquent or non conventional peers with whom they might participate in delinquent activities and therefore affects his stake in conformity, this is interpreted as a sign of weakened attachment to peers or friends.

Commitment is the second element of the social bond and relates to conventional institutions, social relationships, goals and other conventional lines of action (Hirschi, 1969). Jeopardizing the fact of losing these things is not worth the risk of committing deviant or criminal acts (Pratt et al., 2011). For example, when it concerns goals, it can be about occupational or educational goals. Engaging in criminal or delinquent behavior can mean possible failure in achieving some of the set goals and therefore, one is less likely to commit crime (Hirschi, 1969). Although the social control theory specifically focusses on explaining delinquent behavior, commitment can also relate to acquired resources over time such as a well-paying job or good reputation. This is why the theory can also be applied to adults as well (Hirschi, 1969). Evidence suggesting that the perpetrator has shown interest and active participation during his education or actively pursued activities in order to accomplish certain educational or occupational goals, the perpetrator's level of commitment is interpreted as strong. On the other hand, evidence suggesting a perpetrator's commitment in non conventional lines of action, may indicate a weakened bond.

The third element is involvement, relating to an individual's time spent on prosocial and conventional activities. Hirschi (1969) basically says that when people are spending all of their time on participating in everyday activities, there will be no time left for participating in nonconventional and antisocial activities. Evidence suggesting that the perpetrator was heavily concerned with prosocial and conventional activities, such as school-related activities or sports, is interpreted as an indication of strong involvement. Evidence suggesting involvement in non conventional activities, however, may result in a negatively rated bond.

Belief is the final element of the social control theory. Belief relates to people having a high regard for lawful behavior, the norms of society and moral validity. When an individual feels rule bound and accepts the rules of society, they are less likely to diverge from them (Hirschi, 1969). Evidence suggesting that the perpetrator has little regard for lawful behavior or the accepted morals and norms of society, be it through repeated offences or statements in which the perpetrator considers others as insignificant or even viewing them less than human, the perpetrator's belief is interpreted as severely weakened.

Elements	Indicators	Additional dimensions	Clarification
Attachment	Attachment to parents	Virtual supervision	Parents being psychologically present and aware of their children's whereabouts and activities
		Intimacy of communication with parents	Mutually sharing and discussing of thoughts, feelings and emotions
		Affectional identification	Respecting and valuing the parents and their opinions
	Attachment to school	Academic ability and performance	Performing academically well in school and receiving good grades
		The extent to which a student reported liking school	Having no aversion of school and feeling confident instead of nervous and tense in school
		Concern for teacher's opinions	Respecting and valuing the teachers and their opinions and caring of what they think of them
		Acceptance of the school's authority to set rules for behavior	Accepting the school's authority and rules by behaving accordingly, for example no smoking if this is not allowed
	Attachment to peers or friends		Having conventional or non delinquent friends that have large stakes in conformity
Commitment	Commitment to conventional lines of action	Educational goals	Commitment through active participation and for example wanting to graduate
		Occupational goals	For example, working towards getting a job
Involvement	Involvement in conventional activities		Active in sports, school-related activities or other prosocial hobbies
Belief	Belief in moral validity of laws and norms		Having a sense of what is right or wrong and acting accordingly

Table 3.1: Concepts and operationalization of elements

3.2   Type and purpose of the research

The research regarding the gaining of an understanding of underlying motivations and reasoning of rampage school shooters is based on qualitative research. According to Bryman (2012) qualitative research can and should play a considerable part in the testing of theories. Qualitative research "emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data" and "is designed to reveal a target audience's range of behavior and the perceptions that drive it with reference to specific topics or issues" (Bryman, 2012:714; QRCA, 2016). Therefore, qualitative research can help in gaining new insights regarding the phenomenon of school shootings.

The research can be defined as 'theory-based. The theory-based research or research based upon a theoretical approach is about working from a theoretical perspective (Saunders et al., 2009). In other words, the existing theory on social control by Hirschi (1969) is centered within the thesis in order to help explain the phenomenon of school shootings. This research therefore focusses on whether Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory and its conditions influence, and to what extent, rampage school shooting behavior. The research is therefore also oriented towards testing the explanatory power of the Social Control Theory by conducting an in-depth case study on a number of rampage school shooting cases.

Furthermore, the research can be described as 'deductive' or 'theory testing', meaning that there are already clear expectations about what variables could have an effect on school shooting behavior. Deductive research relates to research that is conducted to the mention of ideas referred from the theory and theory testing relates to the investigation whether an already existing theory can bring forth a plausible explanation of the phenomenon (Bryman, 2012). In both cases, the research is guided by theory. The existing theory of Hirschi (1969) is used in order to test whether the Social Control Theory, generally used for ordinary criminality and delinquency, can explain rampage school shootings.

3.3   Research method: case study design

For this research, the case study design is chosen as the method of research. A case study design should be taken into consideration according to Yin (2003) when: (i) the study focusses on answering 'why' and 'how' questions; (ii) the behavior of the ones involved in the study cannot be manipulated; (iii) contextual conditions need to be covered; or (iv) when the context and phenomenon show no clear boundaries. The case study is concerned with intensive and detailed

analysis of the case in question, but is also concerned with its specific character and complexity (Bryman, 2012). However, the research will not cover just one specific case, but rather multiple cases through a comparative design, which "entails the comparison of two or more cases in order to better understand social phenomena" (Bryman, 2012:72). According to Bryman (2012) the comparative design takes the form of a multiple-case study design, when applied in relation to qualitative research. Interpretations and findings of a study are found to be more compelling when multiple cases are included (Merriam, 1998). "Circumstances in which a theory will or will not hold" are better to determine for researchers, when two or more cases are compared (Bryman, 2012:74; Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2009). Therefore, multiple cases will be analyzed and compared in this research. An overview of the selection of the various rampage school shooting cases can be found in table 3.2.

In this research the comparison of cases is focused on similarities between those cases, therefore a case design is used. The research, however, is not based on a most similar design, for the only similarities the cases exhibit is the fact that they can all be classified as 'rampage school shootings'. Case selection is not only based on the criteria of being a rampage school shooting, but also rests upon feasibility, furthermore, cases must have happened within the United States and Germany and must have taken place within the time frame of 1999 to 2014.

For the purpose of the study, the selected cases have to follow the classification or definition of rampage school shootings as set out in chapter 1.3. The definition of rampage school shootings is a combination of Newmans' (2004) and Muscherts' (2007) characterization, since both scholars use more or less the same definition of rampage school shootings and cover the essentials. Consistent with this definition, drug trade activities or gang related incidents involving the educational institution as a site of opportunity, are not included. Nor are violent incidents between individuals that coincidentally occurred at the institution included (Muschert, 2007).

Next to this resemblance, the cases are selected upon feasibility. In order for an in-depth analysis and comparison to work, the cases had to be widely known, highly publicized and heavily debated upon in the public-political field and media. Thus, besides the fact that the selected cases must comply with the definition of rampage school shootings, they also need to be high profile cases, which received mass media attention, featuring high levels of political activity and public and political debate and conflict about the perceived incidents within society. The cases must meet these conditions and must also be notable, well-documented and highly publicized, in order to allow a sufficient in-depth analysis and comparison between cases

as desired. This because, when selecting cases, the first criterion and primary consideration should be about maximizing our learning (Stake, 1995). Creswell (2012) concurs with this notion and states that purposeful sampling allows the researcher to "select individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (p. 156). With the suggestions of Creswell and Stake taken into account, in an effort of providing the best representation of the school shooting phenomenon, the selection of cases for this research was made strategically and purposively.

Case selection is of importance within the United States and Germany – since they represent the most cases – when trying to gain an understanding whether or not social bonds to society play a role in rampage school shootings and to what extent (Bondü et al., 2011). Both countries are selected since various rampage school shooting incidents have taken place over there (Bondü & Scheithauer, 2015; Newman & Fox, 2009). Since dozens of general school shooting incidents have happened over the years, the sheer amount of school shootings can lead to feasibility issues for the research (Everytown, 2016). Therefore, an in-depth analysis will be made based on three specific cases from both the US and Germany within the time period of 1999 to 2014. This time frame is chosen in order to select and analyze only the most recent rampage school shooting incidents.

One of the selected cases, however, is deviating from the others since it is the only case that has two perpetrators. In that sense it is anomalous. This case is included in the study since it is one of the most significant rampage school shooting cases that received nationwide and international attention and is one of the most heavily documented cases with the highest death toll at the time (Heilbrun, Goldstein & Redding, 2005; Larkin, 2009; Muschert, 2002). Also, preceding the incident, there were reportedly only two other rampage school shooting cases and has since gone international (Larkin, 2009). Furthermore, since the lives of the two perpetrators of this case have been intertwined for years prior to the rampage, the strength of their social bonds may be different in comparison with the other perpetrators.

Based on the criteria as introduced above, six rampage school shooting cases have been selected. In chronological order, these cases are: (i) the Columbine High School massacre; (ii) the Erfurt massacre; (iii) the Red Lake shootings; (iv) the Emsdetten school shooting; (v) the Virginia Tech massacre; and (vi) the Winnenden school shooting. Detailed descriptions of these school shootings can be found in the next chapter.

Rampage school shooting cases			
Town	**Country**	**Perpetrator(s)**	**Date**
Columbine	United States	Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold	April 20th, 1999
Erfurt	Germany	Robert Steinhäuser	April 26th, 2002
Red Lake	United States	Jeffrey Weise	March 21th, 2005
Emsdetten	Germany	Sebastian Bosse	November 20th, 2006
Blacksburg	United States	Seung-Hui Cho	April 16th, 2007
Winnenden	Germany	Tim Kretschmer	March 11th, 2009

Table 3.2: Rampage school shooting case selection

3.4 Data gathering and processing

The primary strategy of the gathering of data within case study designs is characterized by triangulated research or triangulation of methods, in order to view and explore the phenomena from multiple perspectives (Knafl & Breitmayer, 1989). Triangulation is also considered the best approach towards a case study, since Rothbauer (2008) stated that "the phenomena under study can be understood best when approached with a variety or a combination of research methods" (p. 893). According to Yin (1984), the necessity for triangulation derives from the need to affirm the validity of processes and is achieved through the use of multiple data sources. The triangulation of independent data sources with the actual findings often refers to cross-check verification, where distortion of data is less likely when similar conclusions are suggested or findings are confirmed by two or more independent data sources (Knafl & Breitmayer, 1989; Patzer, 1996). Consequently, triangulation is defined as "the use of more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon so that findings may be cross-checked" (Bryman, 2012:717). A number of data collection techniques are employed in order to gain insight and a better understanding of the phenomenon of rampage school shootings.

Document analysis is one of the data collection methods used for the research, which includes public records such as official records, policy documents and institutional reports, but also personal documents as first-person reports of an individual's beliefs, experiences and actions (Saunders et al., 2009). Another method is desktop research, where scholarly literature, reports, newspapers and articles are collected, studied and analyzed. And finally, due to the severity of school shooting incidents, there exists wide mass media coverage on the subject. Mass media can be considered a useful source of information on public attitudes and opinions, but also about historical and current events (Bryman, 2012; Macnamara, 2005). Through media analysis, a contribution can be made to the information and knowledge that are previously obtained by the aforementioned data collection methods.

There are, however, various limitations linked to the analysis of media sources. Internet sources may be biased, do not necessarily always represent accurate information, stories change and thus information changes, it is unable to confirm every bit of information presented by these sources and they may represent distorted information (Bryman, 2012; Yin, 2009). Therefore, it is important to cross-check with other sources, such as academic articles, and always critically judge and assess the information available.

In assessing and analyzing the information acquired through desktop research, document analysis on academic sources, literature and other policy documents and media analysis, the obtained information is processed by the means of a plus/minus table. The qualitative information found on each indicator within each case can be placed in a specific category, as seen in table 3.1. Furthermore, when the information on all cases is complete and analyzed, they will be joined together in a table so that further conclusions can be drawn. An example of an entire completed table can be found in table 3.3 below.

An indicator is rated double minus if there is sufficient or strong evidence or indication that there is a severely weakened and maybe even a broken bond with that particular indicator. A single minus is therefore based on evidence or indication suggesting a weakened bond. The rating of a zero or nil of an indicator is considered neutral, since evidence does not show a weak or strong bond or because comprehensive information on the indicator is difficult to obtain (this type of limitation is discussed below). If there is some evidence or indication of a strong bond, an indicator is rated with a plus and two pluses if there is strong evidence suggesting a strong bond. The strength of evidence therefore relates to the rating of the specific indicators. There are exceptions, however, since perpetrators may be 'committed' to certain causes, but if evidence shows this is not in line with Hirschi's (1969) commitment to conventional and non delinquent goals, the indicator of commitment is rated with either a minus or a double minus, dependent on the strength of the evidence or indication. This also applies to the indicator of involvement, when evidence shows that perpetrators are involved non conventional or delinquent activities. Attachment to peers, in contrary, can be rated with a plus or two pluses whether evidence shows that the perpetrator is involved with conventional and non delinquent peers or that the perpetrator is involved with non conventional and delinquent peers.

	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Case 5	Case 6
Indicator 1	-	0	-	+	++	+
Indicator 2	+	+	-	+	-	+
Indicator 3	0	+	++	+	0	- -
Indicator 4	-	0	+	-	+	+
Indicator 5	+	+	-	- -	-	+
Indicator 6	++	- -	+	+	-	-

Table 3.3: Example of plus-minus table (randomly filled in)

Limitations of data gathering and processing may also be reflected in the rating of the indicators of the social bond, especially when evidence results in a zero or nil and the rating of the indicator is considered neutral. This may be the result of the difficulty of obtaining comprehensive and sufficient information about certain indicators. There might be little elaborate evidence or information on the indicator of attachment to parents for example, since every perpetrator of a rampage school shooting in this study has committed suicide and therefore can not provide the information necessary to rate the strength of evidence on this indicator. Furthermore, information retrieved from the parents through documentation or interviews may paint a certain picture, but can not be validated since the perpetrator might have felt different. Since sources like newspaper reports and articles are used in this study, it is not always easy to evaluate and assess the reliability of the information provided, mainly due to the sheer volume and abundance of information. Trustworthiness of the reports based on available data may be even difficult to evaluate due to the fact that reports are not necessarily fully accurate. The reliability of information is also difficult to assess due to confidential documents, which are not revealed or available to the public, like mental health documents. These limitations may be reflected in the results.

4. Analysis and results

In analyzing the six chosen cases within the United States and Germany, it is essential to provide background information on each case. Therefore, firstly, a detailed description on each individual case, that serve as the case study material for this research, is given. Each case begins with a brief introduction of the rampage school shooting and provides general background information on the perpetrator(s). After the presentation of this information, in the light of the theoretical framework of Hirschi (1969), each indicator is analyzed and assessed within the various cases. Then, the findings per case are set out in a table which shows to which degree an indicator is present within that particular case. This particular structure of presenting the cases is chosen to bring it in a more economic and nuanced way. Eventually, the findings on all cases are joined in one table, from which further findings can be analyzed and other conclusions can be made. The various rampage school shooting cases from the United States and Germany are presented in chronological order.

4.1 Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold – Columbine High School massacre, 1999

The high school known as Columbine High School, often abbreviated as CHS, is located in Columbine within the American state of Colorado. However, at the end of the 1990s, when the United States was the scene of several school shootings, Columbine High School was also struck by this type of violence and within the United States the shooting became known as one of the worst in their history of rampage school shootings (Britannica, 2015; Twemlow, 2012). On April 20th 1999, Columbine High School was rocked by the shooting violence after the two senior student perpetrators, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris, killed 13 people including a teacher and wounded another 23 people (Langman, 2010). Initially, Harris and Klebold planned a bombing on a massive scale, that would even overshadow the Oklahoma City bombing, instead of a minor school shooting (Langman, 2008; Larkin, 2009). They planned to kill over 400 students with previously prepared large duffel bags filled with explosives during the busiest time in the cafeteria and wanted to shoot the remaining survivors (JCSO Official Columbine Report, 2000; Langman, 2008; Larkin, 2009). Luckily, their plan did not work out as the explosives failed to go off, however Harris and Klebold decided to make their way toward the school and directed their rage towards other students and teachers. The rampage lasted for about half an hour, after which both perpetrators committed suicide (Bartels & Crowder, 1999; JCSO, 2000; JCSO Official Columbine Report, 2000). The Columbine tragedy received nationwide attention and school shootings became nationally recognized with the general public, due to

live television coverage and nationwide exposure over a long period of time (Heilbrun et al., 2005).

4.1.1 Background information on Eric Harris

The 18-years old Eric Harris was one of the perpetrators of the Columbine High School rampage school shooting along with Dylan Klebold. Harris' family was intact and seemed well-functioning (Columbine Review Commission, 2001). However, there are reports that suggest there is another side to the story (Langman, 2010). Throughout his life, Harris really appeared to be enjoying himself in fooling and deceiving others. His ability to mislead people and his pleasure in it is most evident in his writings, where he used to brag about conning legal professionals, school personnel, his parents and others (JCSO, 1999; Langman, 2009b). Once, Harris was arrested for the theft of electronic equipment and had to attend a probation program, however, the program came to an early end when he charmed his way out of it (JCSO, 1999). Harris was very confident in his abilities to get away with things and fooling people. He even wrote, "I can make you believe anything" and "I could convince the school administrators that I'm going to climb Mount Everest" (Cullen, 1999:1). Langman (2010) believed Harris was a specialist in impression management.

Langman (2013) even described Harris as a psychopath that is characterized by having a pleasure in deceiving others, is skilled in impression management, has sadistic tendencies, has a sense of superiority and lacks empathy. Behavior of psychopaths is not constrained by laws or morals and in this respect, social norms were disregarded and Harris violated various laws (Langman, 2010). Harris was involved in credit card fraud and broke into the school's computer system, furthermore, he constructed homemade explosives to blow things up and illegally purchased several weapons (JCSO, 1999; Pitzel, 2004). Also, Harris reportedly deliberately damaged public and private properties and even stole at school and in the community (Bartels & Crowder, 1999; JCSO, 1997; JCSO, 1999). In line with his psychopathic nature, Harris felt superior to everyone else and wanted to be recognized as such (Langman, 2013). He aspired to be seen as a God among men. Harris even wrote, "I feel like God and I wish I was, having everyone being officially lower than me" (JCSO, 1999:26). Sadistic tendencies complete the picture of Harris being a psychopathic school shooter, as he was heartless, insensitive and had a cruel disregard for others. His fantasy on the mutilation of people for example became true during the rampage and his behavior during the shooting was exemplary for his sadistic nature. While Harris was shooting at Columbine High, he would laugh, provoke and challenge others (Cullen, 2004).

4.1.2   Background information on Dylan Klebold

Dylan Klebold was a 17-year old student of Columbine High at the time of the event. Klebold came from an intact family and had not experience any neglect or abuse (Langman, 2010). On April 20th 1999, Klebold decided to team up with Eric Harris in a rampage school shooting at their current high school, Columbine High (JCSO Official Columbine Report, 2000).

According to Langman (2013), Klebold was considered psychotic, however, unlike other psychotic perpetrators of school shootings, he was not that conspicuously. Klebold's thought processes were disrupted and there was little indication of this, until in 2006 his journal was released, giving insight in Klebold's train of thought (JCSO, 1999). In his journals words were often put to wrong use and words that did not exist were created by distorting actual words. Unlike the speech of schizophrenics, Klebold's odd use of language and confounded grammar never became a mixture of random words and phrases, but the disturbance in his though process is at least notable (Langman, 2010). Also, Klebold deviated on another point from the typical psychotic shooter. Instead of suffering from schizophrenia, Klebold seemed to have suffered from the mental disorder known as schizotypal personality disorder, often characterized by paranoia and social anxiety (Langman, 2013). His social anxiety showed through his social awkwardness and the fact that he was noticeably shy (Bartels & Crowder, 1999). Klebold felt like he was always being evaluated or judged by others and therefore experienced social difficulties in life. The odd behaviors and thoughts as part of being schizotypal reflected to Klebold's surroundings and he therefore seemed a bit strange to others (Langman, 2010). Klebold stood out from his peers due to his foolishness, different style of clothes and his odd behavior (JCSO, 1999).

Beside from his mental disorder, Klebold also had very strange ideas about himself and sometimes even seemed delusional as he viewed himself godlike and not as an actual human being (Langman, 2010). Klebold wrote in his journals, "some god I am" and "humanity is the something I long for" (JCSO, 1999:26). The delusional ideas did not seem to last, but were mainly responses to certain events that caused paranoia for example. In this state, Klebold felt as if everyone conspired against him and despised him (Langman, 2010). Looking at all his issues, it appears that Klebold's life was very affected by his mental disorder.

4.1.3   Strength of the social bond

The Columbine High School Massacre is the only rampage school shooting case in this thesis, where the event was perpetrated by two shooters. Since the lives of Eric Harris and Dylan

Klebold are somewhat intertwined, at least over the last couple of years prior to the shooting, the strength of their social bond will be compared alongside each other. First, the indicators will be briefly illustrated, where after they will be applied to the perpetrators of this particular case. The strength of Eric Harris' and Dylan Klebold's social bond is determined by the following indicators:

Attachment to parents

According to Hirschi (1969) attachment to parents relates to the intimacy of communication between child and parents, where thoughts, emotions and feelings are shared and discussed. Another important dimension within this indicator is whether or not children consider the consequences of their actions in term of their parent's reaction toward their behavior. When they do not seem to care or think about possible repercussions, the child will probably exert certain behavior indicating a weakened attachment to their parents (Hirschi, 1969).

Harris was reportedly a psychopath and a skillful deceiver (Langman, 2010). He was also able to fool his parents, who reportedly had no idea what was going on in their son's head (Cullen, 2010). They knew he had anger issues and tried to address this by sending him to a therapist (Langman, 2008). However, his parents never really learned how he felt and what his though process was like. Klebold's parents had just as little impression of their son's state of mind. His mother said, "I think he suffered horribly before he died. For not seeing that, I will never forgive myself" (Brooks, 2004:1). She described Klebold as someone who gradually became more quiet and even markedly shy at the point where he was unable to intimately communicate about his feelings and thoughts. He never expressed what he truly felt and his private thoughts and feelings were only expressed in his notebooks (Klebold, 2009).

Another dimension within this indicator relates to their parent's reaction toward their behavior. Harris and Klebold were involved in multiple deviant, criminal acts and even were arrested at one point. However, despite their parents, they continued to exert this type of behavior over a period of time (Langman, 2008). Harris and Klebold made statements about their parents, saying that it was never their fault and that they felt terrible (Langman, 2009b). Harris said, "My dad is great, I wish I was a fucking sociopath so I didn't have any remorse, but I do. This is going to tear them apart" (Cullen, 1999:1). Klebold said something similar as he referred to his "great parents" (Cullen, 1999:1).

Although it never really becomes clear to what extent the intimacy of communication was between Harris and Klebold and their parents, it is evident that they did not share most of their emotions, thoughts and feelings. Furthermore, from their statements they reportedly

seemed concerned of their parents' reaction toward their behavior. In conclusion, Harris' and Klebold's attachment to parents may be considered weakened.

Attachment to peers or friends

Within the indicator of attachment to peers or friends, Hirschi (1969) states that the befriending of conventional or non conventional peers is an essential part of that individual's behavior. Companionship of non conventional peers can negatively influence the individual's behavior, because they are less likely to be conformed to conventional norms and therefore, the attachment to those kinds of peers may be considered weakened (Hirschi, 1969).

Harris and Klebold reportedly were social outcast to early accounts of the rampage, however, it is learned that this was inaccurate (Brooks, 2004; Langman, 2008; Toppo, 2009). Although it was believed that Harris and Klebold were ostracized and isolated and the fact that Klebold was socially awkward and struck many people as odd, did not mean that they did not have any friends (Langman, 2008; Larkin, 2009). In fact, Harris and Klebold were involved in multiple peer groups and had various close friends (Cullen, 2004). The statement of Harris and Klebold being social outcasts was even contradicted by their classmates (Prendergast, 1999).

Within their peer groups, Harris and Klebold were involved with all kinds of conventional activities, hobbies and sports (Langman, 2008). Most of their peer groups were conventional and did not exhibit any deviant behavior. Along with various friends, Harris and Klebold were interested and involved in ordinary activities such as baseball, soccer, video games and bowling, which they participated in in group-form (JCSO, 1999; Langman, 2008). However, the duo also had less conventional friends with which they were involved in deviant and criminal acts. This is discussed in further detail under the indicator of belief.

Even though Harris and Klebold had multiple peer groups with conventional friends, that were conformed to conventional norms and activities, they also had a number of non conventional friends that were involved in illegal or deviant behavior. Besides that, Harris and Klebold had each other. Non conventional friends seemed to have the upper hand in their friend circle and exerted negative influence. However, the evidence does not negatively influence the indicator of attachment to peers. Due to the amount of friends Harris and Klebold had and the fact that they had each other and spent a great deal of time together, the evidence suggests a strong bond.

Attachment to school

Academic performances and abilities are considered of great importance within this indicator, because when an individual performs well in school, they tend to like the school better and find it more relevant for their future (Hirschi, 1969). According to Hirschi (1969), the concern for the opinions of teachers along with the acceptance of the school's authority is another important dimension within the indicator. However, when an individual cares about what teachers think of him, but feels frustrated, bullied or picked on by them, they are most likely to exhibit deviant behavior (Hirschi, 1969).

In general, when it comes to academic performances and abilities, Harris seemed committed to school and earned good grades. The fact that Harris earned and maintained good grades resulted in experiencing success at school and therefore probably liked school (Langman, 2008). His sense of superiority and intelligence over others was affirmed by his academic success. Due to his involvement in class and knowledge, Harris was looked up to by his fellow students and appreciated by his teachers (JCSO, 1999). Various teachers praised Harris for his "strong interest and participation" and "positive attitude and good cooperation" (JCSO, 1999:26.325; JCSO, 1999:26.317; Langman, 2009b). Since Harris' intelligence was valued and he experienced success in school, he appeared to like school and gave no indication otherwise (Langman, 2008).

According to Cullen (1999), Klebold was born with a brilliant mind, which resulted in him starting a year earlier than his peers in school. As a a gifted and intellectual child, Klebold registered for the Challenging High Intellectual Potential Students (CHIPS) program in third grade. In mathematics, Klebold was considered a genius among other brilliant minds (Cullen, 2009). However, Klebold was struggling with the transition and when he went to Columbine High, he found it difficult to fit in in school (JCSO, 1999). Even though Klebold was talented, his grades at Columbine were no more than average (Biography, 1999).

The relation of Harris and Klebold with their teachers also seemed to differ, since Harris appeared to have a relatively good understanding with his teachers, although they both reportedly "made fun of teachers behind their backs and even to their faces" (Bartels & Crowder, 1999:1). Klebold's behavior in class and towards his teachers, however, appeared to be opposite of that of Harris. Klebold exhibited intimidating behavior, was disruptive, cursed, insulted and was disrespectful to his teachers indicating a possible poor relationship (JCSO, 1999; Langman, 2008).

Although there is no doubt that Harris and Klebold both were bright boys with enough academic potential, they displayed totally different behavior in class and toward their teachers.

Where Harris earned good grades and seemed to respect his teachers, Klebold earned less good grades but still around average and often displayed deviant behavior. Therefore, Harris' attachment to school may be considered very strong and Klebold's attachment neutral to weakened, mainly due to his disruptive and disrespectful behavior.

Commitment

Overall commitment may be determined by the individual's aspiration and ambition levels in educational and occupational goals. Although commitment levels fluctuate, with the prospect of losing accomplished achievements or future goals, one is less likely to engage in criminal behavior (Hirschi, 1969). While having low aspirations and expectations, the individual has less to lose and may therefore be more involved in deviant or delinquent acts. According to Hirschi (1969) commitment also relates to the extent of which a perpetrator was dedicated to a certain cause, but mainly concerns dedication to conventional lines of action like education or a high-status occupation.

Harris and Klebold seemed to differ upon at least their educational aspirations and efforts. Where Harris would actively contribute at school, Klebold seemed much less involved and even exhibited deviant behavior in class (Langman, 2008). One of Harris' teachers commented that he showed "strong interest and participation" (JCSO, 1999:26.325). Furthermore, a classmate stated that, "he was so involved in class, always had his hand up… he knew every single answer… always had an opinion" (Prendergast, 1999:1). Klebold's behavior was completely the opposite, as he rarely participated and showed overall poor behavior during class (JCSO, 1999). Besides their educational efforts, Harris and Klebold both worked part-time jobs. For a brief period, they worked multiple jobs and then together at Tortilla Wraps. But both were also long-term employed, ever since their sophomore years, at a pizza shop called Blackjack's. Harris and Klebold both worked there until the shooting at Columbine High (Bartels & Crowder, 1999). Reportedly, however, they did not express any future educational goals and plans nor did they express any future occupational goals and plans.

Harris and Klebold were dedicated to a certain cause, however, not really in line with conventional action. Their main future goal concerned dedication to dying in the blaze of glory, as they went "NBK" – short for Natural Born Killers, a film they reportedly were fan of and also the code name for the attack on the school – and "destroyed as much as possible" (JCSO, 1999:26.007; JCSO, 1999:26.012; Langman, 2009b). They seemed really committed to this goal, since they planned the rampage for over a year (Langman, 2009b).

Although Harris and Klebold both worked at the pizza shop for a long period of time, but although they were long-term employed and both had something to lose on the occupational part, this does not say anything about their future occupational aspirations and goals. Furthermore, these goals or plans are not clarified by any report. As far as educational aspirations and goals go, Harris and Klebold differ slightly. As where Harris seemed really committed in class, by both his teachers and fellow students, Klebold did not. Reportedly, however, future educational aspirations are not expressed by both. The perpetrators did heavily invest in the NBK, considered not in line with conventional action. As a result, evidence shows a weakened bond in both Harris's and Klebold's overall commitment.

Involvement

According to Hirschi (1969), involvement relates to an individual's time spent on prosocial and conventional activities such as school-related activities, sports or hobbies. A low level of involvement in these kinds of activities does not immediately imply that an individual spends their time on deviant or even delinquent activities, however, it does indicate a significant amount of time that can ben spent on particular events (Hirschi, 1969).

According to Langman (2008), both Harris and Klebold were involved in all kinds of activities, varying from school-related activities to playing sports and board games with friends. Within multiple peer groups Harris and Klebold were involved in playing in a fantasy baseball league, making movies, playing soccer, online video games, bowling and paintballing with friends and even a board game called Dungeons and Dragons (Langman, 2009b).

Harris and Klebold were involved in multiple activities, both alone as together. Outside of school, Klebold was in a band, playing drums, with one of his high school friends and regularly visited baseball games (Brown & Merrit, 2002; JCSO, 1999). Harris on the other hand, was more interested in the traditional sports and excelled in after-school sports like volleyball, soccer and football (JCSO, 1999). As a freshman and sophomore, Harris also played on the Columbine soccer team (Carnahan, 1999; Langman, 2009b).

Apart from having their own interests and activities, they did have a number of activities where they both were involved in. Along with two other friends, Harris and Klebold joined a bowling team with which they performed at school (JCSO, 1999). They formed "The Fighting Amish", a paintball team, together with one of their other mutual friends (JCSO, 1999:3.213). Furthermore, both regularly helped out at school with the production of plays and films, they even maintained the web server of Columbine High and were part of the Rebel News Network

(Langman, 2008; Langman, 2009b). Finally, both were highly involved, along with multiple friends from school, in playing video games against and with each other (JCSO, 1999).

According to various reports, both Harris and Klebold were highly involved in various activities, varying from sports, hobbies and recreation to even school-related activities. They did not only participate in these activities alone or together, Harris and Klebold had multiple peer groups with which they participated in all kinds of activities. Their overall involvement may therefore be considered exceptionally strong.

Belief

As the final indicator of Hirschi's (1969) social control theory, belief refers to individuals having high regard for lawful behavior, the norms of society and moral validity. People tend not to diverge, while feeling rule bound and accepting society's common value system. However, one can violate the rules he believes in when rationalizing his behavior (Hirschi, 1969).

Despite being arrested just once, both Harris and Klebold were engaged numerous illegal activities and broke the law several times. The duo committed various acts of vandalism, broke into vehicles and stole equipment, let others buy them explosives and guns, committed credit card fraud, spray painted graffiti and deliberately damaged people's homes (JCSO, 1999; Langman, 2008; Larkin, 2009).

Besides their unlawful behaviors, Harris and Klebold demonstrated their very little belief in moral validity and social norms and values. Langman (2013) described Harris as a psychopath that does not acknowledge morality and stated his behavior is not constrained by laws or social norms, because he does not recognize them as limitations to his behavior. Harris stated, "Morals is just another word" (JCSO, 1999:26.012). Furthermore, Harris compared himself to God and proclaimed, "My belief is that if I say something, it goes. I am the law" (JCSO, 1999:10.415). According to Langman (2008) Harris was even willing to kill his two best friends in the rampage, indicating that nothing would stop him. Langman (2010) also commented on the fact that Harris' homicidal thoughts extended far beyond the attack on the school, including the destruction of local neighborhoods and even cities (JCSO, 1999). The duo regularly told their classmates about their dreams of killing and shooting people and the fact that only the strong survive (Prendergast, 1999). Harris and Klebold also deflected the blame towards their peers, saying that is was all their fault and "You're fucking going to pay for all the shit. We're going to kill you all. We don't give a shit. Because we're gonna die doing it" (Cullen, 1999:1; Zero Hour, 2004). Over the years, Klebold had his anger built up and said "I

hope we kill 250 of you" (Cullen, 1999:1). Furthermore, Harris and Klebold wished to attain celebrity status through their school rampage (Muschert & Sumiala, 2012).

In conclusion, both perpetrators exhibited many forms of unlawful behavior, disregarding social norms and values. Their statements about wanting to kill people also indicate a severely weakened belief system. Harris and Klebold tried to justify and rationalize their behavior and belief by saying that everybody had it coming and that they deserved their wrath. Blame is deflected towards others and as Langman (2010) put it, morality is not acknowledged. For these reasons, the indicator of belief is considered to be seriously weakened and may even be missing with both Harris and Klebold.

When assessing and combining all of the indicators that determine the strength of Eric Harris' and Dylan Klebold's social bond, it leads to the following overview:

Harris (left) and Klebold (right), Columbine High		
Indicators	**Strength of the bond**	**Strength of the bond**
Attachment to parents	-	-
Attachment to peers or friends	++	++
Attachment to school	++	-
Commitment	-	-
Involvement	++	++
Belief	--	--

Table 4.1: Eric Harris' and Dylan Klebold's social bond indicators rated

4.2 Robert Steinhäuser – Erfurt massacre, 2002

In the Thuringia State capital of Erfurt, Germany, lies the secondary school of the Gutenberg-Gymnasium. On April 26th 2002, the Gutenberg-Gymnasium was the stage of the worst rampage school shooting in German history at that time (BBC, 2002; Finley, 2011). The school shooting in Erfurt is often referred to as the Erfurt massacre, where the then 19-year-old Robert Steinhäuser commenced his rampage. Steinhäuser had been expelled from the Gutenberg-Gymnasium approximately one year prior to the rampage, but had kept it a secret from his parents all this time as he left without any qualifications (Wallace, 2002). During the fifteen-minute killing spree, Steinhäuser targeted and killed mostly teachers and other staff of his former school (Hooper, 2002). The perpetrator killed 16 people and wounded (Gasser, Creutzfeldt, Naher, Rainer & Wickler, 2004). When one of the teachers was eventually able to lock him in one of the school's classrooms, Steinhäuser decided to commit suicide, ending his school rampage (CNN, 2002; Gasser et al., 2004).

4.2.1 Background information on Robert Steinhäuser

The 19-year-old Robert Steinhäuser was a former student of the Gutenberg-Gymnasium, from which he had been expelled the year before in 2001 (Larkin, 2009). He was very pessimistic about his chances of success with the finals and feared he would fail again. Therefore, he decided to forge medical notes from a doctor, but was caught and excluded from school (Helm, 2002a). Due to his expulsion, Steinhäuser had very limited occupational opportunities as he had left school without any qualifications (Wallace, 2002). Therefore, he had never told his parents about this and pretended to be going to school every day until the incident (Beard, 2002; Hooper, 2002)

According to Langman (2012), Steinhäuser was neither suffering from a psychosis nor did he sustain any previous trauma or abuse. However, he did show traits of having a psychopathic nature due to his open and unashamed disregard for rules and his deceiving and narcissistic character (Langman, 2013). There are conflicting reports on his school's friendships, as where one student said that he did not have many friends, another said that Steinhäuser was a popular, attention seeking and rebellious young man (Andrews, 2002; Wallace, 2002). This description corresponds with Langman's (2012) suggestion of Steinhäuser having a narcissistic character, as he desired fame, was insubordinate and at the same time popular among his peers.

In line with his perceived psychopathic nature, Steinhäuser's rampage seemed an act of revenge for he felt he had been done wrong with his expulsion (Langman, 2012). While he was absent from school, he forged medical notes in order to practice his shooting at a local gun club. However, he was discovered by the school's teachers and thus expelled (Hall, 2002). Steinhäuser felt like a victim in the situation and therefore held his teachers responsible for his exclusion and the denied opportunity of having a degree, another trait of psychopaths (Langman, 2013). Also, one of his peers said: "I think the teachers got on his nerves" (Wallace, 2002:1). Fact is that during the rampage, most of Steinhäuser's victims were teachers of his former school (Helm, 2002b).

4.2.2 Strength of the social bond

As previously described by Langman (2013) as having a psychopathic nature, characterized by a lack of empathy and narcissism, Robert Steinhäuser's strength of his social bond is determined by the following indicators:

Attachment to parents

Although there is little known about Robert Steinhäuser's attachment to his parents from his childhood, there are reports and documents present that can inform about the level of attachment leading up to the 2002 incident. Even though his parents were separated, he did not particularly suffer from a disadvantaged background, since both parents were reportedly amicable and made a decent living (Rippert, 2002). Despite of the separation, they would still come together as a family during weekends and other familial occasions (Amok in der Schule, 2004). At one point, Steinhäuser's parents decided he needed to switch to another high school in order to pass his Abitur (final exams) and be able to get a regular job (Henning, 2004). He was put under a lot of pressure and his father said that no matter what grades he got, he needed to complete the Abitur. "It's the only chance you have to get a job and earn money and lead a decent life" (Henning, 2004:1). His mother in particular scolded and criticized him about his uncertain future, a situation that led to serious conflicts within the family (Henning, 2004). In the documentary *Amok in der Schule,* Robert's father states that he was an integrated part of the family and that their relation was based on trust and confidence, or at least that is was strongly present (Amok in der Schule, 2004). However, this is not in line with the deceiving and secrecy Steinhäuser had towards his parents in the six-month period before the incident.

While Steinhäuser was absent from school, he went to the gun club in order to practice his shooting, medical notes were forged to cover his absenteeism (Langman, 2012). When he was exposed, he got expelled, but never once mentioned this to his parents in all those months and just pretended to be going to school everyday (Hooper, 2002). To uphold his deceiving behavior, Steinhäuser shredded the school's letters that were sent to their home (Beard, 2002). His parents were absolutely oblivious to the situation as "he let us wake him as normal every morning, he took his sandwiches and went out of the house as if he was on his way to school" (Connolly, 2002:1). They believed he was "on course to pass his exams" and said "goodbye and good luck" on the day of the incident, not knowing what he was planning (Beard, 2002:1).

According to Hirschi's (1969) description of attachment to parents in terms of valuing his parents' opinion and respect, this might explain his secrecy and deceiving behavior. The fact that Steinhäuser actually cared what his parent thought of his actions and consequences, might have been a reason he has kept his expulsion hidden from them. Intimacy of communication on the other hand also corresponds with these findings. Steinhäuser was never able to express his feelings and thoughts about what was going on in this six-month period with his parents, instead he would go to the gun club. This given, would indicate a weakened bond in attachment to his parents.

Attachment to peers or friends

There are many reports and articles that contradict each other on whether or not Steinhäuser had friends at or outside of school. What is known is that Steinhäuser was never socially excluded or bullied by his peers (Langman, 2013). Some of his peers said that he had no real friends, but did have plenty of acquaintances (Andrews, 2002; Delekat, 2002). Others said that many students liked him, that he met friends on a daily basis and at weekends he went to the disco with some of them (Wallace, 2002). However, his mother contradicted this in the documentary when she said that Steinhäuser had little interest in others and would not even go to the disco (Amok in der Schule, 2004). In one of Steinhäuser's assignments from the Gutenberg-Gymnasium, Robert described himself liked by some and disliked by others (Henning, 2004).

Although there is no evidence that Steinhäuser compared himself with the Columbine shooters, or looked up to them, a similarity is found between perpetrators. For example, Steinhäuser told some of his peers that he "wanted everyone to know his name and just be famous" (Niedzviecki, 2006:206; Wallace, 2002). So, in both incidents, they desired fame in pop culture for perpetuity. Steinhäuser's claim to fame would be the attainment of a greater death toll than in the Columbine case (Gasser et al., 2004; Mendoza, 2002b).

Normally, a weakened bond in relation to attachment to peers or friends is characterized by having little to none friends or peers with whom he interacted with. Reportedly Steinhäuser had a couple of friends, or at least acquaintances who may be considered conventional peers and that could influence him positively. Evidence suggests that Steinhäuser did appear to have conventional and non delinquent friends and therefore his attachment to peers or friends is considered positive.

Attachment to school

In order to switch to another secondary school, Steinhäuser needed to up his grades and he did. He received such good grades, where he was praised for in the testimonies that eventually let him into the Gutenberg-Gymnasium (Amok in der Schule, 2004). After a while, when he became more and more involved with a local gun club, his attendance and academic performance started to suffer (Gasser et al., 2004). Then, according to the report from *der Kommission Gutenberg-Gymnasium* (2004), his academic performance and grades had increasingly worsened throughout a certain period that eventually led to Steinhäuser's expulsion (Diamond, 2013). Due to his expulsion, he was nog longer connected to the secondary school in any way and thus left without qualifications (Wallace, 2002).

Another dimension within this indicator is about how one feels about his teachers. The relationship with his teachers was not good to say the least, where on his first high school Steinhäuser made teaching impossible with his uncontrolled and aggressive behavior (Henning, 2004). Steinhäuser definitely did not respect them and this was also shown two years prior to the attack, at the Gutenberg-Gymnasium, when he was confronted for smoking during a school trip (Langman, 2012). During the confrontation, Steinhäuser exherted hostile and violent behavior towards the teacher and pretended to shoot him while he formed a gun with his hand (Beard, 2002). One of his peers said "I think the teachers got on his nerves" (Wallace, 2002:1). Steinhäuser's negative relationship with his teachers really showed during the rampage, as he targeted mainly teachers. He felt that the teachers frustrated his opportunities in getting the proper qualifications by expelling him from school (Langman, 2012).

In conclusion, Steinhäuser's academic abilities and performance were never really great and started to plummet in a specific period leading up to his expulsion from school. Due to this expulsion, academically, Steinhäuser's prospects were blown as he left without qualifications. Furthermore, he did not care much about his teachers or the rules they set in their classes and would defy them at times. Especially after his expulsion, Steinhäuser was not able to forgive them. Therefore, evidence suggesting a severely weakened or broken bond in attachment to school might be the logical result.

Commitment

From one of Steinhäuser's school assignments, a bit of his educational aspirations at the time can be unveiled. In the assignment he stated that he wanted to study in a particular direction, but was not able to get the amount of point needed and so he had to readjust his plan (Amok in der Schule, 2014). Then he says "my aim at the moment is to first get good marks in the exams, and second work as a systems analyst", explaining his future educational and occupational goals (Amok in der Schule, 2004; Henning, 2004:1). This assignment was made approximately two school years before the incident and in the meantime, a lot changed. Steinhäuser seemed decreasingly committed to his aims and goals and this was reflected in his progressive absenteeism and failing grades (Diamond, 2013; Gasser et al., 2004). In fact, he would rather hang out at the gun club, practicing his shooting, than going to school and perform academically (Langman, 2012).

With his expulsion six months prior to the exams, both his educational and occupational aspirations and expectations would be severely lowered. Due to Thuringia state rules, Steinhäuser had no qualifications at all and could not even be compensated with a minor

qualification (Beard, 2002). Therefore, he was not qualified for most of the jobs in Germany and affected his commitment dramatically. Based on the fact that Steinhäuser's educational and occupational career was over even before it started, his commitment is considered to be severely weakened or broken.

Involvement

According to his mother, Steinhäuser had little interest in conventional activities. He had little interest in anything and did not have any real hobbies. Although, one point in time his parents put him on a handball club, but Steinhäuser was never really interested and stopped after a little while (Amok in der Schule, 2004). Steinhäuser often obsessively watched tv, no matter what was on and always played violent video games on his computer (Amok in der Schule, 2004; Rippert, 2002). Even though he did not spend his time on school-related activities or sports, Steinhäuser was an avid member of two local gun clubs where he practiced along with his father and on his own (Amok in der Schule, 2004; Langman, 2012). In fact, he devoted so much of his time at the gun club, that it had cost him school-career (Hall, 2002; Langman, 2012).

It is debatable whether or not shooting at the gun club may be considered a conventional activity, however, it is a fact that this activity did not benefit him in various ways. Since it was a hobby of his and he devoted a lot of his time on it, the bond of involvement is present and may even be considered as strong.

Belief

It appears that Steinhäuser believed in the rules of the common value system of society, at least, there are no records of him having had trouble with the law or other authorities. He did however, had a history of trouble following the rules of the school. At his first high school, Steinhäuser made teaching impossible with his violent rampant behavior (Henning, 2004). Also at the Gutenberg-Gymnasium, he showed a real defiance of authority and refusal to obey orders. In general, he had a blatant disregard for school rules. No drinking and no smoking rules set by the school were defied by him (Langman, 2013). "He was insubordinate in school, attracting attention. Students loved it" as one of his peers described him (Wallace, 2002:1). Steinhäuser described himself as one "who is sometimes difficult to bear" (Henning, 2004:1).

These facts, however, do not indicate a weakened belief of the common value system. In fact, little becomes clear on Steinhäuser's view on social values and morals. It is evident that he had problems with the authority and rules set by the school, but nothing indicates a weakened

belief of the norms and morals of society. Therefore, belief in the common value system is considered to be intact and neutral.

When assessing and combining all of the indicators that determine the strength of Robert Steinhäuser's social bond, it leads to the following overview below:

Robert Steinhäuser, Erfurt	
Indicators	**Strength of the bond**
Attachment to parents	-
Attachment to peers or friends	0
Attachment to school	- -
Commitment	- -
Involvement	+
Belief	0

Table 4.2: Robert Steinhäuser's social bond indicators rated

4.3 Jeffrey Weise – Red Lake shootings, 2005

Located in the United States on the south shore of Red Lake, northern Minnesota, is the Red Lake Indian Reservation, home to the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians (Red Lake Nation, 2016). On March 21th 2005, the Red Lake Indian Reservation experienced a two-pronged rampage shooting. On that day, one of the Chippewa tribe members and ex-student to the Red Lake Senior High School, Jeffrey Weise, took his grandfather's weapons and shot both his grandfather and his grandfather's companion to death (Finley, 2007). Weise then drove to his former high school, where he commenced the second part of his rampage (Finley, 2007; Littlefield, Reierson, Cowden, Stowman & Long Feather, 2009). Once inside the school building, Weise shot and killed multiple students, a teacher and a security guard. Then, a shoot-out with a police officer followed, who managed to hit the perpetrator three times (Finley, 2007). The gunman then decided to end his rampage. During the shooting, Weise had injured a number of 14 people and killed another total of 9 people, including his grandfather and his grandfather's partner, before taking his own life (Minnesota Public Radio, 2005; Langman, 2010).

4.3.1 Background information on Jeffrey Weise

The former student of the Red Lake Senior High School, Jeffrey Weise, was only 16 years of age at the time he committed the rampage school shooting and, in addition, killed both his grandfather and partner with whom he lived in Red Lake (Finley, 2007). Weise's childhood

was reportedly tough, growing up while having to move between his separated parents. Most of his life, Weise had lived with his mother and became especially dependent on his mother after his father committed suicide (Finley, 2007; Huffstutter, 2005; Langman, 2010). She then married another man, with whom she had two children. It appeared to be a family again however, for a long period of time, Weise was physically abused and mistreated by his abusive and alcoholic mother (Barkhausen, 2005). When his mother became involved in a car accident, due to drunk-driving, she sustained serious brain damage that required her to move to a nursing home (Finley, 2007; Langman, 2010). The family fragmented, since the husband left, but did not take Weise with him, resulting in a period of foster care for him (Langman, 2010; Nader, 2013). In a two-year period, from the age of nine to eleven years old, Weise experienced two significant losses, eventually forcing him to live with his grandparents (Connolly & Hedgpeth, 2005). During the last years of his life, Weise was reportedly struggling with depression, as he attempted suicide twice and also exhibited behavioral issues for which he received treatment (Helms, 2005; Langman, 2009b; Rave, 2005). According to Langman (2013), Weise, who experienced physical abuse and came from a broken home, could be characterized as a traumatized rampage school shooter, who had parents with both a criminal history and substance abuse problems.

4.3.2 Strength of the social bond

The strength of Jeffrey Weise's social bond is determined by the following indicators:

Attachment to parents

Little to no reports clearly indicate the type of relationship Weise had with his parents, also due to the short duration of their relationship. Very little is known on the attachment of Weise to his father, mostly because Weise only lived with his father for a short period of time, but also since his father was killed during a shoot-out when Weise was young of age (Finley, 2007). Little more is known about the relationship with his mother, with whom he lived for a longer period of time. However, their relationship was far from positive, since she reportedly was an abusive alcoholic (Barkhausen, 2005; Finley, 2007; Langman, 2010). Weise said the following about her, "My mom used to abuse me a lot when I was little. She used to drink excessively, too. She would tell me I was a mistake, and she would say so many things that it's hard to deal with them or think of them without crying" (Langman, 2015:73). This suggests that Weise had a damaged relationship with his mother and shared little intimate ties. Though, Weise reportedly had a "good relationship" with his grandparents who took him in after his father died and mother

was forced to live in a nursing home (Haga, 2005:1). Weise appeared to have a solid structure and stable relationship in his life, but this changed when his grandparents split up and Weise experienced yet another hardship (Rosario, 2006). According to Rosario (2006), authorities speculated that this might have triggered Weise to commit the rampage that day. Previous to the shooting, there were never any real disputes between Weise and his grandfather and they both reportedly loved each other. According to a family member, Weise's aunts "were surprised by all of this, but they were stunned he would shoot his grandfather" (Haga, 2005:1). Indicating a seemingly strong relationship.

Even though Weise expressed his feelings about his mother and her actions, the extent to which Weise was attached to his parents, according to Hirschi's (1969) indicator of attachment to parents, remains very unclear. However, Weise's significant caregivers appeared to be his grandparents, in particular his grandfather, for the last few years. Although evidence suggests that Weise had a good relationship with him, there still remains a lack of available information. Judging from the evidence, due to the unavailability and insufficiency of information, the indicator is considered neutral. Evidence suggests that the indicator can not be adequately assessed and the bond is thus indicated with a zero or nil.

Attachment to peers or friends

Reports of Weise being picked on, bullied and ostracized by his peers vary significantly. On one hand, reports suggest that Weise's peers repeatedly made comments about his parents, but others denied the indication of being teased (Langman, 2015). Although it was suggested that Weise was a loner, he did appear to have multiple friends and this was also confirmed by various students (Lennard, 2005). More importantly, Weise was represented as "the only one I talked to about my problems. He was trustworthy, and he was always capable of understanding what I was going though" by one of his close friends (Sevcik, 2005:1). According to Langman (2015), Weise was part of a group of friends called "the Darkers", discussed his friendships with other peers and mentioned that "his friends were the only thing he had in life" (p. 74). Weise's cousin was considered his best friend, with whom he discussed his plans for months through email exchange about the rampage he wanted to commit and it even appeared that his cousin encouraged Weise to execute his plan (Haga & Collins, 2005).

So, reportedly, Weise did appear to have multiple close friends and peers who he hung out with. Although these friends were not only conventional peers, but also non conventional peers, this makes no difference for the indicator of attachment to peers or friends. Evidence

suggests Weise had a strong bond of attachment to peers and therefore, the indicator is rated with a plus.

Attachment to school

On the academic abilities and performance of Jeffrey Weise throughout his entire school career is little known except for the fact that Weise was underachieving for a period of time, skipped school and had failing grades which forced him to redo the eight grade (Langman, 2015; Plaza, 2015). Furthermore, Weise was seen as someone who required special educational needs and the Red Lake Senior High School enrolled him in a program to meet these needs (Plaza, 2015). However, no reports were found on specific grades.

The reports on Weise's relationship with his teachers appear to be mixed, since one teacher refers to him as "a good listener like any other ordinary student. He was quiet but never a troublemaker" (Gunderson, 2005:1). Other reports, however, indicate that Weise had periods of being home schooled due to troublesome behavior in school (Harden & Hedgpeth, 2005). A clear relationship with his teachers is never really specified.

Since it was consequently difficult to obtain sufficient data on Weise's academic performances and abilities as well as the relationship with his teachers, the indicator of attachment to school is hard to assess. Although there are reports suggesting that Weise had trouble obeying the school's authority, this is not consequently confirmed. The evidence therefore indicates a more or less neutral bond, due to the lack of available data and the credibility of it.

Commitment

There are little to none reports on Jeffrey Weise's commitment in relation to his educational and occupational aspirations and ambitions. Some of his expressed feelings in his online journals, as discussed under the indicator of belief, seem to give away the thought that Weise had lost all hope and did not care for his future and therefore his goals and expectations anymore. However, since there is little evidence suggesting this or suggesting otherwise, no clear indication on this can be given.

Weise did seem very committed in planning and executing a large-scale attack on the school (Newman & Fox, 2009). Reportedly, detailed plans were made over a two-year period, Weise discussed them via text messages and over 900 pages of emails. Furthermore, Weise even tried to recruit co-conspirators and other partners in crime (Haga, Padilla & Meryhew,

2005; Rosario, 2006). Besides that, Weise's thoughts and intentions of performing a school shooting were known to almost 40 students (Lee, 2006; Newman & Fox, 2009; Rosario, 2006).

Since Weise reportedly appeared to be very committed to non conventional lines of action, regarding the detailed plans and elaborate discussions with others about a school shooting, evidence indicates a weakened bond. The indicator of commitment is considered negative and rated with a minus.

Involvement

Jeffrey Weise never really seemed interested in conventional activities, such as sports or school-related activities. According to Langman (2015), Weise was involved in some sort of band, however, no further reports are able to confirm this. The perpetrator did spend a great amount of time online, one of his hobbies, as he appeared very active in several online communities. On one site he regularly posted short stories, one involved a zombie type school massacre and on another – neo-Nazi – website he also frequently commented (Blades11, 2001; Finley, 2007). Furthermore, Weise was the creator of flash animations, and one of these animations involved a character who committed suicide after having killed multiple people (Finley, 2007; Newman & Fox, 2009; Plaza, 2015).

There are little reports on the type of activities Weise was involved in, even though he appeared to play in a band. Besides that, while spending time on the internet may be considered a conventional activity, Weise's online activities were far from conventional. Therefore, evidence suggests a weakened bond to the indicator of involvement and is rated with a minus.

Belief

Even though there were no previous records of Weise having trouble with the law, he did show some divergence from his other peers. Weise clearly expressed his interest in Neo Nazism, admired Adolf Hitler and had extremist leanings, which he told his school counselor (Plaza, 2015). In his online journals, Weise wrote, "I've always carried a natural admiration for Hitler and his ideals, and his courage to take on larger nations" (Langman, 2015:74).

Furthermore, Weise also expressed other feelings in online journals. For example, he referred to himself as "16 years of accumulated rage suppressed by nothing more than brief glimpses of hope, which have all but faded to black. I can feel the urges within slipping through the cracks, the leash I can no longer hold" (Sevcik, 2005:1; Langman, 2015:76). Indicating loss of hope and rage that could come out at any point in time, which was also reflected in other writings as he said, "So fucking naïve. Always expecting change when I know nothing ever

changes. I've seen mothers choose their man over their own flesh and blood, I've seen others choose alcohol over friendship. I sacrifice no more for others, part of me has fucking died and I hate this shit" (Livejournal, 2005:1). Once, he even mentioned to a couple of friends, "that would be cool if I shot up the school" and also discussed his plans of a rampage school shooting in detail with his cousin (Finley, 2007:302; Haga & Collins, 2005).

Evidence on Weise's extremist beliefs and plans on committing a rampage school shooting, suggests that his social norms and values deviated from the ones as accepted by society. Therefore, the indicator of belief is considered weakened and rated with a minus.

When assessing and combining all of the indicators that determine the strength of Jeffrey Weise's social bond, it leads to the following overview:

Jeffrey Weise, Red Lake	
Indicators	**Strength of the bond**
Attachment to parents	0
Attachment to peers or friends	+
Attachment to school	0
Commitment	-
Involvement	-
Belief	-

Table 4.3: Jeffrey Weise's social bond indicators rated

4.4   Sebastian Bosse – Emsdetten school shooting, 2006

Situated in North Rhine-Westphalia of Germany, the town of Emsdetten is located within Kreis Steinfurt. On November 20th 2006, the town of Emsdetten and especially their Geschwister Scholl-Schule was rocked by one of Germany's most lethal school shootings in their history (Finley, 2011). Since the Erfurt massacre, the Emsdetten school shooting was considered to be the worst incident in history even though there was only one fatality in the form of the perpetrator (Jüttner, 2006). Sebastian Bosse, a former student who had graduated from the school the year before, entered the school using guns, homemade explosives and smoke grenades and suddenly started firing at random at the present students and teachers of the Geschwister Scholl-Schule (Jüttner, 2006:1; Steinberg, 2006). In order to hinder the police from entering the school building, the perpetrator had scattered explosives in and around the school. In the meantime, while explosive experts were brought in, Bosse continued his rampage (Der Spiegel, 2006). Although Bosse fired upon multiple students and wounded 22 people, none of

them were fatally wounded in the process. In the end, the gunman committed suicide (Finley, 2011).

4.4.1 Background information on Sebastian Bosse

At the time of the event, the 18-year old Sebastian Bosse was a former student of the Geschwister Scholl-Schule in Emsdetten, from which he had graduated the year before (Lieberman, 2008). Although there are little reports and other documents to be found about Bosse's youth, his online journals, website and video's paint a clear picture of Sebastian Bosse and his state of mind leading up to the shooting at the Emsdetten school.

According to his peers, Bosse was obsessed with playing violent video-games, had affinity with all types of weapons and listened to death metal music (Jüttner, 2006). This, and due to the fact that he consistently wore a black hat and "was always totally dressed in black, including a constant pair of sunglasses", Bosse was considered a misfit among his peers and often referred to as the "Man in Black" (Finley, 2011; Lieberman, 2008:109). Over his school years, Bosse had been excluded from social groups and teased badly (Lieberman, 2008). The frustration of how he had been persecuted, ridiculed and ostracized was clearly felt in his video, as he explained that he was laughed at and bullied for years while trying to make friends (Video Bosse, 2006). In general, Bosse was very frustrated with life, mainly due to his social issues with his school classmates and the fact that he never had a girlfriend (Lieberman, 2008; Stöcker, 2006). A cry for help came when Bosse expressed his feelings and announced his intentions on an internet forum, saying it concerned a rampage, more than two years prior to the attack and unfortunately, help never came (Grzeszyk, 2014).

4.4.2 Strength of the social bond

Sebastian Bosse's strength of his social bond is determined by the following indicators:

Attachment to parents

There are little to no reports that can clearly indicate the type of relationship Bosse had with his parents. According to Jüttner (2006), Bosse's attachment to his parents is undisclosed. Although the contents of Bosse's website and journals do say something about his feelings toward his parents, they do not necessarily concern his attachment according to Hirschi's (1969) indicator. In one of his journals he wrote that his family did not accept his appearance, especially his Mohawk (Laramie, 2014a). On the other hand, his love for his family was evident as he said "I hate the human race, except for myself and my family!" (Laramie, 2014a:2). Also, leading up

to the rampage, Bosse indicated that he felt conflicted. Glad that it would be all over soon, but very sad for his parents, siblings and grandmother whom he loved (Laramie, 2014a). Bosse constantly referred to them in his journal and said "I hate me for hurting them" (Laramie, 2014a:5).

Even though it remains very unclear to what extent Bosse was attached to his parents, according to Hirschi's (1969) indicator of attachment to parents, Bosse clearly expressed his love for his parents multiple times throughout his journals and diary. However, it did not concern the indicator of attachment to parents. Therefore, as there is insufficient information available, the indicator is considered to be neutral since it is nearly impossible to indicate a weakened or strong bond within this indicator.

Attachment to peers or friends

In his video, Bosse explained that he was ostracized, bullied, teased and laughed at by his peers for years, while he was just trying to make friends (Bosse, 2006). He was considered a loner, since he was different from the other kids (Lieberman, 2008). While Bosse at first strove to make friends, he later realized, as he said, that it was all fake and people do not accept you for you (Laramie, 2014a). Besides from not having any friends at school, Bosse did have a friend with whom he went to blow up home-made bombs, shoot weapons and even pretend to execute a pony while catching it all on videotape (Laramie, 2014b; Lieberman, 2008). The companionship of this friend did not necessarily have a positive influence on Bosse. Furthermore, Bosse was obsessed with one of the Columbine shooters, Eric Harris. In the video he made with his friend, Bosse even dressed himself completely like Eric Harris during his rampage (Lieberman, 2008). It is no secret that Bosse adored Harris and, so it seems, even worshipped him. In his diary he wrote "Eric Harris is God!" and that "sometimes it seems as if I were to live his life again, as if everything would repeat itself" (Laramie, 2014a:2; Lieberman, 2008). With Harris as some sort of role model, Bosse's grudge and anger towards his peers at school grew and eventually he held everybody accountable for the humiliation during his school years (Böckler & Seeger, 2010).

Bosse did not seem to have any conventional peers or friends with high stakes, that could have a positive influence on him. Instead, Bosse occasionally hung out with a friend with whom he was involved in non conventional activities such as the shooting of weapons and blowing stuff up. Furthermore, with the idolization of Eric Harris, Bosse seemed really attached to someone who was definitely not involved in conventional activities. Harris and his beliefs fueled Bosse's rage and anger towards others, which eventually led to the Emsdetten school

shooting. Therefore, although there was a significant involvement of non conventional peers, evidence indicates a strong bond of attachment to peers.

Attachment to school

On the academic abilities and performance of Sebastian Bosse throughout his entire school career is little known except for the fact that Bosse was underachieving for a period of time, which forced him to redo two school years (Lieberman, 2008; Stöcker, 2006). However, in 2005, Bosse graduated from the Geschwister Scholl-Schule with respectable grades (Lieberman, 2008). That year, he showed that he was able to earn decent grades.

Bosse had a rough time at school, partly because of academic performance and partly because of his relationship with the school's teachers. Bosse felt bullied by his teachers and a loser at school and had a lot of hatred towards his teachers (Stöcker, 2006). In his video, Bosse stated that the school, along with its students and teachers where the main reasons for him to commence a rampage (Langman, 2014). Furthermore, he specifically directed himself towards his teachers as he said "much of my revenge will be directed at the teachers, because they are the people who intervened in my life against my will and helped put me where I am now: on the battlefield" (Lieberman, 2008:268). Accordingly, he felt very frustrated with them.

Even though Bosse was forced to redo two whole school years, he did manage to graduate with proper grades. However, having to repeat two years probably caused him to hate school. The frustration only grew due to his teachers, who he felt had interceded his life. The combination of frustration, being bullied and hatred towards everything revolving school leads to the consideration of a seriously weakened bond of attachment to school.

Commitment

Bosse's overall commitment is determined by his educational and occupational aspirations and ambitions. Commitment to his educational goal, graduating from school, fluctuated over the years. Two years before graduation, Bosse wrote in his journal that he didn't feel like doing his homework and therefore received his second strike already on the third day of school (Laramie, 2014b). However, he did not care about it. The next year, Bosse still appeared not very committed, as one of his teachers wanted to fail him for not reading aloud an assignment. Bosse said in his journal, "she won't give me an F, but even if she did, it doesn't matter now!" (Laramie, 2014a:3). Also, he said that "since I don't care about anything, I won't graduate" (Laramie, 2014a:2). Then, the following year, Bosse graduated. Although he never mentioned in his journals how he felt about his educational goals at that moment.

As far as occupational goals go, Bosse seemed even less committed toward getting a job. Couple of months before his graduation Bosse stated in one of his journals, "Why should I work? So that I work myself to death in order to retire at 65 and croak 5 years later? Why should I make an effort to succeed in something, if in the end it doesn't matter anyway because, sooner or later, I will die?" (Laramier, 2014c:1).

As mentioned before, commitment fluctuates, and considering the statements about his education, Bosse's bond is considered weakened. His occupational goals, however, are as good as nonexistent. He openly refuses to work and will never attain a well paid position or desired job and thus has nothing to lose in this aspect. Therefore, based on the statements Bosse made in his journals, his overall commitment is considered to be weakened.

Involvement

Sebastian Bosse was never really interested in conventional activities, such as sports or school-related activities. According to his journals, Bosse was not interested in school and everything revolving school, so he was never involved in school-based activities (Laramier, 2014; Laramier, 2014b). His hobbies involved going on hunting trips with his father and obsessively playing violent video-games (Jüttner, 2006; Lieberman, 2008). Bosse spent "most of his waking hours" playing video-games on his computer (Meller, 2007). Furthermore, it seems from his journals that Bosse enjoyed playing with weapons and blowing things up (Laramier, 2014).

Bosse did not necessarily devote his time on conventional activities, however, he was also not really involved in non conventional activities apart from experimenting with weapons and explosives. Regarding the fact that Bosse was not involved in any sports or school-related activities, his bond of the indicator involvement may be considered weakened.

Belief

Mainly in the years leading up to the incident, a lot is known about Bosse's beliefs on norms and morals, primarily through his journals and video. However, there are also reports on illegal weapon possession and even during public events Bosse did not hesitate to occasionally bring a weapon with him (Der Tagesspiegel, 2006; Jüttner, 2006).

Bosse's beliefs really became evident, when he posted a message online two to three year prior to the rampage. The message read, "I am consuming all this rage and will let it all out at some point to take revenge on all the assholes who wrecked my life! For those who haven't understood it exactly: yes, this is about a shooting" (Lieberman, 2008:267). However, the unequivocal message was disregarded. For over two years the rampage was meticulously

planned against those whom he felt had ruined his life and humiliated him (Langman, 2014; Lieberman, 2008). In his video he exclaimed that everybody had to die, because, as he said, "since I was 6 years old, I was jerked around by all of you! Now you have to pay for it!" (Laramie, 2014c:3). Bosse wanted revenge against all the culprits who had ever crossed him (Böckler & Seeger, 2010). One of his journals stated that "it's not Airsoft or music that make me kill people, it's you!" (Laramie, 2014a:4). According to one of Bosse's former classmates, sooner or later, Bosse was bound to lose his mind because of his intense disgust of the world (Lieberman, 2008). Furthermore, the idolization of Eric Harris intensified his beliefs and hatred towards others (Böckler & Seeger, 2010).

Bosse's statements in his journals and video indicate a seriously weakened or broken belief of the common value system. He does however, try to justify and rationalize his behavior and beliefs by saying that people have brought it upon themselves. Bosse primarily places the blame outside himself and a rampage is justified in his eyes. Therefore, the indicator of belief is considered to be completely missing with Bosse at the time of the rampage school shooting.

When assessing and combining all of the indicators that determine the strength of Sebastian Bosse's social bond, it leads to the following overview:

Sebastian Bosse, Emsdetten	
Indicators	**Strength of the bond**
Attachment to parents	0
Attachment to peers or friends	+
Attachment to school	-
Commitment	-
Involvement	-
Belief	--

Table 4.4: Sebastian Bosse's social bond indicators rated

4.5   Seung-Hui Cho – Virginia Tech shooting, 2007

Most commonly known as Virginia Tech, the research university of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University has multiple educational facilities throughout the state of Virginia and has its main campus based in Blacksburg, Virginia (Virginia Tech, 2016). However, on April 16th 2007, the university was turned into the stage of the single-worst rampage school shooting by one gunman in the history of the United States to date (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). Although there have been various more fatal events in US history, they are not considered under the definition of rampage school shootings, like the Michigan Bath disaster

of 1927 (Peters, 2012). The shooting consisted of a two-pronged attack, where the perpetrator Seung-Hui Cho made his first victims at the West Ambler Johnston Hall as he commenced his rampage and the other victims during his second attack at Norris Hall (Gelineau, 2013). After the initial attack, the police believed the incident was related to domestic violence and the victim's boyfriend was seen as a potential suspect and as a "person of interest", providing Cho with enough time and freedom to further execute his rampage (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007:25). Cho even went to the Blacksburg post office and sent a package containing an 1800-word public declaration of his aims, dozens of pictures and video recordings of himself to NBC News in New York (Johnson, 2007). Through this package of video's and writings, he referred to the oncoming massacre at Virginia Tech. Cho then proceeded to Norris Hall, where he started the second part of the shooting. During the shooting at Virginia Tech, which took approximately two and a half hours, the then senior student of the university Seung-Hui Cho, killed 32 students and teachers and wounded another 17 other people on campus (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). Ultimately, the perpetrator took his own life in the event (Gelineau, 2013; Langman, 2010).

4.5.1   Background information on Seung-Hui Cho

Seung-Hui Cho was of South Korean decent and a senior-level undergraduate student at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University at the time of the event (Adams, 2007; Golden, 2007). At the age of eight, Cho emigrated along with his family to the United States and as South Korean nationals they received a permanent residency in the United States (Chang, 2007). In 2007, violent and uncontrollable behavior by Seung-Hui Cho marked Virginia Tech (Langman, 2010).

According to the Virginia Tech Review Panel (2007), Cho has had a long history of emotional and social strains. At a young age, social situations worried him and even at the age of three he was described as cautious towards physical contact, feeble and shy of others (Langman, 2010; Smith, 2007). Even within his family, Cho barely spoke. Regardless of this, according to Langman (2010), he was well behaved in school and appeared to be an intelligent kid. Although, the subsequent years did not get any better for Cho, as his parents took him to the Center for Multi-cultural Human Services (CHMS) to seek treatment for him through therapy and medication. At the CHMS, Cho was psychological evaluated and his mental health was examined due to his parents' concern of his reluctance in to talk about his feelings and thoughts but also his social isolation (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). A year later, in eight grade, Seung-Hui was diagnosed with "major depression: single episode" and "selective

mutism", an anxiety disorder that impedes him from speaking in social situations (Adams, 2007; Golden, 2007; Langman, 2013; Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007:35). After his diagnosis with these disorders, Cho received special education support and mental health therapy. As a result, he was put in a speech therapy program and in class he was excused of oral participation as well as presentations (Golden, 2007). The therapy continued up until his third year of high school, but treatment was discontinued after he turned eighteen. With the discontinuation of treatment and Cho leaving high school after graduation, he lost the multifaceted support system along with their positive influences (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007).

Throughout his college years, Cho continued displaying deviant behavior of isolation and shyness. Affective flattening and poverty of speech, associated with schizophrenia, were a notable part of his daily behavior (Langman, 2010). His aberrant behavior throughout the first years of college resulted in a number of incidents, from harassment to stalking (Alfano, 2007; Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). While during the final two years at college his mental condition was further deteriorating and deviant behavior increased, teachers and classmates became increasingly concerned and, as turned out, these concerns were not unfounded.

4.5.2 Strength of the social bond

According to Levin and Madfis (2009) some students turn marginalized and even foster their violent beliefs and antisocial feelings, like Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, and other students like Seung-Hui Cho are never capable of maintaining any significant form of social relationships. The strength of Seung-Hui Cho's social bond is determined by the following indicators:

Attachment to parents

Seung-Hui Cho was raised in a two-parent family and had an older sibling, a sister, but had also extended family support through grandparents and aunts. Even in Korea, Cho was exceedingly quiet towards his parents (Langman, 2013). Even though families in Korea cherish attributes such as calmness and quietness, since they are often identified with scholarliness, Cho's parents were very worried about his introverted personality (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). According to the findings of the Virginia Tech Review Panel (2007) poor communication was considered to be one of the main issues between Seung-Hui and his family. Eye contact was almost always avoided and besides that, he would barely speak to his parents. Even when he

did talk, sharing and discussing his quotidian thoughts on events, school and life were avoided as well as conversing about his feelings and emotions (Addendum Review Panel, 2009).

His mother sat him down a couple of times in trying to persuade him to "have more courage" (Addendum Review Panel, 2009:33). His father was more accepting of his withdrawn and introverted character, but was always very serious when it came down to respect. Cho often argued with his father about the subject and the fact that he would not approve of or admire him (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). Cho has always had a strained relationship with his father and while he wrote about his father-son relationship, his father was always depicted negatively (Smith, 2007; Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). Over the years, his parents took many attempts to interact and converse with him, they finally decided not to force socialization with them and others upon him but just to "let him be the way he is" (Addendum Review Panel, 2009:34).

When Cho went to college, obviously, communication between him and his parents did not improve for the fact that there was a considerable distance between them. They became less and less aware of how and what he was doing (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). Each Sunday, every weekend, his parents visited him within his initial transition to Virginia Tech. After a while, they only spoke by telephone every Sunday and Cho would come home every break he had from college. Conversation, however, remained superficial and Cho was still not able to discuss his feelings, thoughts or emotions (Addendum Review Panel, 2009; Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007).

Although Cho has always had poor intimate communication skills, mainly due to his disabilities and inability to build close relationships, it seems that his parents did have an affect on the internalization of norms and moral rules. From childhood to the point that he had left his ancestral home, Cho did not exhibit any form of deviant behavior that contradict the internalization of morals and norms, other than the social issues where he had been diagnosed for. Only when he moved out and lost part of his support system, Cho's morals and norms seemed to loosen. Indicating a rather strong attachment to his parents, but only under their supervision. As said before, intimacy of communication with his parents in this case is virtually non-existent, since Cho did occasionally converse with his parents but always avoided having to talk about his emotions and feelings. He never expressed his everyday thoughts on his education, life or other events that were going on. Communication was extremely superficial and due to the fact that important matters were never discussed by Cho, very poor intimacy of communication with parents can be concluded in this case. However, as we know, his communication skills were severely affected by his various mental inabilities. Another point,

affectional identification, does not directly come forward from reports and writings. Although he often wrote about a father-son relationship, the negative depicted character of his father may indicate a negative affectional identification with his father. The lack of mutual respect and trust from the Virginia Tech Review Panel (2007) confirm these findings. However, Cho took every opportunity he had, when he had a break from college, to return to his parents' home. This might indicate that their relationship may not have been as bad as suggested by other findings. Therefore, the degree of attachment with his parents is deemed neutral, since the only negative attachment comes from his inabilities that impede his opportunities to build an intimate relationship with his parents.

Attachment to peers or friends

When Cho was a child, back in Korea, he had a couple of friends that would occasionally come over to play. In Virginia, the boy next door was Cho's only friend at the age of 9 (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). Elementary school did not change much for Cho, although he did have one schoolmate to play with during recess. Towards his peers he did not "interact socially, communicate verbally nor would he participate in group activities" according to his school teachers (Addendum Review Panel, 2009:33). Little change was also seen during middle and high school, where he remained "dramatically uncommunicative" and "difficult to know" as described by his classmates (Cho & Gardner, 2007:1).

Although Cho did not have any real friends, neither did he have so in college, he also was not engaged with non conventional or delinquent peers. In fact, when Cho was confronted with a roommate that could have a negative influence on Cho, due to neatness and the use of alcohol, he requested a room change in order to escape from this negative energy (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). Furthermore, in college, Cho was described as a quiet person and someone who keeps to himself by fellow students (Langman, 2013). According to Julie Poole and Joe Aust, who where in the same literature class as Cho, said that he "he was always really, really quiet" and "he never talked" (Leeder, Reinhart & Koring, 2009:1). Even when Aust made attempts to reach out to him, Cho tried to avoid conversation (Leeder et al., 2009). Where Cho first was known for his withdrawn personality and non-communication, he gradually became known for his violent and macabre writings along with frightening behavior leading to students becoming somewhat scared of him (Langman, 2013; Leeder et al., 2009; Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). His violent side and anger towards his peers came out in one of the papers from the creative writing classes, where he said they "disgusted" him and that the "low-life

barbarians" made him physically ill (Addendum Review Panel, 2007:42). Furthermore, the students said that "everyone's afraid of him" (Addendum Review Panel, 2007:43).

Back in his dorm on the Virginia Tech campus, Cho had two suitemates and a roommate. They described him the same way as earlier mentioned; quiet, to himself and barely communicative (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). According to the report (2007), the suitemates and roommate regularly invited Cho to various dinners and parties, however, he would not talk so this stopped eventually. Even his roommate from his final year said he barely knew him and that they "just slept in the same room" (Addendum Review Panel, 2009:51).

Based on this kind of information from his former roommates, peers and teachers, Cho was in no way attached to his peers nor did he have any friends to whom he could be attached. Even when his peers, including his roommates, made several attempts to reach out to him, Cho shut them down. Cho was not able to maintain social relationships because of his conditions and despite the fact that others regularly tried to converse and communicate with him. Furthermore, the few friends he had while growing up, he did not have when he was in college. Although he did not have any real connection with conventional peers, he definitely did not have any attachment to non conventional peers who could influence him negatively. Therefore, evidence suggests that Cho's attachment to peers and friends can be marked as weak due to the fact that he had no real friends or peers to be attached to. Besides this, Cho was involved in several incidents regarding his fellow students, however, these will be discussed with the indicator of belief.

Attachment to school

Considered of great importance to the indicator of attachment to school is one's academic ability and performance. Besides from having difficulties communicating and other issues, up to high school, Cho was often praised by teachers for his student-qualities (Langman, 2013). Although he did not speak, he did not cause any problems either and he never showed any other types of deviant behavior. Furthermore, he was industrious about doing his homework assignments, never showed up late for class and always achieved excellent grades (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). According to the Virginia Tech Review Panel (2007), Cho had arrangements with the teachers, where he could privately provide verbal responses as opposed to having to speak in front of his classmates. His grades benefitted from this arrangement and he even made it as an honor student. At the age of 18, Cho finished the honors program with a GPA of 3.52 and this led him to be accepted to Virginia Tech. However, the grades were not representative, because it did not reflect on class participation (Virginia Tech Review Panel,

2007). During his first year of college, he continued getting good grades and ended with an average of 3.00 (The Guardian, 2007). However, in his second year his grades started to slip and Cho decided to switch his major to English. Up until the incident his grades went down and up again, ending as an average college student (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007).

His attitude towards school seemed to change when he switched his major to English and was in a creative writing class taught by Nikki Giovanni (Langman, 2010). Also of great importance within this indicator is the extent to which an individual cares about what teachers think of him and linked to his change in behavior. According to numerous emails sent between Giovanni and Lucinda Roy and Seung-Hui Cho and Lucinda Roy, there had been multiple confrontations and altercations between Cho and Giovanni in her creative writing class (English Department Emails, 2007). Cho's attitude in class was reportedly uncooperative, but he also exhibited disruptive behavior. In class, he wore sunglasses, a hat to conceal his face or a "Bedouin-style" scarf around his head and he would not comply to take them off (Addendum Review Panel, 2009:42; English Department Emails, 2007:2). Furthermore, he was unwilling to make changes to pieces he had to correct and would just hand in the same paper afterwards (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). Cho obviously did not feel much for his teacher, as he angrily criticized her in a two-page letter to Lucinda Roy (English Department Email, 2007; Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). His behavior may have had something to do with the fact that Cho felt brutally bullied for his disorders not only by his classmates but also by his teachers (Losey, 2011). Cho did however, care of teachers' opinions of him as is seen in the English Department Email Exchanges (2007). He appeared to be overly concerned with teachers yelling at him for no apparent reason (English Department Email, 2007).

So, although Cho's academic abilities ended on a positive note, he had a number of other issues at Virginia Tech. He had always been a great student with excellent grades. Even though his grades dropped during college, he was still considered an average student with lots of positive grades. Apart from his grades, he did not care much about his teachers or the rules they set in their classes. However, this was mainly the result of feeling bullied by his teachers and according to Hirschi (1969) this could negatively impact his attachment to school. Especially concerning creative writing teacher Nikki Giovanni, Cho was disruptive and non-cooperative in her classes. Therefore, although his academic performance was considered positive, his feelings towards school and teachers outweigh this. Evidence indicating that Cho had a negative attachment to school may be the only logical conclusion.

Commitment

When Cho was transitioning from high school to college, he had to make a choice about the type and size of the school. His family and school guidance counselor were concerned that his issues might become more serious when he would attend a large school away from his family instead of a small school close to home (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). According to the Addendum of the Review Panel (2009), Cho seemed in his decision about which school to choose very "independent" and "self-directed" (p. 37). In other words, he knew what he wanted, since it had been his long time goal to get accepted to Virginia Tech. He appeared committed to his educational goal at Virginia Tech and this was confirmed when Cho requested a room change due to the fact that his roommate drunk alcohol and was less hygienic in terms of cleaning up after himself (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). However, in his sophomore year things changed a bit. As his grades were slipping, he decided to switch his major. Cho seemed enthusiastic about writing and poetry and was keen on becoming a writer. He would spend hours writing, even wanted to publish a novel and actively sought help from Lucinda Roy in finding publishers and agents (English Department Emails, 2007). Cho seemed very committed at the time, but when he was in Giovanni's creative writing class he appeared more withdrawn to his sister and was writing a lot less (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). In the Virginia Tech Review Panel (2007) it states that Cho did not want to go to graduate school as his parents offered to help him with.

Although commitment fluctuates over time, as with any other normal human being, Cho seemed very committed to his educational goals at times with getting accepted into Virginia Tech and writing his novel and poetry. However, the occupational dimension of commitment with future occupational goals seemed non-existent, since Cho had not had any jobs and no clear goals. At least, that doesn't become clear from the documentation. Due to his strong educational commitment, his overall commitment may be indicated as positive and rated with a plus as he had clear goals in mind.

Involvement

Besides the fact that Cho participated in the sport of Tae Kwon Do at the age of 9, he never really actively participated in any other sports-related or other conventional activities (Nizza, 2007; Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). In high school, Cho could not participate in extracurricular activities since both his parents worked long days and were not able to provide transportation. According to the Virginia Tech Review Panel (2007) Cho's only activities were downloading music, sleeping and studying. And, the few prosocial activities Cho attended

ended almost as quickly as they started. While he was regularly invited to parties and dinners, they stopped asking Cho since he would not speak or would behave out of the ordinary (Thomas, 2007).

When reading the reports and statements of his former roommates, it becomes clear that Cho was not involved in any kind of prosocial or other conventional everyday activities. He did devote a lot of his time on his hobby, the writing of stories and poetry. For that reason, Cho's level of involvement is considered weakened.

Belief

Growing up, it appeared that Cho believed in the rules of the common value system of society. For a long time, he seemed obedient to the rules and did nothing that indicated otherwise (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). First indication of deviant belief was captured in high school, when Cho had written in a homework assignment about homicides and the fact that he wanted "to repeat Columbine" after he gained knowledge of the school shooting at Columbine High School in 1999 (Neuman & Macias, 2007:1). Besides this disturbing fact, Cho did not exhibit any other type of behavior that would support him having deviant beliefs.

Then, at college on the Virginia Tech campus, Cho was involved in a number of cases regarding his fellow students and on several occasions he was contacted by the Virginia Tech Police Department (VTPD). Following various cases of threatening behavior and undesired communication towards his fellow female students, Cho came into contact with the VTPD (Langman, 2013; Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007). The first complaint against Cho was made on November 27, 2005, when Cho called a couple of times and had sent multiple instant messages to Jennifer Nelson. Although Nelson did not know Cho, one day he would turn up on her doorstep wearing a hat and sunglasses. He stated he was "the question mark kid" and after Nelson threatened to call the police, Cho left (VTPD incident report, 2005:4). After the VTPD contacted Cho and Nelson, she decided not to press criminal charges as Cho would not contact her anymore. The first harassment complaint was being filed after this incident by the VTPD (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007; VTPD incident report, 2005). On December 12, 2005 the VTPD once again received a complaint about Cho leaving unwanted messages with one of his female students (Alfano, 2007). The campus police officer came to see and instruct Cho not to contact his fellow student any more. Criminal charges were not filed. Furthermore, there was another report on stalking of a female student. However, this did not result in a verbal warning from the police department (Virginia Tech Review Panel, 2007; VTPD incident report, 2005).

When NBC received Cho's manifesto it became clear that he was justifying his actions by saying: "You had a hundred billion chances and ways to have avoided today, but you decided to spill my blood. You forced me into a corner and gave me only one option. The decision was yours. Now you have blood on your hands that will never wash off, you Apostles of Sin" (Manifesto, 2007:1).

Cho has showed very contradictory behavior throughout his life, where on one hand he was always following the rules and obedient for quite some time, he then became more and more disobedient towards the incident. A possible significant event is the Columbine High School shootings, where his first deviant believes become visible through a written paper. It is not necessarily so that Cho's belief system has changed over time, but it is also possible that Cho rationalized his behavior while still believing in certain rules (Hirschi, 1969). This is most obvious in his manifesto, where it seems like he feels that they have brought it upon themselves. In addition, due to his various inabilities Cho might not understand certain societal norms and morals in relation to the stalking and harassment cases. However, it is clear that Cho's belief weakened towards the incident.

When assessing and combining all of the indicators that determine the strength of Seung-Hui Cho's social bond, it leads to the following overview:

Seung-Hui Cho, Virginia Tech	
Indicators	**Strength of the bond**
Attachment to parents	0
Attachment to peers or friends	-
Attachment to school	-
Commitment	+
Involvement	-
Belief	-

Table 4.5: Seung-Hui Cho's social bond indicators rated

4.6   Tim Kretschmer – Winnenden school shooting, 2009

In the state of Baden-Württemberg, located towards the southwest of Germany, lies the secondary type school of Albertville-Realschule in the town of Winnenden (Der Spiegel, 2009a). The small town of Winnenden, having a population of under 28.000 people, was shocked on the morning of March 11th 2009 when a school shooting occurred. The attack was initiated by a 17-year old former student of the Albertville-Realschule who had graduated from the secondary school one year before (BBC, 2009a). The perpetrator, Tim Kretschmer,

conducted a two-pronged attack where he not only performed a rampage at the school but also induced a shootout at another town nearby. At the Albertville-Realschule Kretschmer managed shoot eight female students, a female teacher and a male student to death. It was argued that females were specifically targeted during the attack (Hall, 2009; Langman, 2012). Ever since the Erfurt massacre in 2002, German educators installed a coded message in order to alert teachers and students of an ongoing rampage situation. With the message: "Frau Koma kommt" the school headmaster was able to alert educational staff, so they could prepare themselves and the students to lock classroom doors in order to prevent further casualties (Davies, 2009; Frankfurter Allgemeine, 2009). With the arrival of the police, Kretschmer fled the building by shooting his way out, killing another two female teachers (Gera, 2009; Stuttgart Journal, 2009). While Kretschmer carjacked a minivan, he ordered the owner of the vehicle to drive towards the nearby town of Wendlingen and commenced the second part of his rampage (Abendzeitung, 2009; Gera, 2009; Rayner & Bingham, 2009; Yeoman & Naughton, 2009). Ultimately, the rampage ended in a suicide and with 16 deaths and nine people injured, the attack is considered the most lethal rampage school shooting in German history (BBC, 2009a; Deutsche Welle, 2009).

4.6.1   Background information on Tim Kretschmer

Tim Kretschmer was 17-years old at the time of the Winnenden school shooting and had graduated from the secondary type school Albertvill-Realschule one year earlier in 2008 (Yeoman & Charter, 2009). Kretschmer grew up, living in a two parent home (Naughton, 2009).

Leading up to the event, Kretschmer started to withdraw from his peers and was described by a friend as a quiet student who felt frustrated and lonely within society (Davies, 2009; Der Spiegel, 2009a; Gera, 2009). According to reports, Kretschmer suffered from various mental health problems, among which depression (BBC, 2009b; Bild, 2009a). One year prior to the attack, Kretschmer was admitted to the Weissenhoff Psychiatric Clinic as an in-patient, from where he received health care services in the form of treatment. Initially, his treatment was to be continued in Winnenden after he was discharged from the Weissenhoff Psychiatric Clinic, however, the treatment was discontinued (Stuttgart Journal, 2009; Yeoman & Charter, 2009). Although, psychiatric reports and clinic staff suggest otherwise. They state that Kretschmer was treated as an out-patient in 2008 for his violent outbursts, growing anger and clinical depression (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2009; Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2010a). His parents denied Tim ever received any psychiatric treatment (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2009).

According to Langman (2012), these were not Kretschmer's only issues, as he showed possible psychopathic traits. For example, Kretschmer was an enthusiastic table-tennis player, but would throw his racket, yell, cry and have a tantrum due to his spoiled nature as he lost a game. Furthermore, he would openly criticize and belittle his teammates (Jutarnji list, 2009; Pancevskiin, 2009). When confronted with this behavior, his parents fully sided with him. And, like psychopaths, Kretschmer would always blame others and accept no responsibility (Langman, 2012). The psychopathic nature also showed in his behavior during the attack, when he appeared to be calm and nonchalant about it, indicating sadistic traits. This also coincides with the sadistic video material found on Kretschmer's computer (Langman, 2012; Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2009).

4.6.2   Strength of the social bond

As previously described by Langman (2012) as probably being a psychopath, characterized by a sadistic nature and a profound lack of empathy, Tim Kretschmer's strength of his social bond is determined by the following indicators:

Attachment to parents

Next to Winnenden lies the neighboring municipality of Leutenbach, where Kretschmer and both his parents lived (Naughton, 2009). They appeared to be a well integrated normal family and lived a generous life (Kerr, 2012). Parents usually learn their children a sense for accepted moral rules and norms, however, as it seems, Kretschmer was always very spoiled as a child. When thing didn't go the way he planned or wanted it, he eventually got it from his parents as they always gave in to his demands (Kerr, 2012; Pancevskiin, 2009). There was nobody to correct his bad behavior. When Kretschmer lost a game of table-tennis, he would throw a fit and when his parents were confronted with this behavior and attitude, they would fully side with him and defend their son (Jutarnji List, 2009). Kretschmer noticed he had issues and was talking to a therapist, who noticed his violent urges and growing anger (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2010b). Kretschmer was suffering so badly that he felt he was unable to continue and wrote a letter to his parents three weeks before the rampage (Kerr, 2012; Yeoman & Charter, 2009).

It seems that Kretschmer did have some internalization of norms and moral rules, since there were no criminal offenses prior to the attack (Stuttgart Journal, 2009). However, his parents' attitude about his behavior toward other did not benefit him. While they were always supporting and defending him, Kretschmer thought he would get away with anything since he always got his way. So even though his parents fully sided with him, it did have a negative

impact on Kretschmer's behavior. He did not need to care about his parents' reaction, because he knew they would never correct him or tell him otherwise. It is difficult to indicate Kretschmer's level of attachment to his parents, since it appears that a certain level of internalization of norms and morals was present. However, when he differed from it, he was not corrected by his parents. Therefore, the attachment to parents is considered neutral.

Attachment to peers or friends

There seem to be conflicting reports on whether or not Kretschmer really had any friends. One of Kretschmer's neighborhood peers said that they used to play with him, but that Kretschmer had violent tendencies and regularly shot at them with his air pistol for fun, which made them unwilling to continue and play with him. There after, as he had no friends, Kretschmer's parents reportedly begged other parents to play with their son (Kerr, 2012). Kretschmer seemed like a bully himself, instead of one that was persecuted (Langman, 2012). However, one of his school peers knew that Kretschmer felt mocked and ignored by other students (Associated Press, 2009). In general, Kretschmer was known as an unremarkable and normal boy within his social environment (BBC, 2009c). In school he felt rejected by his peers and became frustrated and lonely (Davies, 2009). One of his friends, Marcel Rupp, said that he actually did have friends but was a bit quiet (BBC, 2009c). Then, towards the incident, Kretschmer gradually began to isolate himself from his friends and other peers (Der Spiegel, 2009b; Gera, 2009). This happened after Kretschmer was rejected by a girl whom he was interested in (Pancevskiin, 2009; Rayner & Bingham, 2009).

Reportedly Kretschmer's did have friends and peers, to whom he was attached in some sort of way, and they were all conventional peers who exerted positive influences. For example, when Kretschmer was playing around with his air gun, the others felt that this was wrong and would not participate anymore. It seems that Kretschmer had a couple of friends, or at least acquaintances who may be considered conventional peers. Based on the evidence that suggests that he did have friends, Kretschmer's attachment to peers or friends is considered positive.

Attachment to school

Although little is known about Kretschmer's academic abilities and performance throughout his school life, there are reports on his performance in his final year at the Albertville-Realschule. Generally, Kretschmer did not really stand out in school as he was an average student who earned relative low to moderate type grades (Finley, 2011). Kretschmer wanted to obtain an apprenticeship, but was unable to do so due to his relative poor grades with which he

graduated in 2008 (Kerr, 2012). His performance covers just one dimension of the indicator.

Another relates to the relationship with school's teachers and how Kretschmer felt about them. Kretschmer had a troubled understanding with the teachers. According to one peer, teachers not only ignored him, they also ridiculed him (Associated Press, 2009). A friend of Kretschmer said that he felt threatened and bullied by one teacher in particular and that "he completely hated her, as he did all women in general" (Rayner & Bingham, 2009:1). Kretschmer wanted to be recognized and this was frustrated by his teachers (Langman, 2012).

Even though Kretschmer's grades were not that great, he did manage to graduate. Therefore, his academic performance is not considered of decisive importance within the indicator of attachment to school. His relationship with teachers, however, is considered to be of much more importance. According to Hirschi (1969) bullying and mocking of students by teachers can negatively impact the indicator of attachment to school. This was the case with Kretschmer, as he felt he was picked on and frustrated by teachers and that they did not understand them. Even though Kretschmer was not rebellious against the school's authority or the rules they set, his attachment to school may be considered weakened.

Commitment

Even though Kretschmer was unable to obtain an apprenticeship on his first try, which was his ultimate educational goal, he decided to get that apprenticeship another way. Therefore, he registered with a commercial high school in Waiblingen (Kerr, 2012). Kretschmer hoped to achieve a commercial career by first obtaining his apprenticeship at the school in Waiblingen (Castledon, 2011; Kerr, 2012). Besides his educational goals, Kretschmer had other goals. Since he was a talented and eager table-tennis player, he nursed dreams of one day becoming a professional table-tennis player (Der Spiegel, 2009b; Gera, 2009; Kerr, 2012).

It is evident that Kretschmer had serious educational and occupational aspirations and expectations and was determined to get an apprenticeship, be it by another way. Based on the reports, it seems that Kretschmer was seriously committed to his goals and the indicator may therefore be considered as strong.

Involvement

Besides from the fact that Kretschmer was not interested or engaged in any school activities, he really enjoyed playing video games on his computer (Associated Press, 2009; Davies, 2009). However, this is not a conventional activity in the sense of it being related to sports, school or work. Besides watching TV and playing video games, Kretschmer devoted a lot of his time on

table-tennis. He was a very keen and avid player of this recreational activity and was planning on making it his profession (Kerr, 2012).

Although it is unclear how much time Kretschmer spent on playing table-tennis, it is obvious that he was involved and spent his time on conventional activities. Therefore, the indicator of involvement in conventional, non-delinquent activities may be considered positive.

Belief

At first glance, it appears that Kretschmer believed in the rules of the common value system of society, at least, there are no records of him having had trouble with the law or other authorities. Reportedly, there were no criminal records found on Kretschmer (Stuttgart Journal, 2009). Furthermore, Kretschmer did not cause any real trouble at school as there are no incidents reported. However, his belief started to change significantly toward the moment of the school rampage. The letter to his parents, three weeks before the incident, was not very explicit but it did say something about his state of mind at the time. The fact that he was suffering and, in his eyes, something needed to change (Yeoman & Charter, 2009; Kerr, 2012).

His intentions became evident the night before the rampage, when Kretschmer expressed his feelings towards someone in an online chatroom. He wrote that his true potential was not recognized by others, people were always mocking him and basically that he was fed up with life and could not take any more (BBC, 2009c). Then he wrote: "I mean this seriously – I've got a weapon here and tomorrow morning I'm going to go to my old school and give them hell. Take note of the name: Winnenden" (BBC, 2009c; Rayner & Bingham, 2009:1).

During the rampage, it seemed like Kretschmer had lost all connection to accepted and conventional social norms and values. Kretschmer seemed enjoying the killing of other human beings and was reportedly carefree and nonchalant about it (Langman, 2012). The driver that was taken hostage by Kretschmer asked him why he did what he did, "for fun, because it's fun" Kretschmer answered (Bild, 2009b:1).

These statements indicate a severely weakened or broken belief of the common value system. Kretschmer did not longer value of believe the accepted norms and morals, as evidenced by his carefree character during the killings. He was able to kill without remorse and actually seemed to enjoy it. Therefore, the indicator of belief is considered to be completely missing with Kretschmer at the time of the incident.

When assessing and combining all of the indicators that determine the strength of Tim Kretschmer's social bond, it leads to the overview on the following page:

Tim Kretschmer, Winnenden	
Indicators	**Strength of the bond**
Attachment to parents	0
Attachment to peers or friends	+
Attachment to school	-
Commitment	+
Involvement	+
Belief	- -

Table 4.6: Tim Kretschmer's social bond indicators rated

A complete overview and discussion of every perpetrator's social bond and corresponding indicators can be found within the next chapter in table 5.1.

5.   Discussion

The purpose of this study is to gain more insight into the relation between the strength of the social bond, or the bond to social surroundings, and rampage school shooting perpetrators. Results and meanings of the findings are interpreted and discussed within this chapter.

While combining every previously discussed perpetrators' strength of their bond to their social surroundings, it results in the following table as is shown further in this chapter. Table 5.1 below displays an overview of all the perpetrators from the various rampage school shooting cases and combines the ratings of the strength of their social bond indicators. The first column represents Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory indicators in the same order as presented within the school shooting cases: (1) attachment to parents, (2) attachment to peers or friends, (3) attachment to school, (4) commitment, (5) involvement and (6) belief.

Strength of the social bond							
	Harris	Klebold	Steinhäuser	Weise	Bosse	Cho	Kretschmer
1	-	-	-	0	0	0	0
2	++	++	+	+	+	-	+
3	++	-	- -	0	-	-	-
4	-	-	- -	-	-	+	+
5	++	++	+	-	-	-	+
6	- -	- -	0	-	- -	-	- -

Table 5.1: Overview social bond indicators rated

At first glance, the ratings of the perpetrators' indicators of the social bond appear to be very scattered across the table. There does not seem to be a clear line within the ratings among the various perpetrators. The most striking observation probably is that the strength of the social bond of a typical rampage school shooter is very difficult to classify, if not nearly impossible. Among the perpetrators of rampage school shootings, they seem to differ from each other at nearly every level. There is an intense fluctuation in the strength of indicators between the perpetrators. A constant pattern can hardly be found within the table above, although some trends can be observed. The various indicators are briefly discussed individually in order below.

Attachment to parents: The indicator of attachment to parents appears to be one of the closest to each other in classification or ranking between the perpetrators. Across the perpetrators, the indicator of attachment to parents is generally ranked neutral to negative or is considered weakened. Meaning that, according to Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory, the perpetrators generally experienced little intimacy of communication with their parents and did only share

and discuss their feelings, emotions and thoughts to a limited extent or barely. Furthermore, the ratings of the indicator show that the perpetrators do not necessarily immediately consider the consequences of their actions and their parent's reaction toward this behavior. Less thought may be given to possible repercussions from their parent's side. However, the indicator also clearly expresses difficulties with the availability and credibility of data. In general, when ranked with a zero or nil, it means that consistent difficulty was experienced in obtaining data on the various perpetrators within this specific indicator.

Attachment to peers or friends: Evidence on the indicator of attachment to peers or friends also suggests a fairly constant ranking between the various perpetrators throughout the several cases. According to the ratings, most of the perpetrators seem to have had one or multiple friends or peers with whom they hung out with. Whether these peers were conventional and non delinquent or non conventional and delinquent peers, does not make any difference for the ranking of this indicator. Although the indicator has one outlier where evidence indicates a weakened bond with one of the perpetrators, this might be due to his mental condition which prevented him from having and maintaining social relationships even though several peers regularly reached out to him.

Attachment to school: This indicator appears to be one of the most diversely rated indicators, with classifications or rankings on both the upper and lower end of the spectrum. Although not every rating possible is given to the indicator, it is apparent that the ratings vary considerably. Meaning that there are great variations in academic performances and abilities as well as the acceptance of the school's authority across the various perpetrators. The indicator can also reflect a perpetrator's sense of being frustrated or bullied by teachers and can therefore be negatively rated. Even though the ratings vary, a negative trend can be seen within the table, since evidence suggests that most of the perpetrators have a weakened attachment to school.

Commitment: Commitment to conventional lines of action or the expression of future plans and goals also appears to vary between the perpetrators of rampage school shootings. The variations in educational or occupational ambitions and aspirations suggests that future plans or goals seem to differ quite a lot between the school shooters. Variations are mainly due to whether or not the perpetrator had clearly expressed his goals or not, or that they actually expressed their goals but these were not in line with conventional lines of action. Some of the perpetrators had made quite elaborate and detailed plans about carrying out a school shooting, which is considered far from a conventional line of action and therefore negatively indicated. Furthermore, the indicator of commitment of one perpetrator is ranked with a double minus even though he was committed to graduate from school. However, due to discrepancies between

the perpetrator's hopes and expectations, by having to leave school without any qualifications and therefore educational and occupational prospects, the indicator is ranked negatively.

Involvement: Involvement and time spent on prosocial and conventional school-related activities, sports or hobbies also seems to vary quite considerably among the perpetrators. However, a rating of a plus or double plus does not necessarily indicate time being spent on prosocial activities alone, since multiple perpetrators also were involved in delinquent activities and this is not always directly reflected in the ratings of the indicator, mainly due to strong involvement in conventional activities.

Belief: Overall, evidence suggests a weakened or even broken bond amongst the perpetrators within the indicator of belief. Indicating little to none regard for lawful behavior, the accepted norms of society and even moral validity. With nearly every perpetrator having experienced a loss of regard for lawful behavior, the indicator of belief may be considered the most important indicator of rampage school shooters within the theoretical framework of Hirschi (1969). Most of the perpetrators seem to have expressed their feelings in regard to the school shootings and mostly blame others and hold them accountable. This sense of justification and legitimation of their actions is clearly reflected in the ratings of this indicator. Furthermore, evidence suggesting that various perpetrators had made comprehensive and meticulous plans over longer periods of time, clearly indicates a weakened belief system. Although there is an outlier within this indicator, with the rating of a zero or nil, this is mainly due to insufficient data on the subject. Reportedly, there is little known on this perpetrator's overall belief and therefore rated neutral.

Although some provisional statements can be made based on the analyses and results of the rampage school shooting cases within the United States and Germany, more research needs to be conducted in the future. At least one indicator seems to affect the behavior of rampage school shooters, but may be considered necessary and not sufficient due to the complex interplay of all sorts of factors revolving the perpetrators. Not one factor or indicator in this research may be considered decisive. However, as said, it is not completely without effect. Further limitations of the research relate to the fact that the main sources used are secondary sources, such as articles and newspaper reports. Since interviews with perpetrators are nearly impossible, every single perpetrator in this study has committed suicide, interviews with direct family and relatives may provide additional information necessary to adequately assess the strength of their social bond.

Another restriction is the limited amount of case studies used for the study, but since they were analyzed and assessed in-depth, researching a larger number of cases was not possible due to time constraints and feasibility issues. An increase in the number of cases could provide a more convincing and reasoned understanding of the social bond and rampage school shootings and is further discussed at the end of the conclusion.

Coming back to the main research question as defined at the beginning of the thesis:

"To what extent can the Social Control Theory explain rampage school shootings within Germany and the United States between 1999 and 2014"?

Overall, the conducted case study analysis provides mixed results and therefore gives no clear indication of the explanatory power of the Social Control Theory over rampage school shootings. However, this will be discussed more elaborately within the conclusion.

6.   Conclusion

The extreme forms of violence in the form of school shootings have been a hot topic among researchers and scholars for many years. This interest has especially peaked over the last two decades due to highly publicized events, where the school shooting phenomenon increasingly received national and international attention which has led it to be the subject of extensive academic, social and political debate. In order to gain and develop a better understanding of the school shooting phenomenon, multiple researches have been conducted across various specialized fields and disciplines such as criminology, psychology, education, psychiatry, medicine and sociology. Although the initial debate was particularly centered on school shootings within the United States, a shift towards school shootings across the world has taken place where they also gained increasing attention by the state, media and the public.

Even though literature on school shootings has rapidly increased over the previous two decades, still little systematic theories have been developed by researchers and remain unable to clearly specify or characterize school shooting perpetrators. Since traditional criminological theories have also proven to be able to provide an explanation to some extent on the phenomenon of school shootings, the research focuses on a different criminological perspective. Through the application and analysis of another criminological theory, namely Hirschi's Social Control Theory, the explanatory power on ordinary criminality and delinquency is tested.

This research specifically addresses on one type of school shootings, to be specific, the type of rampage school shootings. A total of six rampage school shooting cases in both the United States and Germany from the period of 1999 to 2014 have served as the case study material with the application of the social control theory framework by Travis Hirschi.

Based on the analyses and assessment of the various rampage school shootings cases as presented in chapter 4 and application of Travis Hirschi's Social Control Theory, the conducted case study analysis provides mixed results and therefore does not provide clear indication of the explanatory power of the Social Control Theory. Basically, there are too many variations and fluctuations between the several perpetrators and the strength of their social bond or their bond to their social surroundings in order to give an adequate explanation of the phenomenon. As previously discussed, the ratings and rankings of the perpetrators' indicators appear to be so extremely different among the perpetrators themselves, that a clear within the ratings among the various perpetrators can not be differentiated. Since evidence suggests that most of the

indicators of Hirschi's Social Control Theory framework are rated differently amongst the perpetrators, a clear characterization of the perpetrator of rampage school shootings is nearly impossible. Evidence does, however, indicate a weakened belief among most of the perpetrators. While a constant pattern seems to be missing between the rampage school shooters, it does demonstrate the fact that, although the perpetrators may differ in a broad way from each other in relation to the strength of their social bond, they all did exhibit sheer violence in the form of a rampage school shooting. Furthermore, the strength of the social bond of perpetrators of rampage school shootings appears to be dissociated from their violent outbursts.

While taking a closer look at the overall analyses and results of all the rampage school shooting perpetrators combined, that are displayed in the final table, the most noticeable observation is that there does appear to be a resemblance among the perpetrators based on one particular indicator of the Social Control Theory's framework. The indicator of belief, which is related to the acceptance of society's norms, moral validity and having regard for lawful behavior, is poorly rated across the various perpetrators. Meaning that most of the rampage school shooters have a weakened sense of moral validity, accept society's norms to a limited extent and have little regard for lawful behavior. In a few cases, the perpetrators even seem to have completely broken off with the accepted norms, morals and values of todays society. However, this seems to be in line with the common perception of rampage school shootings being premeditated attacks, as is demonstrated with most of the perpetrators. Besides this, some of the perpetrators appear to have consciously legitimized their acts of violence throughout various statements, by holding others responsible for their own actions and by saying that they have brought it upon themselves. This is relevant, because it appears to contribute to rampage school shootings and is therefore of importance for the school shooting literature. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the indicator of belief may be considered a necessary factor, in ultimately performing rampage school shootings, however, it may not be considered sufficient due to various other complex factors that play a significant role.

In addition, as explained earlier, the Social Control Theory does not provide an indication of having explanatory power over rampage school shootings, due to the mixed results from the case study analysis. Therefore, rampage school shootings can not be explained by criminological theories alone, although maybe to some extent. Mainly specific theorization on rampage school shootings is necessary in order to grasp a better understanding of the phenomenon.

For future studies, continued case study research is needed. Since this research is limited to a certain amount of school shooting cases – mainly due to feasibility issues and time constraints – and in order to get a more convincing and reliable understanding of the relation of the strength of the social bond and rampage school shootings, the number of cases need to be increased. Moreover, further research may focus on multiple cases within one country or across certain historical periods and across nations. This may help develop a better understanding to which extent the Social Control Theory can explain rampage school shootings. An extension of the amount of case studies increases the generalizability and reliability of the findings. However, the issue at hand is so complex and complicated, that it is impossible to capture within the scope of a single study. Since it remains unclear why the phenomenon of school shootings happens, research needs to proceed and keep evolving, for example with the application of various other theories, in order to develop a better understanding. Also, research is needed between contrasting and varying cultural and social circumstances in order to achieve a better understanding of the phenomenon. Taken together, additional research is essential and would lead to a more thorough understanding of the complex nature of the phenomenon.

7.   References

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