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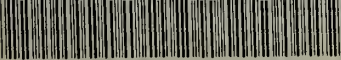Andrew J. Theiss
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SELF–ESTEEM AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS VIOLENCE:

A THEORY ABOUT VIOLENT INDIVIDUALS

A Dissertation Presented

By

ANDREW THEISS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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Psychology

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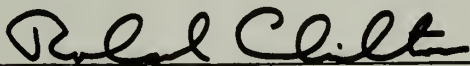

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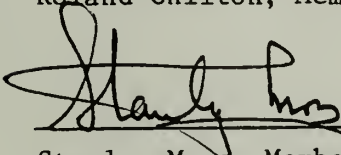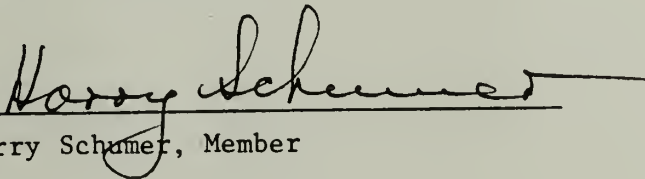Approved as to style and content by:

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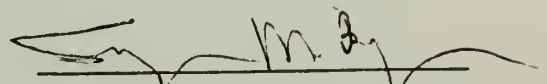

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Stanley Moss, Member

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Harry Schumer, Member

_____

Seymour Berger, Chairperson
Department of Psychology

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABSTRACT

Self-Esteem and Attitudes Towards Violence:

A Theory About Violent Individuals

ANDREW THEISS, B.A., State University of New York

M. A., Teacher's College, Columbia University
Ph.D., University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Directed by: Professor Ervin Staub

This paper attempts to contribute to the understanding of
individual violence by addressing the question of why some individuals
are violent while others are not. Theories on aggression and research
on and related to violent offenders are reviewed and critiqued. A
theoretical framework involving a) low self-esteem, b) lack of social
competencies, c) exposure to violence, and d) attitudes accepting of
violence is posited to differentiate violent from nonviolent individ-
uals. This theory is discussed in terms of existing research findings
and a study designed to assess its validity is presented.

Results obtained support the basic assertions of the theory.
Self-esteem was found to be significantly correlated with undergradu-
ates' attitudes towards violence. Likewise, factors of social compe-
tencies and exposure to violence were significantly correlated with
self-esteem. Significant correlations were also obtained for self-
reported violent behaviors and attitudes accepting of violence (posi-
tive correlation) and self-reported violent behaviors and self-esteem
(negative correlation). While these findings are supportive of the
differentiations posited, more work needs to be done to define and

assess the above factors and discern their precise role regarding

individual violence.

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INTRODUCTION

This study is intended to contribute to the understanding and prediction of the pervasive social problem of individual violence. Nothing scares us so much, arouses our indignation, provokes a desire to retaliate, and instills a sense of helplessness and incomprehensibility, as an act of wanton violence against a fellow human being. It strikes deep to our collective heart of vulnerability. "There but for the grace of God go I" is made painfully true. And yet in 1983, Americans were subjected to a violent crime every 26 seconds! The statistics are staggering. In the ten year period since 1974, the incidence of violent crimes has risen 27 percent! Even controlling for population growth, the rate of violent crimes per 100,000 inhabitants is up 14.7 percent for the same period.

These numbers may not seem all that bad, until one remembers the nature and character of the phenomenon under consideration and its consequences. Violent crime includes murder, forcible rape, forcible robbery, and aggrevated assault. The poignancy of growth in these statistics becomes even more dramatic when one realizes that our per capita violent crime rate is almost ten times that of our allies and friends in industrial, non-Communist countries.

These statistics confirm what the average American already knows either through the media or experience: America is a violent place. But more than a violent place, these statistics say that America tolerates violence; and to the extent that violence is increasing,

America must be promoting violence. This promotion of violence can, of course, be by default, due to ignorance and neglect. Default due to ignorance does not necessarily mean an ignorance of the existence of a problem. An ignorance of the root causes of violence and/or viable solutions, can indirectly work to exacerbate conditions and thereby contribute to the problem. And likewise, neglect does not necessarily imply inaction on the part of society. It can contribute to the problem in the sense of a lack of resolve to effectively and responsibly address the issues involved.

That our country would suffer from ignorance and neglect regarding our citizens' well-being appears paradoxical given our affluence, technology, and intellectual sophistication. And yet, the statistics belie any rhetoric. Violence does exist and is increasing!

These statistics, coupled with the nature and pervasiveness of violence are simply indefensible. In my attempt to address this topic in a forthright manner, I propose to present a new theoretical framework for understanding violence, and a study predicated on it. However, to achieve the development of a cogent theoretical perspective necessitates proceeding in two seemingly contradictory directions simultaneously.

First, the scope of the phenomenon under consideration must be limited. Literature abounds on the subject of aggression. However given the encompassing nature and varying definitions of aggression the literature has been relatively fragmented, and offers limited understanding of the phenomenon of violence. Rather than "aggression"

which has been variously defined as an instinct, emotion or impulse (Freud, 1920), a motive or intention (Berkowitz, 1974; Feshbach, 1970), and an attitude (Zillman, 1978); I propose the subset "violence" defined as the use, or threat to use, physical force to injure another.

The second direction to work toward is to loosen up theorizing and research. I believe theorizing should transcend traditional psychological parameters and approaches. While I am not eschewing theorizing and then experimentation based upon it, I am calling for greater connectedness between the phenomenon as it exists and theorizing about it. To use the American Psychological Association's own caution, we must avoid the "bull in a Royal Worcester china shop" strategy. To say aggression is instinctual, or that frustration leads to aggression and then frustrate a college undergraduate until he aggresses, really adds little to our understanding of the everyday phenomenon typified by Peewee Brown, a 13-year old murderer and mugger ("Juvenile Crime," 1982), or Baby Love, a 14-year old who violently assaults people ("In Brooklyn," 1981).

The drawback to this narrowing of the broader topic of aggression is that one must perforce forego the academic purity of seeking an economy of theory regarding all aspects of aggression. However, the advantages outweigh this disadvantage. Physical violence, unlike aggression, is an easily identifiable and therefore observable event. It can be focused upon and dealt with in a straightforward manner, as the need to identify the more abstract forms of violence and aggression such as psychological or mental cruelty, competition,

etc. is eliminated. Another advantage is that this focus facilitates a utilitarian, pragmatic application of scientific research to every-day phenomena. Physical violence is probably the most visible, immediately threatening form of aggression to our society on a day-to-day basis. Thus from a personal safety and psychological perspective, it is most in need of remediation/control.

Addressing this social problem directly (and thus more efficiently and hopefully more effectively) would have the benefit of a calming and generally positive ripple effect throughout society. The immediate threat posited by physical violence is in actuality a two-edged sword. The obvious side is the actual physical harm perpetrated. The other equally devastating side is the insidious side-effect victimization and fear have upon society as a whole. As long as a violent crime occurs every 26 seconds, people will become desensitized to it and in some respects tolerant of it. Violence becomes a "fact" of life. A robbery is not so bad--compared to a murder.

The magnitude of violence in our society in terms of both frequency and nature dulls our sensibilities and alters our perception (Hornstein et al., 1975). Also, with our attention focused on the immediate threat of physical violence, the more subtle forms of cruelty, devaluation and aggression tend to have a diminished impact or go unnoticed. Likewise, the highly publicized nature of physical violence must affect and possibly alter our perception of violence in society, and has been demonstrated to alter our perception of human nature (Wrightsman and Noble, 1965). Thus, effectively dealing

with physical violence will liberate society in general to be more humane.

This investigation will also be limited to individual in contrast to collective forms of violence. The former is self-explanatory. The latter includes gang warfare, mob violence, lynchings, riots, genocide, and war. It appears reasonable (and evidence suggests) that the two are somewhat distinct and unique forms of violence. Focusing on individuals engaged as individuals in acts of physical violence eliminates the need to look at the dynamics of a group situation.

C H A P T E R   I I
TOWARD A THEORY OF INDIVIDUAL VIOLENCE

Traditional Theories

A brief review of three theoretical approaches will augment the
need for a more pragmatic approach to theorizing. First, while I
agree with the instinct (Freud, 1920) approach of focusing on the
individual, I question the utility of accepting violence as an innate
aspect of human behavior. After six decades of research, the
instinctual model has yielded little, if any, practical insight
and/or viable resolutions to the problem of violence. What matter
if aggression is innate, if having stated that has no impact on
understanding, prediction or control? It seems the issue of whether
aggression is instinctual or innate is relatively moot, and as such
becomes academic obfuscation regarding a pragmatic consideration of
the problem. Whether or not it is innate, the fact is that not all
people employ violence. Thus, we must look at those individuals who
do use it and ask why they do and others don't. Further, an advan-
tage of not subscribing to aggression as instinct is that one, at
least temporarily, puts aside the excess baggage of popular authors
like Konrad Lorenz (1966) and Robert Ardrey (1966) whose extrapola-
tions from animals to man merely confound the phenomena at hand.

Likewise, the frustration-aggression hypothesis put forth by
Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears (1939) and updated by
Berkowitz (1969, 1974) and Feshbach (1964, 1970) appears less than
satsifactory. It may be that the drive to aggress is contingent on

an arousal which is elicited by various environmental conditions. And it is plausible as they postulate, that this elicitation takes the form of a blocking or thwarting of some ongoing, goal-directed behavior (a frustration of some sort). However, the fact that frustration is common to most people's lives and yet not everyone responds with aggression becomes problematic. We are again left with the question of "why" some and not others employ aggression.

Even Berkowitz's (1965, 1969) insightful revision of the frustration-aggression hypothesis to include the presence of "aggressive cues" as a necessary condition for overt aggression to occur is not totally satisfying (see Baron, 1977). For example, this theory of frustration leading to an arousal or readiness to aggress, coupled with the presence of aggressive cues, culminating in overt aggression, does not effectively deal with hostile and instrumental aggression per se (cf. Feshbach, 1964, 1970; Buss, 1961, 1971). It relies heavily on external events (frustration, presence of appropriate cues) to bring about aggression. It does not account for those who seek to harm and/or do so without the provocation of a direct and/or relatively immediate frustration (see "In Brooklyn", 1981; and "Juvenile Crime", 1982).

There is also research evidence which argues against the view that frustration serves as an important antecedent of aggression (Buss, 1963, 1966; Kuhn, Madsen, and Becker, 1967; Taylor and Pisano, 1971). Some evidence even suggests that frustration may sometimes reduce later aggression (Gentry, 1970; Rule and Hewitt, 1971). These studies notwithstanding, it is certainly reasonable and evident

within our society that frustration can lead to aggression. However, given the individual nature of what constitutes a frustration, this theory proves less than complete in predicting and controlling the problem of individual violence.

A third major theoretical approach to aggression is that of social learning theory, as put forth by Albert Bandura (1973). It regards aggression as another form of social behavior; and as such, aggression is acquired and maintained just as any other behavior. This approach is informative and effective, in that attention is focused on three distinct issues involved in aggression. They are: 1) how aggressive actions/behaviors are acquired; 2) in what situations or circumstances they occur; and 3) how they are maintained.

All three of these issues contribute in a meaningful way to our understanding of violence as a behavior, and yet, as a whole they are incomplete. What they neglect as a theory is the individual involved. That one can "learn" to behave aggressively has been demonstrated (Bandura, 1973; Buss, 1971; Geen and Stonner, 1971). That certain instigating factors, at times, lead to aggression, or that aggression can be rewarded and thereby maintained, seem reasonable and valid enough. However, none of these propositions speaks to the issue of "why" certain individuals behave violently while others do not. True, it could be argued that violence is simply reinforcing for some individuals, while not for others. Yet, that still skirts the issue of why violence is reinforcing to some and not to others. What seems to be missing is the individual as a variable. Perhaps there are individual traits or characteristics that differentiate

violent from nonviolent individuals, or contribute to increasing or decreasing the likelihood of learning and/or using violence. Unfortunately, the behavioral approach does not address itself directly to these questions.

While the above theories err by being incomplete and perhaps too removed from the phenomenon as it is manifest, even more recent, pragmatic approaches fall short as well. As an illustration, Peter Greenwood (1982) at the Rand Corporation devised a list of seven characteristics he claims will predict a high rate of future criminal activity. His list is based upon interviews with 2,190 inmates who discussed their personal and criminal histories. The list contains: 1) imprisonment for more than half the two years preceding the most recent arrest; 2) a previous conviction for the same crime; 3) a conviction before the age of 16; 4) commitment to a juvenile facility; 5) heroin or barbiturate use in the preceding two years; 6) use of the same drug as a juvenile; and, 7) unemployment for more than half the preceding two years. As a signaling devise the list makes sense, for taken together these characteristics identify both a near-term (within the previous two years) and a long-term history of crime as a factual way of life. However, as an effective means of dealing with violent crime (or crime in general) it is very unsatisfying.

The proposal is unsatisfying because it deals with symptoms rather than their underlying causes, and because it is reactive rather than predictive. One must wait for the behavioral patterns to be set. Violence must be employed and detected, and "participation" severely restricted by incarceration and further evidenced by

unemployment before this approach becomes predictive. Even then, the proscription is simple and somewhat naive: "selectively incapacitate" the criminals identfied by this program through the use of longer prison sentences. Legal and moral concerns aside (and to my mind there are many), this proposal does nothing to affect the breeding grounds of violence and crime. By not addressing the issues that lead to and promote this behavior, a new supply of criminals and violent individuals will continually replace those locked up. The idea of identifying characteristics is a good one, but the follow through is poor. Greenwood's proposal chases a questionable quick-fix, attempting to stop crime and violence by incapacitating those who employ them as a behavioral strategy. Yet, how can one hope to control a phenomenon while avoiding any understanding of its true dynamics?

Understanding Individual Violence

To develop a theoretical framework for understanding, predicting, and controlling the phenomenon of violence, it is important to maintain a perspective that incorporates the totality of the problem as it exists. Consideration should be narrowed to the specific phenomenon of violence, yet should not be limited by disciplinary constraints. The basic question to be addressed appears to be "why" is it that certain individuals are violent and others are not. Understanding why an individual engages in violence is akin to identifying the needs and purposes violence fulfills for that individual. Regardless of the legitimacy of those needs, knowing that information affords

society the possibility of developing socially acceptable alternative means of serving/satisfying these needs. By that I mean society is in a better position to deal with the individual's behaviors, and refocus both its and the individual's energies toward socially acceptable alternative behaviors. That being the case, it becomes possible to lessen violence on a societal level by diminishing the need for violence on an individual level. This approach is intuitively more appealing than the present strategy of trying to deter violence by attaching negative consequences after the fact.

To achieve this understanding, it is useful to think of violence as a natural and ongoing form of behavior. By natural, I do not mean innate. Violence is natural in that given certain developmental and individual characteristics, violence as a form of behavior is a natural outcome. It is not a flaw or an atypical or pathological behavior. As in social learning theory, this facilitates analyses of "how" individuals become violent or learn violence. By ongoing, I mean to imply that violence is not a discrete outburst, but rather an integrated, and to some extent accepted mode of behaving, for many individuals who engage in it. This facilitates analyses of "why" some individuals employ violence while others do not.

In trying to account for the wide variety of individual differences regarding the use of violence, it is useful to remember the nature of the phenomenon at hand. As with any behavior, violence develops, can vary in degree of intensity, frequency of utilization, range of utilization, and so forth. Accepting the natural and ongoing nature of violence facilitates the search for patterns or

similarities common to violent individuals, yet which differentiates them from nonviolent individuals.

Existing Research Findings

In trying to differentiate violent individuals, I will review theories and research on and related to individual violence, as well as statistics and characteristics of violent offenders. These yield a portrait that is compelling in its consistency. Four personal characteristics or traits emerge to typify violent individuals, while three population parameters define and limit violent offenders as a population.

Individual Characteristics

Many studies start by identifying individuals who have engaged in/committed acts of violence, and then proceed to identify current personality characteristics and psychological traits, as well as collecting anecdotal information about their backgrounds. While these studies differ as to population, intent, methodology and characteristics reported, they tend to support major themes or characteristics descriptive of violent offenders. Above all else, they indiciate that violent individuals suffer low self-esteem. This is true for hardened, incarcerated violent offenders (Newman, 1974; Toch, 1969); first-time violent offenders (Gillooly and Bond, 1976); violent youth-gang members (Copeland, 1974); and even adolessent juvenile offenders (Offer, Marohn, and Ostrov, 1975). This characteristic even transcends the various diagnostic labels applied

to violent offenders (Keltikangas-Jarvinen, 1978).

A second characteristic identified by these studies is an inability to participate successfully in the mainstream of society. By this I mean the individual seems lacking (to varying degrees) in social skills and/or competencies that would allow him to receive positive feedback from normal (socially acceptable or prescribed) social interactions. No studies have looked at this dimension directly, but glimpses of its association with violent behavior are reported throughout the literature across age groups and populations. This takes the form of "distorted and deficient" human relations (Keltikangas-Jarvinen, 1978); "inadequate peer relations" (Gillooly and Bond, 1976); poor performance in school situations and previous incidents of lesser forms of antisocial behavior (Bond, 1976); and isolation from access to the social mainstream, poor verbal expression, and academic underachievement (Copeland, 1974). This portrait holds even when dealing with elementary school children identified as bullies; when compared to controls, they have lower IQs and are below-average on reading achievement scores (Lowenstein, 1977). These last two may seem a bit far removed from the more extreme characteristics cited, and given the population, rather premature as evidence of a connection between violent behavior and personal skill/interaction deficiencies. However, these same traits become increasing liabilities with time, and are consistently mirrored in adult violent offenders. Toch (1969) states: "probably a majority of violence-prone persons may be classed as deficient in verbal and other social skills" (p. 153).

A third characteristic to emerge from these studies deals with developmental aspects of violent offenders' lives. These include lack of significant stable, positive relationships (Newman, 1974); deprivation and/or brutality (parental separation, neglect and abuse), repeated experiences of rejection and disappointment, and no viable marriages or significant interpersonal relationships prior to their offense (Bond, 1976). And, again, these developmental problems are evident even when looking at elementary school children. Lowenstein (1977) reported that compared to controls, bullying children are more likely to have parents who: a) have marital problems or conflicts at home, b) have been bullies themselves, c) exhibit inconsistent or overpermissive approaches to child rearing, and d) lack sensitivity to other people. These suggest both the lack of a positive developmental experience, and ample opportunities for learning by modeling.

Another class of studies that document the existence of developmental problems experienced by violent individuals are those dealing with child abuse. These studies do not actually look at the child involved, but rather they focus on the abusing parent/adult. They yield a portrait of abusers similar to that of violent offenders. A brief sampling: Spinetta and Rigler (1972) found abusing parents were themselves raised with deprivation, had mistaken notions of child rearing, and expressed their aggressive impulses too freely. Kempe, Silverman, Steele, Droegemueller and Silver (1962) found that abusing families had a high incidence of divorce, separation and unstable marriages. And Steele and Pollock (1968) found abusing parents characterized by feeling insecure and unloved, and being

unrealistic in their expectations and demands of their children. All of these findings coincide with the findings of inadequate interpersonal relations reported for violent offenders (certainly abusing parents are violent offenders), and suggest or indicate a less than healthy, normal developmental background.

The fourth characteristic to emerge from these studies on violent individuals deals with the way in which violent individuals see themselves and the world in general. Newman (1974) reported that for the prisoners he interviewed, violence was part of their identity. They felt that "worth" equalled strength and a lack of fear. Self-esteem was tied to manliness, which was defined as being proud, strong, big and violent. Thus, self-esteem and violence were fused. Some prisoners needed to inflict hurt in order to feel successful and manly, while for others a sense of worth was achieved by controlling and compelling others. Interestingly, the actual crimes committed mirrored this distinction. Men who felt the need to inflict hurt generally committed assaults, while men who felt the need to control generally committed robberies. Ironically, these violent offenders viewed themselves as victims. They all agreed that it was a hurt or be hurt world.

Hans Toch (1969) reported similar findings. Violent offenders could be categorized by two major themes. The first involves the use of "self-preserving" strategies. These are instances of "violence used to bolster and enhance the person's ego in the eyes of himself and of others" (p. 135). The second involves individuals who "see themselves (and their own needs) as being the only fact of

social relevance" (p. 136). These are egocentric individuals and violence is simply used to ensure compliance with, or to promote one's own personal needs and desires. In both of these themes, as with Newman's findings above, we find individuals who: a) are very concerned with their identity/self-esteem and b) use inappropriate, in this case violent, means of addressing their concern.

This same portrait, although not addressed directly, is painted in a variety of ways. Gillooly and Bond (1976) characterized their offenders as having "underlying dependency needs" and motivated by a desire to "escape" problems they were "unable" to resolve, or as an attempt to "prove" their masculinity and independence. Bond (1976) went on to catalog these same subjects as displaying: lack of critical self-observation, use of externalization (especially regarding reasons for failure), feelings of insecurity or vulner- ability, and low tolerance for frustration. Likewise, Offer et al. (1975) found that although all subjects saw themselves as more disturbed, less happy, having more problems, and generally less emotionally healthy than the norm, when dichotomized into more and less violent groups, a comparison revealed the more violent males saw themselves as healthier and better adjusted than the less violent males. It is almost as if the use of violence somehow compensated for, or mitigated some of the negatives in these adolescents' lives. Given that, it is reasonable that violence would be an accepted mode of behaving.

Population Characteristics

The Federal Bureau of Investigation classifies murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault as violent crimes and compiles data on individuals arrested for such crimes. This statistical data is published under the name Uniform Crime Reports. It informs us of the more mundane, nonpsychological characteristics of violent offenders. Yet we should be attentive, for the portrait it presents is powerful in its clarity and disturbing in its complexion. Three "facts" jump out at the reader. One, males overwhelmingly are responsible for violent crimes. In 1983, males committed 89.2 percent of violent crimes. Two, youths are disproportionately involved in violent crimes. Youths 13 to 24 years old account for approximately 56 percent of the violent crimes committed, yet they represent only 21 percent of the population. If that group is extended from 13 to 34 years old, they account for 82 percent of violent crimes, while comprising only 36 percent of the population. And three, Blacks are disproportionately involved in violent crimes. Blacks account for 47.5 percent of violent crimes committed in 1983, yet they represent under 12 percent of the population.

If one is to develop a theory of why individuals are violent, then surely that theory must address the existence of these imbalances, as well as the individual characteristics delineated earlier. Why is it that young males, and especially young Black males, engage in violence within our society? Perhaps a key lies in an understanding of the niche occupied by young males (and disproportionately by young Black males) within our society. Likewise, thought must be

given to the overwhelming gender difference evident in violent crimes.

C H A P T E R   I I I

A SOCIAL COMPETENCE THEORY OF INDIVIDUAL VIOLENCE

Having these two distinct sets of characteristics regarding
violent individuals, one need ask are they reconcilable? I believe
the answer is yes. I will begin by stating my belief that the four
individual characteristics culled out of the studies above are
factors which if present over a sufficiently long developmental
period will result in an individual highly prone to violence. These
individuals will develop and employ interpersonal strategies that
have a high probability of degenerating into, or resulting in, some
form of violence.

I will reiterate the four factors, and then examine each in
light of the population characteristics and theoretical considera-
tions. The factors are: 1) Low self-esteem, sufficiently low to
cause a need state or desire to enhance one's esteem. 2) An
inability, either personal or imposed, to "participate" successfully
in the social mainstream, especially in terms of overcoming or
compensating the first factor. 3) A background that includes high
"exposure", either witnessed or experienced, to aggression and
violence as modes of behaving. 4) A world-view or mental orienta-
tion that tolerates, or even accepts, violence as an alternative
form of behavior. Taken together, these factors provide a motive
to act, a forced channeling (by limitation) of the motive to act,
a learned way of behaving, and a disposition that allows for the
occurrence of the type of behavior that was learned. One need only

examine their relationships to and interactions with each other to conclude that they result in a violence-prone individual.

Self-esteem and Social Competence

The first and most salient characteristic of violent offenders was their low self-esteem and their concern or sensitivity regarding perceived threats to it. As Newman (1974) summarized: "what became glaringly apparent from the outset was the central importance of self-esteem and related problems in these men living violent lives" (p. 328) (emphasis added). To speculate, if as Maslow (1968, 1954) and others have theorized, the lower an individual's self-esteem the greater his need to enhance and/or achieve self esteem, then this would account for violent individuals' reported concern/preoccupation with "protecting", "proving", and "enhancing" their identity and esteem. It would also provide a reasonable motivation to act to that end. This motivation might be a link, that in conjunction with the other three factors, differentiates violent from nonviolent individuals. However, the key here is "in conjunction with". I do not mean to imply that low self-esteem by itself will cause violent behavior.

How does this correspond with the population characteristics? Remember youths are disproportionately represented in violent crimes: youths 13 to 18 years old are responsible for 41.4 percent of violent crimes, and youths 13 to 24 years old account for 55.5 percent of violent crimes. Given the high recidivism rate among violent offenders, and the inverse relationship between violent crime and age, it is plausible that the factors that contribute to an individ-

ual's disposition towards violence are set in their youth. Fortunately, we can gain some insight into this period of an individual's life by looking at the literature on adolescence.

Adolescence in our culture is a time of uncertainty and change. It is a period during which individuals undergo the metamorphosis from dependent children to fledgling individual, growing more mature and independent with time. For the child, it is a time to discover, develop and refine who they are; to come to grips with their identity--both physically and psychologically. If this weren't enough, in our society adolescents must also deal with who they are vis-a-vis the larger context of a complex and rapidly changing society. Unlike some other societies where values and roles are largely prescriptive, youths in our culture are bombarded with a variety of different opportunities and orientations which serve to complicate an already difficult period.

Havighurst (1972) delineated a series of "developmental tasks" which confront adolescents, and which they must successfully moderate to achieve healthy adult status. Basically they are: developing a sense of oneself, asserting one's independence, learning to interact and relate to others, and developing an orientation or perspective on life and the world in general (what I call a world-view). These sound very familiar in the negative, in terms of characteristics and concerns of violent offenders (e.g., concern with protecting and proving oneself, and deficient interpersonal skills and relations).

Hamachek (1980) condensed the purpose of adolescence and its developmental tasks to helping adolescents "to define themselves as

individuals and to develop a recognizable and reasonably predictable 'self' from which both a self-concept and feelings of self-esteem can grow" (p. 83). Thus, the essence of adolescence appears to be about the development and resolution of the very "issues" violent offenders seem to be concerned with and motivated by. It is as if violent offenders have not successfully navigated the developmental tasks of adolescence. If that is the case, that might explain why youths are so disproportionately represented in violent crimes. Perhaps violence is being used as a means of addressing these concerns.

As always the question arises: Why is it some individuals behave violently while others don't? The answer seems to lie in the inter-action of all four developmental factors. Most individuals seem to successfully moderate the tasks of adolescence and thereby achieve some degree of healthy adult status. However, what would happen if the socially acceptable means of dealing with these tasks were for some reason unavailable? What if an individual could not achieve self-esteem in socially acceptable ways?

This seems to be the case with violent individuals. Remember the reports of "distorted and deficient" and "inadequate" relations. These suggest interpersonal skills problems. Likewise, reports of poor performance in school, low IQ, and lack of verbal skills testify to the violent individual's lack of ability to take advan-tage of opportunities to achieve self-esteem in socially prescribed/acceptable ways.

This factor, which I refer to as "participation", may be some-

what similar to what sociological "control" theories (see Hirschi, 1969) refer to as involvement. However unlike involvement, which is viewed in a fairly linear, one-dimensional way—that involvement in conventional activities simply precludes the possibility of engaging in deviant ones—participation refers to the ability or inability, for whatever reason, to take advantage of or achieve through socially acceptable activities. It goes beyond a lack of involvement, to a forced exclusion from the benefits of participation in socially acceptable activities. This lack of benefit specifically applies to the development of self-esteem. This limitation then is both a precursor for low self-esteem and a channeling mechanism; simultaneously creating and exacerbating a motivational state, while shutting down the opportunities for addressing that state. It seems reasonable then that this factor would help differentiate the violent from nonviolent among low self-esteem individuals.

An illustration of what I am referring to is a finding by Coleman, Weinman, and Hsi (1980). They gathered data on 60 couples seeking assistance for marital conflicts, 30 of whom were involved in marital violence. The abusing husbands were characterized by a background of family violence and low educational level, while the nonabusing husbands did not have these traits. It could be argued that low educational level indicates, or corresponds to, some degree of difficulty in achieving within school. Three points come to mind. One, difficulty and/or inability to achieve within school leads to and reinforces negative evaluations of oneself. Two, given school's central, mandatory role and the importance of skills acquired there,

this difficulty tends to reduce/restrict both current and future options available for satisfying the need for positive self-esteem. And three, this difficulty with school may be symptomatic of a generalized difficulty in relating to and/or achieving within the socially prescribed/acceptable ways.

Not all academic nonachievers are violent individuals. However, an overwhelming majority of violent individuals seem to have had academic/achievement problems. This particular study dealt with couples experiencing interpersonal difficulties. Half of the husbands resorted to violence, the other half did not. When compared as two groups, the abusers were found to have a lower educational level (possible evidence of personal and/or social skill deficiencies). This finding supports the pattern of the use of violence and evidence of an inability to participate successfully in socially acceptable ways. Further, it was the case that when faced with similar problems, the nonabusing husbands--who had a higher educational level (perhaps greater or more developed personal/social skills and competencies)--did not respond with violence. This could be interpreted as lending credence to the idea that violence might be used when socially acceptable modes are not available/ successful. And again with these violent husbands, as with other violent offenders, we find evidence of the existence of the factors of "exposure" and some degree of difficulty in successfully "participating", associated with the use of violence.

But why use violence when faced with this inability to participate? I would speculate that if the individual's need for esteem is

sufficiently high, he is in a very precarious position. Possibly

out of desperation in an attempt to hide his weakness/inability and/or

utilize a possible strength or well-known strategy, the individual

acts violently. As Toch (1969) described it:

> The object of this man's fights is to eliminate a
> source of irritation, which generally consists of
> <u>verbal</u> materials. The reason this kind of material
> proves irritating to him is because he himself seems
> <u>incapable of handling</u> his end of the argument.
> (pp. 154-155; emphasis added)

However, violence could also be acting within the limited options

the individual perceives available to him. Lowenstein's (1977)

elementary school bullies had lower IQs and below-average reading

achievement scores--evidence of difficulty participating. We also

know of their disruptive and bullying behaviors, certainly less

aggressive but nonetheless on the continuum of antisocial/violent

behaviors. Two advantages of disruption and bullying come to mind:

the attention received and, at least temporary, feelings of self-

worth as compared to a devalued other. A plausible interpretation

might be that these children felt a need for this attention and

feelings of self-worth; a need which perhaps could have, but was

not being satisfied by school achievement.

Unfortunately, if this speculation is accurate, this state of

affairs is setting a foundation which will probably perpetuate the

cycle of need and the use of violence to satisfy that need. It will

perpetuate the "need" for esteem because the behavioral strategies

chosen (e.g., violence, disruption) are inherently inadequate in

the long-term and within the larger social context (thus violence's

"antisocial" label). However, given violence's success in the near-term and within a limited context, coupled with its side-effect of further alienating its user from the social mainstream and therefore acceptable means to achieving esteem, it is very likely violence will be resorted to again. Thus, it seems the seeds of a self-perpetuating cycle of the use of violence leading ultimately to the further use of violence (given no intervention or occurrence to change the progression) are being planted.

Exposure to and Integration of Violent Behavior

The third factor ("exposure") also addresses the question of "why violence". We have a motivational state and a restriction of the available options. Yet, that alone does not account for the choice of violence. Although I see a restricting of options, there certainly are (at least early on in the process) avenues and strategies other than violence still available. Likewise to say violence is reinforcing or successful, although true, still does not account for the choice. One cannot learn of violence's success without first having tried or seen or heard about it. What gets someone to choose violence in the first place?

As cited earlier, the evidence is overwhelming that violent individuals have had developmental backgrounds plagued by a variety of problems. These background problems both foster and exacerbate the characteristics of low self-esteem and limited ability to partici-pate. This is clearly seen in Copeland's (1974) conclusion that membership in violent gangs was motivated by: a) a reaction against

a chaotic family life, b) search for security, and c) need for identity. Here we find a "reaction" by violent gang members against their background, signifying a dissatisfaction with it. A "search" indicating that present/existing avenues of participation are somehow deficient or unsuccessful. And a "need" demonstrating that the first two conditions have been the state of affairs for a long time, thereby inhibiting or preventing the normal development of identity and/or esteem. This paints a portrait of an individual primed and ready, yet seemingly no closer to answering the question of why violence.

We know that violence can be learned vicariously (Bandura, 1969; Bandura, Ross, and Ross, 1963; Bandura and Walters, 1963). Couple this fact with the consistent reports of varying degrees of "exposure" to aggression and violence while growing up, the existence of a need state, imposed limits on one's means of satifying his need, and a world-view that tolerates or accepts violent behaviors, and the result is likely to be a violent individual. The critcal role of exposure is seen in a study by Thomas Reidy (1977). He compared abused, neglected, and normal children (mean age 6½ years). Overall abused children exhibited significantly more aggression than the other two groups. This was true across the social situations in which measurements were taken (e.g., TAT stories, school, free play). This finding of more aggression by abused versus neglected and normal children clearly suggests that experiencing aggression does effectively increase a child's level of aggression. Another result found by this study is of interest. Both abused and neglected children exhibited significantly more aggression within school

settings than did the normals. The first result suggests that aggression is not only a by-product of faulty child rearing practices or a disadvantaged home background, but that parental modeling of aggression does effectively increase the child's level of aggression. This second finding corroborates the repeatedly reported pattern of the use of aggressive behaviors and the existence of difficulty within socially prescribed settings. The important point here is not a causal one, but rather a correlational one. These children whom we might reasonably expect to have difficulties with socially acceptable modes of intercourse (e.g., school), do significantly engage in more aggression than the norm, and do so in the social setting one would predict they would have trouble in. It may be that these children are inadvertently employing aggression where and when other alternatives are not available/successful.

The finding of aggression following aggressive behavior by parents, has been documented repeatedly, even with "normal" subjects (e.g., Sears, Maccoby, and Levin, 1957; Hoffman, 1960). Further, the effects of experiencing aggression--of being abused--coincide with the characteristics of low self-esteem and difficulty in participating in the social mainstream. Kinard (1980) found that abused children were significantly different from nonabused children (ages 5 to 12 years) on five dimensions of emotional development: self-concept, aggression, interpersonal relations with their peer group, establishment of trust in people, and separation from their mother. These abused children, even at this early age, evidenced the same characteristics as older convicted violent offenders. They were

lower in self-esteem, had difficulties participating/interacting with their peers, displayed more aggressive behaviors, and were developing a less than positive world-view as evidenced by their lack of trust in people. Similar findings of the detrimental effects of abuse and its resultant personal and interpersonal problems were reported for incarcerated juvenile delinquents aged 14 to 18 years old (Rogers and LeUnes, 1979).

The fourth factor contributing to the use of violence is, I believe, a world-view that tolerates or even accepts violence as a part of life. This factor seems intuitively necessary as a mediating influence regarding the actual use of violent behavior(s). It could be argued that with regard to any of the prior three factors, people could evidence similar degrees of the factor and yet still, some individuals would act violently while others would not. Thus there must be something else which accounts for the violent versus nonviolent differentiation. It seems reasonable that the missing, necessary link is how the individual views the world, or more specifically his attitudes and beliefs regarding the use of violence.

We know that attitudes such as prejudice effect the way individuals view others (Allport, 1954). Once a distinction and devaluation are made, even extreme forms of violence against those "others" becomes somewhat permissible (Leamer, 1972). Likewise, it seems the individual's perception of the aggression itself--whether or not it is justified in a given situation--also influences whether aggression will be employed or not (Rule and Nesdale, 1976). And further, we know that making an individual's values and standards

(attitudes) more salient to himself (what has been termed "objective self-awareness"), can intensify or enhance the aggressive behaviors associated with those beliefs (Carver, 1974), and conversely can inhibit aggressive behavior that is not in line with the individual's belief (Carver, 1975).

Taken together the above research results indicate a cognitive mediating of aggressive behaviors. However, bear in mind that these results were derived almost exclusively with college students. Try to imagine individuals steeped in the other three factors-- suffering low self-esteem, experiencing difficulties participating successfully, and having experienced a high degree of exposure to violence--and you will quickly appreciate how for these individuals world-view would be a major contributing factor to their use of violent behaviors. Let me close this consideration with two quotes illustrating this more extreme world-view. They are from Peewee Brown ("Juvenile Crime", 1982) a convicted murderer at 15 years old, who has admitted to many other murders--several corroborated-- including beating a young girl into a coma because she called him a name and shooting a man because he "felt" the man had cheated him.

> Anything I did was justified so far as I was concerned.
> I don't feel guilt..."

> I felt if you try to hurt me, I'm definitely going to
> hurt you. I would definitely get you back." (p. 44)

Summary

What appears to be emerging is a rather consistent, cyclical portrait. People "learn" aggression by expsoure to aggressive behav-

iors. Individuals who employ aggressive behavior evidence certain personal characteristics that argue for the existence of personal deficiencies. These deficiencies help perpetuate the use of agressive behaviors by limiting other options, alienating the individual from society and exacerbating his need. Conversely, children exposed to aggression exhibit: 1) aggression, and 2) the same personal characteristics (deficiencies) as those adults who employ aggression. Thus, the seeds of future violence are sown.

How does one unwind the interwoven, and discern the cause from the effect? I suspect the earlier in life the better the prospects for successful intervention.   As Erik Erikson (1963, 1968) observed, growing up with mistrust, shame, doubt, guilt and inferiority-- outcomes resulting from the factors of exposure and participation-- will adversely affect the youngster, and can lead to experiencing more than the usual amount of identity confusion during adolescence. Thus the developmental pressure of "exposure" and "participation" over time can affect the individual at the critical time of adolescence and in the sensitive area of identity and esteem, thereby setting in motion the motivational drive evidenced by violent individuals.

Now the developmental stage is set. The environment is exerting itself and interacting with personal difficulties, in the seemingly inexorable development of a violent individual. Yet even given the existence of these three factors, not all individuals become violent. The explanation for this lies with the individual himself. People have the ability to think, reason, decide and choose. True, as

social scientists have pointed out, an individual's attachment to others--their sensitivity to others' opinions (especially significant others)--is extremely important and influential. However, the individual must and does ultimately decide and act on his own. Thus the fourth factor, a world-view or mental orientation that tolerates or accepts violence as a mode of behaving, is necessary.

As was documented very clearly by both Toch (1969) and Newman (1974), "world-view" is a component of violent offenders. For some, their attachment and value system is simply different than that of society. They subscribe to, and perhaps even enjoy violence. For others, they may not like or enjoy it, but they feel trapped-- helpless to act otherwise--a victim of circumstances. In either case their world-view, at the very least, tolerates violence.

This finding is reasonable in light of the previously delineated factors. Exposure teaches one the realities of life. Participation shuts down the options available, and low self-esteem sets a motiva- tional need state. Without strong constraints of conscience inhibit- ing the use of violence, the rewards violence achieves becomes too great. Unfortunately too, once employed the self-perpetuating nature of violence increases the likelihood it will be resorted to again.

I believe these four factors are at the core of why individuals engage in violence. They are developmental in nature and cyclical in effect. They interact with one another, and may vary in degree from individual to individual. However, some combination of all four factors will be present in all violent individuals.

As to the population characteristics, they seem reasonably con-

sistent with my theorizing. That youths are so disproportionately represented owes to the developmental fact that it is during adolescence that these contributing factors, particularly low self-esteem and participation, come to a head. That Blacks are so disproportionately represented is testimony to the pervasive and complex effects of racism and discrimination within our society. If the factors described can lead to violence, it need only be asked: how do these factors affect Blacks. The answer, I believe and statistics support, is that these factors are magnified for Blacks as an aggregate. Participation is more restricted, personal skill deficiencies (as indicated by educational level, SES, etc.) are greater; exposure, given concentration in urban ghettos with high crime rates, is greater; and world-view would thus be more negative. The equation is the same, just its effect is realized more often (on aggregate) due to societal conditions. And finally, that an overwhelming gender difference exists is probably reconcilable.

Although this gender difference is the most difficult to account for, I hypothesize that the four factors contributing to the development of a violence prone individual are also at work for females. The studies on abused children and adolescents support this assertion. Kinard (1980), Reidy (1977), and Rogers and LeUnes (1979) all reported on balanced samples of both males and females. Likewise, the study by Offer et al. (1975) was based on a sample of both male and female adolescents. Thus the findings hold for both sexes. So what happens to account for the conspicuous absence of females in the violent crime statistics?

Since this is such a clear gender differentiation, the obvious first place to seek an explanation would be utilizing existing or genuine gender differences. If as I have theorized these developmental factors come to the fore during adolescence, this coincides with the existence of a possibly confounding, significant difference between males and females. Females mature, both physically and mentally, faster and more completely than males during adolescence. Thus, during this critical period many females are afforded the opportunity of fulfilling their need for attention and esteem by somehow exploiting their sexuality.

Naturally this is conjecture on my part. However if true, it would certainly help to defuse the factors of low self-esteem and participation, as one would be sought after and/or possibly even gain status by an "older" boyfriend, or physical comparison to those less developed. An argument could also be made for its utilization, given its availability. It might be easier, in the sense of less threatening, and probably more pleasurable, to channel one's energy to sexual as opposed to violent behavior. That this course is more readily available to females than males, is the result of both maturation and societal sexual stereotypes. Males are supposed to be strong and aggressive, while females are supposed to be passive and sexy. These differences do exist, and thus the potential opportunities which might contribute to the gender difference regarding violence.

At this point, the fundamentals of a theory and existing evidence have been presented. Now tests need to be devised and studies

performed to explore the theory and fine-tune the posited relation-
ships. I propose the following study as a beginning.

CHAPTER IV

THE STUDY

Introduction to the Study

This study will attempt to ascertain the relationship between
individuals' level of self-esteem and their attitudes towards aggres-
sive and violent behaviors. It is predicted that individuals with
low self-esteem will be more accepting in their attitudes, than
individuals with high self-esteem. The study will also attempt to
ascertain the relationships between the factors of "participation"
and "exposure", and an individual's self-esteem and attitudes towards
violence. It is predicted that participation will be positively
correlated with self-esteem and negatively correlated with attitudes
of acceptance, while exposure will be negatively correlated with
self-esteem and positively correlated with attitudes of acceptance.
An experimental manipulation seeking to either enhance, diminish, or
not affect the subject's self-esteem will be employed. The effects
of these manipulations on attitudes towards violence will be assessed
for both high and low self-esteem subjects. And finally, the
dependent measures--the measurements of subjects' attitudes towards
aggressive and violent behaviors--will be analyzed both as a total
score and broken down into component subscores. These measures are
constructed to enable an analysis of attitudes towards types and
levels of both instigations and responses. Again, it is predicted
that low self-esteem subjects will be more accepting than high self-
esteem subjects. It is also predicted that subjects will be more

accepting of violence when either: the instigation is more threatening, or the response is relatively mild.

Method

Subjects

The subjects were Freshmen and Sophomore male undergraduates at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Males were selected because they commit 90 percent of violent crimes, according to the Uniform Crime Reports published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Limiting subjects to Freshmen and Sophomores tends to keep their ages under 21 years, or within the 16 to 21 year old age bracket. This is the bracket that according to the above reports commits the highest percentage of violent crimes, and engages in violent crimes in the greatest proportional discrepancy from their actual population representation.

Measures

1) Self-esteem. The "Tennessee Self-Concept Scale" (TSCS) (Fitts, 1964), a standard and reliable measure of self-esteem.

2) Participation. The "Participation Survey" prepared for this study is a questionnaire consisting of 25 short questions assessing subjects' participation (while growing up) in socially acceptable activities that are believed to contribute to self-esteem. Subjects recorded their degree of participation in these activities on seven-point Likert-type scales.

3) Exposure. The "Survey of Life Experiences" prepared for this

study is a questionnaire assessing subjects' exposure to aggressive and violent behaviors while growing up. The survey contains a balanced number of positive and negative experience items that were scored so as to yield a unified and consistent portrait of exposure. This portrait is subdivided into two parts. The first concerns experiences or behaviors that were witnessed by or happened to the subject. The second questions actual behaviors the subject has engaged in. This yields not only a measure of the degree of exposure to these behaviors, but also a measure of the subject's own aggressive and violent behaviors. Again, responses were recorded by the subject on seven-point Likert-type scales.

4) Experimental Manipulation. This manipulation, introduced as a time-out activity, is a take-off on the "Autobiographical Recollections Method" of mood induction (Velten, 1968). Its purpose is to enhance or diminish the subject's immediate sense of self-esteem. A third neutral condition similar in form and content was also used. The two experimental conditions asked subjects to recall specific academic successes (failures) and then analyze their feelings about and contributions to those successes (failures). The neutral condition asked subjects to recall specific poems they had read in school, and then analyze their feelings about those poems and what contributed to the poems' success or failure.

5) Dependent Measures. Subjects were asked to read and rate a series of 24 vignettes each describing a situation and an individual's behavior. Subjects rated each vignette on five dimensions designed to assess their attitudes towards the use of

varying degrees of aggressive and violent behaviors, in response to varying degrees of instigation. The actual vignettes themselves reflect the following components:

a) type of instigation (frustration or assault)

b) degree of intensity of instigation (mild or strong)

c) type of response (verbal or physical)

d) degree of intensity of response (mild, moderate or strong)

This yields a 2 x 2 x 2 x 3 mix, or 24 vignettes. Subjects recorded their responses on seven-point Likert-type scales.

Procedure

The study is divided into two parts. This allowed the identification of high and low esteem subjects prior to the use of the experimental manipulations, enabling us to control self-esteem as an independent variable.

Part One

Subjects were recruited from large, introductory psychology classes and asked to participate in a correlational study of aspects of self-concept and participation in various social activities while growing up. They were told that we were looking for specific, but unnamed relationships between the two. They were also told that they might be contacted for follow-up study, although they were under no obligation to return. After an appropriate introduction, subjects were given the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale and then the Theiss Participation Survey. Part One was group administered, although once

begun subjects were under no time constraints. Subjects freely supplied their names and phone numbers.

Part Two

The TSCS was scored for all subjects in Part One. A mean score and standard deviation were calculated and then a plus and minus one standard deviation sort was made. Starting with extreme scores and working toward the mean, subjects were telephoned and asked to participate in our follow-up. They were told that we were interested in how the still unspecified relationships obtained in Part One were related to life experiences and attitudes toward various social behaviors.

Two groups of 48 subjects were recruited (one high self-esteem, the other low self-esteem). Subjects were then randomly assigned, in equal numbers, to one of the three experimental conditions. At this point working with the TSCS scores, several adjustments were made. One was to balance across conditions the mean score for each esteem-group. The other was to ensure that each research assistant administering Part Two had roughly equivalent TSCS mean scores for all conditions. The research assistants administering Part Two did not know a subject's esteem-group, nor were they informed of the experimental condition until the moment it was actually administered.

All subjects heard the same instructions and went through exactly the same procedure. They were told that we were interested in how patterns of child-rearing practices and experiences while growing up affect one's later attitudes toward social behaviors. In addition to

that, we were also interested in establishing "true" (as opposed to theoretical) parenting patterns and practices. They were told that we suspected that all parents engage, at one time or other, and to varying degrees, in the whole range of behaviors--including behaviors they're not always proud of. For these reasons, subjects were instructed to respond anonymously and twice--once as relates to their mother, and once as relates to their father. It was explained that given the personal nature of the questions and experiences, they would then be given a "focused" time-out activity before reading the vignettes and rating the various behaviors. Following the time-out activity, subjects received 24 file cards each with a vignette, and printed response scales on which to record their ratings.

Each of the 96 subjects were scheduled individually and adminis-tered Part Two in a small room with only the research assistant present. Confidentiality regarding participation in the study and anonymity of results obtained were guaranteed. After a verbal intro-duction, subjects were given a written informed consent form to read and sign. The actual study sequence was: the Survey of Life Experi-ences, followed by a time-out activity (the experimental condition), and then the vignettes to read and rate. In each case subjects were handed the appropriate survey/activity/set of vignettes and their corresponding response sheet by the research assistant and allowed to work undisturbed at a desk with their backs to the room. The only exception to this subject self-pacing was if the subject completed the time-out activity in under five minutes. In that case the research assistant pretended to be busy and asked the subject to

wait. At the end of the five minute period the research assistant continued the study by giving the subject the set of vignettes and response sheets.

Upon completion, subjects were debriefed by the research assistant and given written feedback regarding the study. However, subjects were not told of their selection based on high/low self-esteem, nor of the experimental or control conditions. This was done to protect the individual's integrity, and to prevent contamination of future subjects. Subjects were told of our focus on aggressive and violent behaviors. Also the split of the study into two parts was explained (and easily believed) as a time consideration; Part One averaged 35 minutes, while Part Two averaged 55 minutes.

Rationale

My main assertion is that a major cause of individual physical violence as it afflicts our society derives from the self-enhancing nature of violence. The perpetrator engages in violence to enhance his self-esteem. This assertion derives from reports of low self-esteem for violent offenders, and seems reasonable in the context of the theory advanced. The factor of self-esteem, as opposed to social competence, is focused upon for three reasons. One it can be easily and accurately quantified. Two it is a reasonable manifestation of the degree of lack of social competencies theorized. And three, as mentioned above, low self-esteem is a characteristic reported through-out the literature.

In attempting to document this relationship in this study, there

are two signficant changes from the original theoretical starting point. First, the population is different. Rather than dealing with the population of violent offenders, the study uses college undergraduates who have not (to the researcher's knowledge) been identified as violent offenders. Given the theorizing presented, this should have implications for the range of self-esteem studied. Second, I am not studying "acts" of violence, but "attitudes" towards aggressive and violent behaviors.

From a methodological perspective this change is not simply expedient but sound, as otherwise problems abound. How does one know beforehand who will perpetrate an act of violence? If that were possible, the need for research and theorizing on this topic would be moot. Unfortunately given this, it is difficult to impossible to document the existence of this relationship (or any other), before one is actually identified as a violent offender. This forces a posteriori reporting which while informative, does not elucidate the reasons for or even the existence of low self-esteem before the individual was labelled (stigmatized) as a violent offender. However, if the posited relationship between low self-esteem and violence exists, it seems reasonable that one should be able to find more subtle manifestations of it within the population at large.

From a theoretical perspective, this change has certain advantages. Treating violent offenders as a separate, distinct population allows one to scapegoat those individuals as somehow flawed, thereby complicating one's analysis and understanding of the phenomenon by implying a separate, distinct set of dynamics at work. Conversely,

if this relationship is found to exist within the normal population, it allows one to argue persuasively that violent offenders are simply part of a continuum of humanity on this dimension, and that normal dynamics and considerations apply.

Likewise, dealing with "acts" of violent behavior has its methodological problems. One is forced to either deal after the fact, or rely on the self-reporting of behaviors that society has defined as undesirable, deviant or unacceptable. The former case has already been described as unacceptable, and in the latter case the data would be open to serious questions of validity and reliability. Thus, in an attempt to eliminate these problems, I have chosen to look at attitudes rather than actual behaviors.

I reason that an attitude of acceptance or tolerance towards a behavior would be something akin to a precursor to the actual occurrence of that behavior. It would probably enhance or facilitate the occurrence of or engagement in that behavior. Also, looking at an individual's attitudes towards behaviors allows a glimpse of their world-view. Certainly attitudes are part of an individual's world-view. This affords an opportunity to assess the validity of the theorizing already put forth. If a world-view that accepts (to some degree) violence is a component associated with and possibly contributing to violent behavior, then measures of subjects' attitudes towards violence should be negatively correlated with their self-esteem.

Shifting from behaviors to attitudes does not eliminate the methodological problems associated with self-reporting, and compounded

by the self-reporting of socially undesirable behaviors. In an attempt to minimize these problems, individuals will rate the acceptability of the behaviors of hypothetical others, and will do so within the context of an innocuous study. Hopefully, both of these precautions will work to minimize the "threat" associated with first-person reporting, and thereby yield more reliable data.

To maintain some degree of connection between an individual's attitudes and actual behaviors, a part of the Survey of Life Experiences focuses on the individual's actual behaviors. A correlation will be computed between this subscore and the individual's attitudes score to determine their degree of relatedness.

The experimental manipulation used in this study is a variation of the mood induction procedures introduced by Thorton Velten (1968) and refined by Brewer et al. (1980). This procedure makes use of the subject's own experiences and memories to influence their mood, thus its name: autobiographical recollections method. My variant of this method will attempt to temporarily influence the subject's self-esteem, rather than simply their mood. This will be accomplished by asking subjects to recall and analyze specific academic successes/failures they have had and their role in creating those successes/failures. They will be asked to focus on the pattern of their behavior and ultimately recognize and take responsibility for the outcomes (see attached manipulation).

The use of this manipulation will serve a dual purpose. One, it will make it possible to determine the influence of an immediate sense of self-esteem on attitudes towards violent behaviors. And two, it

will attempt to exaggerate the range of self-esteem investigated by our study. If the manipulation can successfully diminish already low self-esteem and enhance already high self-esteem, it may help to magnify any differences that exist between low and high self-esteem individuals.

This last point above, magnifying the extremes, is important in terms of the population of this study. Although I earlier pointed out some theoretical advantages in using a normal population, there is a drawback. If, as hypothesized, low self-esteem is positively correlated with a proneness to the use of violence, as is a lack of ability to participate in socially acceptable activities leading to positive self-esteem, then the use of college students as our population probably excludes those individuals we are most interested in. If an individual has made it to college in our society it is extremely unlikely he is suffering from either a severe lack of self-esteem or an inability to participate in the social mainstream. Thus, magnifying the extreme helps to more closely approximate the total range of esteem and possibly detect differences.

It should be pointed out that this drawback inherent in the population of college undergraduates is also a simultaneous strength. If on the whole they are better able to participate in the social mainstream and have achieved higher self-esteem, and the study is able to document the existence of the posited relationships, then the likelihood is great that these relationships would be even more pronounced with people who suffer lower self-esteem and have significantly less ability to participate in the social mainstream. Thus,

if the population used in this study is in any way inappropriate, it
is inappropriate on the side of being too conservative. It runs the
risk of not detecting anything, but holds the promise of demonstrating
in an unbiased way the relationships posited.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

Sample Data

The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Fitts, 1964) was used as the measure of self-esteem. It was administered to 206 subjects, who yielded a mean ($\bar{X}$ = 344.69) and standard deviation (S_x = 32.73), as compared with normative data for the TSCS of $\bar{X}$ = 345.57 and S_x = 30.70. Ninety-six subjects were then recruited from the two extremes, working toward the mean, producing a low self-esteem group (N = 48) $\bar{X}_L$ = 300.83 S_{xL} = 19.51 and a high self-esteem group (N = 48) $\bar{X}_H$ = 376.50 S_{xH} = 13.94. These two groups had z-scores of -1.34 and .97 respectively. The slightly lower high self-esteem scores resulted from a sorting criterion which dropped subjects who scored above one standard deviation on the TCSC, and below one standard deviation on the self-criticism subscore. Seven individuals were replaced due to this discrepancy (see Fitts, 1965 for a discussion of this procedure).

Reliability of Measures

Participation

The "Participation Survey" sought to assess the degree of participation in socially acceptable activities, assumed to contribute to self-esteem, that an individual had experienced while growing up. A Pearson correlation between this survey and an individual's total self-esteem score yielded: r = .41, p = .001. Thus this survey did achieve a degree of success in that it does account for approximately

48

17% of the variability in self-esteem scores (r^2 = .168). It was also successful in differentiating low and high esteem groups, with the predicted greater participation associated with high-esteem, $\bar{X}_L$ = 193.98 versus $\bar{X}_H$ = 217.60, $T_{(df = 94)}$ = -3.86, P_{2-tail} = .001.

Exposure

The "Survey of Life Experiences" was designed to assess the degree of exposure to aggressive and violent behaviors that an individual experienced while growing up. The mean for the total survey was $\bar{X}_L$ = 171.92 (low esteem) and $\bar{X}_H$ = 143.02 (high esteem), indicating the predicted association of greater exposure and low self-esteem. This association was significant, $T_{(df = 94)}$ = 4.73, P_{2-tail} = .001. A Pearson correlation with an individual's self-esteem score yielded: r = -.49, p = .001. Thus, this survey too was successful as it accounted for approximately 24% of the variability in self-esteem (r^2 = .2401), with the negative correlation showing the predicted inverse relationship. Likewise both of its subscores separately yielded similar significant results (see Table 1).

Also, the subscore "self" designed to assess the individual's own behavior was not only significantly different for esteem-groups $T_{(df = 94)}$ = 3.42, p = .001, with more aggressive and violent behaviors reported by the low-esteem group $\bar{X}_L$ = 46.54 versus $\bar{X}_H$ = 39.81 for the high-esteem group, but was also significantly correlated with scores on the dependent measures, r = .25, p = .007. Although this did not account for much of the variation of the

TABLE 1

Participation and Exposure Surveys:
Means, T-Tests, Pearson Correlations

| | Means | | T-Test | Probability | Correlations with Self-Esteem | |
	Low-Esteem	High-Esteem	(df = 94)		$\underline{r}$	$\underline{p}$
Survey						
Participation	193.98	217.60	-3.86	.001	.41	.001
Life Experiences						
Total	171.92	143.02	4.73	.001	-.49	.001
a) "Exposure"	125.37	103.21	4.36	.001	-.47	.001
b) "Self"	46.54	39.81	3.42	.001	-.35	.001

dependent measures (r^2 = .0625), it does support the earlier contention that attitudes as measured by the dependent measures would be a reasonable indicator of behavior. No other measure, excepting self-esteem, was correlated with the dependent measure.

Dependent Measures

The 24 vignettes were pretested prior to being used in this study. Male undergraduates were given a list of the four components (type/level by instigation/response) and their respective labels (e.g., frustration, assault, mild strong, etc.). They were then asked to read each vignette and choose which of the components were represented by that vignette. This procedure resulted in 85% to 100% agreement as to classification. Given these results, together with the vignettes' face validity, only 20 pilot subjects were used.

Overall Results

A T-Test on the two research assistants' groups, using their total score on the dependent measures, yielded no significant difference: $T_{(df = 94)}$ = -.38, p_{2-tail} = .71. Given this nonsignificant result, the distinction between research assistants' groups was dropped. Data was collapsed across the two groups and all other results are reported without distinction as to the research assistant.

A 2 (esteem group) x 3 (experimental condition) analysis of variance, using the total score of the vignettes, yielded a significant main effect for esteem-groups (see Table 2), $F_{(1, 95)}$ = 4.77, p_{2-tail} = .03. There was no significant effect for experimental

TABLE 2

Means of Dependent Measure by Esteem-Group and Condition

condition:	Diminished I	Enhanced II	Neutral III	
esteem-group				
Low (1)	426.25	468.50	466.81	453.85
High (2)	430.88	429.13	424.19	428.06

(higher score = greater acceptance of violent behaviors)

condition ($F_{1, 95} = 1.13$, $p_{2-tail} = .33$), nor was there a significant interaction effect ($F_{1, 95} = 1.66$, $p_{2-tail} = .20$). A multiple regression was performed to analyze the relationship between the criterion variable (total score on the vignettes--dependent measure) and the predictor variables of self-esteem, participation, and exposure. This yielded a nonsignificant multiple r = .27, $F_{(1, 92)} = 2.39$, $p_{2-tail} = .07$. However further multiple regressions designed to assess self-esteem, participation, and the two subscores of the survey of life experiences separately, yielded significant results. Using the exposure section of the survey, yielded a multiple r = .29, allowing rejection of the null hypothesis that the multiple correlation is equal to zero in the population; $F_{(1, 92)} = 2.80$, $p_{2-tail} = .04$. Using the behavior section of the survey yielded a multiple r = .31, again rejecting the probability of the multiple regression being due to sampling fluctuation or measurement error; $F_{(1, 92)} = 3.21$, $p_{2-tail} = .03$. Unfortunately, the porportion of variation explained in each case (r^2) is extremely low, .08 and .09 respectively.

Details of Findings

Dependent Measures

Given the significant difference obtained between esteem groups regarding attitudes towards aggressive and violent behaviors, it seemed reasonable to look at the means of the four components that comprise the dependent measures, broken down by esteem-group (see Table 3). Overall these numbers confirm the prediction of greater acceptance of violence associated with low self-esteem. In eight of

TABLE 3

Means and T-Tests of Components of Dependent Measures
by Esteem-Group

	Low EG	High EG	T-Value (df = 94)	P_{2-tail}
Total Score	453.85	428.06	2.17	.033
Type of Instigation				
Frustration	232.73	225.92	1.16	NS
Assault	221.13	202.15	2.61	.010
Type of Response				
Verbal	237.06	224.46	1.91	NS
Physical	216.79	203.60	1.92	NS
Level of Instigation				
Mild	221.69	207.73	2.28	.025
Strong	232.17	220.33	1.73	NS
Level of Response				
Mild	165.00	166.75	-.46	NS
Moderate	158.21	147.29	2.06	.042
Strong	130.65	114.02	2.97	.004

(higher score = greater acceptance of violent behaviors)

nine categories the low-esteem group displayed the predicted higher scores (than corresponding high-esteem group), indicating a greater acceptance of aggressive and violent behaviors. The one exception to this trend was clearly nonsignificant ($\bar{X}_L$ = 165 versus $\bar{X}_H$ = 167). However when looking at the actual components (types/levels) separately, a less clear portrait emerges.

Regarding the type of instigation, there was slightly greater acceptance across both esteem groups when the instigation was frustration ($\bar{X}_L$ = 233, $\bar{X}_H$ = 226) versus assault ($\bar{X}_L$ = 221, $\bar{X}_H$ = 202). This was contrary to the prediction of greater acceptance associated with greater provocation. Consistent with this unexpected reversal, the difference between esteem groups was only significant regarding assault; $\bar{X}_L$ = 221 versus $\bar{X}_H$ = 202, $T_{(df\ 94)}$ = 2.61, P_{2-tail} = .01. There was no significant difference between esteem groups regarding aggression following frustration. Again, this was contrary to the expectation of greater differentiation between groups in acceptance of aggression following a lesser instigation. However to further complicate this portrait, there were significant within-group differences regarding subjects' attitudes towards aggression given different types of instigation (see Table 4). The low-esteem group responded more accepting when the instigator was frustration ($\bar{X}$ = 233) than assault ($\bar{X}$ = 221); $T_{(df\ =\ 47)}$ = 2.73, P_{2-tail} = .009. The high-esteem group was also significantly more accepting of violence in response to frustration ($\bar{X}$ = 226) versus assault ($\bar{X}$ = 202); $T_{(df\ 47)}$ = 6.38, P_{2-tail} = .001.

Likewise contrary to expectations, there were no significant

TABLE 4

Correlated T-Tests for Within-Group Differences:
Type of Instigation/Type of Response

	T	df	P_{2-tail}
Low Esteem Group			
Type of Instigation	2.73	47	.009
Type of Response	4.25	47	.001
High Esteem Group			
Type of Instigation	6.38	47	.001
Type of Response	5.04	47	.001

(for individual category means, see Table 3)

differences between esteem groups regarding the type of response; verbal or physical (see Table 3). However as predicted, there was greater acceptance of violence across esteem groups of the lesser response--verbal ($\bar{X}_L$ = 237, $\bar{X}_H$ = 224)--as compared to physical ($\bar{X}_L$ = 217, $\bar{X}_H$ = 204). Again enhancing the picture, there were significant within-group differences. The low-esteem group was more accepting of a verbally aggressive response ($\bar{X}$ = 237) than a physical one ($\bar{X}$ = 217); $T_{(df = 47)}$ = 425, p_{2-tail} = .001. And similarly, the high-esteem group was significantly more accepting of a verbal ($\bar{X}$ = 224) versus a physical ($\bar{X}$ = 204) response; $T_{(df = 47)}$ = 5.40, p_{2-tail} = .001.

Subjects responded to the level of instigation as predicted. They were more accepting of violence when the instigation was strong ($\bar{X}_L$ = 232, $\bar{X}_H$ = 220) versus mild ($\bar{X}_L$ = 222, $\bar{X}$ = 208). And, there was a significant difference between esteem groups in attitudes towards violence in response to a mild level of instigation ($\bar{X}_L$ = 222 versus $\bar{X}_H$ = 208), $T_{(df = 94)}$ = 2.28, p_{2-tail} = .03, but not in response to a strong level of instigation.

Finally, as predicted, both esteem groups accepted violence less as the level of response intensified, with a high acceptance of $\bar{X}_L$ = 165, $\bar{X}_H$ = 167 for a mild response, to a low acceptance of $\bar{X}_L$ = 131, $\bar{X}_H$ = 114 for a strong response. There was also a significant difference between esteem groups in the predicted direction (low-esteem more accepting) with regard to both moderate ($\bar{X}_L$ = 158 versus $\bar{X}_H$ = 147) $T_{(df = 94)}$ = 2.06, p_{2-tail} = .04, and strong ($\bar{X}_L$ = 131

versus $\bar{X}_H$ = 114) $T_{(df = 94)}$ = 2.97, P_{2-tail} = .004 levels of response. As predicted, the greatest difference between esteem groups was within the strong (most violent) level of response; p = .004 versus p = .04 (moderate level) and p = NS (mild level).

Self-Esteem

The total score of the TSCS was significantly correlated with the dependent measure: r = -.24 (N = 96) p = .01. Although this does not account for much of the variability of the dependent measure (r^2 = .06), the significant negative correlation does support the assertion that low self-esteem is associated with greater acceptance of (and by extrapolation, involvement in) violence.

All subscores of the TSCS were also negatively correlated with the vignettes, with only two of the eight correlations not achieving statistical significance (see Table 5). The three subscores most significantly correlated with attitudes toward violence (p = .01) were: "self-satisfaction" (p = .003) "how he feels about the self he perceives"; personal self (p = .008) "individual's sense of personal worth"; and moral-ethical self (p = .009) "feelings of being a 'good' or 'bad' person".

TABLE 5

Details of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale

	Pearson Correlation with Vignettes	
	r	p
TSCS		
Total P-score	-.2377	.010
Identity	-.1930	.030
Self-satisfaction	-.2762	.003
Behavior	-.1811	.039
Physical Self	-.1628	.057
Moral-Ethical Self	-.2417	.009
Personal Self	-.2448	.008
Family Self	-.1431	.082
Social Self	-.2265	.013

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

The study began with the assumption that self-esteem was sig-
nificantly associated with an individual's violent behaviors. For
methodological reasons discussed earlier, attitudes toward aggressive
and violent behaviors were substituted for actual incidents of vio-
lence. It was theorized that an individual's attitudes would ulti-
mately influence his behaviors, with attitudes accepting of violence
associated with actual violent behaviors. Therefore it was assumed
that if self-esteem was truly correlated with violent behaviors,
then it would also be correlated with attitudes accepting of violence.
This assumption was supported by both a significant main effect for
esteem-group, and a significant negative correlation between self-
esteem and attitudes of acceptance towards violence. These results,
given the relationship between attitude and behavior (Ajzen and
Fishbein, 1977), corroborate the findings cited earlier of low
self-esteem associated with violent behavior.

Furthermore, the hypothesized correspondence between an individ-
ual's self-esteem and his own aggressive and violent behaviors
received support from two other results. One, low self-esteem
subjects reported engaging in significantly more (quantitatively
speaking) violent behaviors than did high self-esteem subjects. And
two, the amount of self-reported violent behavior was significantly
correlated with subjects' attitudes of acceptance towards violence.
Thus although this study did not look at violent behaviors directly,

it did obtain significant support for the hypothesized correspondence between low self-esteem, an attitude accepting of violence, and violent behaviors.

It was further hypothesized that two other factors: participation and exposure, would contribute to the ultimate employment of violence. While they were not significantly associated with a subject's attitudes, they were associated with his self-esteem, in the predicted directions. Participation was positively correlated with self-esteem, with high-esteem subjects reporting significantly more involvement in socially acceptable activities than low-esteem subjects. Conversely, exposure was negatively correlated with self-esteem, with low-esteem subjects reporting significantly more exposure to aggressive and violent behaviors than did high-esteem subjects. This latter result was true even when excluding the individual's self-reported behaviors from the analysis. These findings suggest the developmental consequences of these two factors on self-esteem, which in turn is significantly linked to attitude and behavior. Thus, at least with self reported data, there is support for the contribution of the hypothesized factors to individual violence.

That the factors of participation and exposure were not found directly linked to the measure of attitude does not necessarily refute the hypothesized link. It may be that the assessment of these factors was itself not specific enough. Both surveys used sought to assess a developmental impact. Participation and exposure, given the vast variety and complexity of events and actions that can func-

tion on them, are relatively amorphous in nature and therefore tend to resist easy definition and quantification. Too, both assessment procedures used are new. Another explanation might be that the hypothesized link between these factors and an individual's attitudes only manifests itself when either the factors and/or attitudes are in the extreme. In any event, it seems reasonable to conclude that both participation and exposure seem to be involved in the overall picture, but more work needs to be done to define and assess them, and explore the nature of their role regarding violent behavior.

The experimental manipulation designed to enhance or diminish a subject's self-esteem appeared to do neither. The analysis of variance found no effect for experimental treatments. Unfortunately the effectiveness of the manipulation was not assessed. Thus, there is no way to differentiate whether or not the "no effect" refers to the manipulation itself, or the influence of an immediately heightened or diminished sense of self-esteem on attitudes towards violence. The omission of this check was not an oversight. Several checks were discussed and thought to be less than satisfactory. This coupled with previously reported successes with the type of mood manipulation used (e.g., Riskind, Rholes, and Eggers, 1982) led to the decision to forego the check. Prior successes of this method might also lead one to speculate that the obtained "no effect" refers to the manipulation's influence on attitudes. However, differences in the content, administration and duration of the manipulation may have been sufficient to account for the lack of effect. Resolution of this point will have to await further studies.

The final category of results to consider is the breakdown of the dependent measure according to type and level of instigation and response. Originally I made three predictions regarding the vignettes:

1) greater acceptance of violence by the low versus high esteem group;

2) greater acceptance of violence given greater provocation; and

3) greater acceptance of violence given a milder response.

These predictions were based on two beliefs. One, that violence rather than being a unique behavior specific to violent individuals, is more like a continuum of behaviors along which most, if not all, individuals travel. And two, that individuals make a series of differentiations regarding the acceptability of violence. The results of this study generally support this thinking.

The main prediction of greater acceptance of violence associated with low self-esteem generally held across categories, although the differences were not always significant. More strongly supported was the prediction of greater acceptance of violence given a milder response. Both in terms of the level of response and type of response-- where a verbal response was viewed as milder than a physical response --the obtained results supported the expectation. However, the prediction of greater acceptance of violence given greater provocation was both supported and refuted. When considering the level of instigation (mild or strong), subjects were more accepting of violence when the level was strong. But when considering the type of instigation (frustration or assault), subjects were more accepting

of violence when the instigation was the less provocative frustration.

A possible explanation of these contradictory results might rest with the sample population. College undergraduates are probably less exposed to assaults than urban juvenile delinquents or violent offenders. Lack of experience with assault might have made these situations seem more extreme, causing subjects to think more and thereby temper their responses or bring them more in line with anticipated socially desirable responses.

The plausibility of this type of sampling bias receives support from the significant negative correlation between a subject's reported aggressive and violent behaviors and his self-esteem. More violent behavior is associated with lower self-esteem. Working backwards, if this population has generally higher self-esteem than other, potentially violent populations, they are likely to have less experience with violent behaviors. If so, they might be less able to relate to it, and their ratings of assaults might reflect that. Given the results obtained, this or some other explanation centered on assault as an instigator seems reasonable.

Turning to the actual results, low self-esteem subjects were significantly more accepting of violence than high self-esteem subjects when the instigation was an assault. This result by itself, and in conjunction with the findings of significantly more acceptance of violence in response to a frustration, could be interpreted as supporting the reasoning presented above of high-esteem subjects being less able to relate to assault.

Low self-esteem subjects were also significantly more accepting

of violence than high self-esteem subjects when the level of instigation was mild, and as the level of response was stronger. Taken together these are curious results. They lend support to the predictions made, but not in the way the predictions were framed. Rather than the predicted focus of "greater acceptance of violence" given a stronger provocation or milder response, these findings show a greater differentiation in attitutdes towards both a milder provocation and a stronger response.

One interpretation of these results is that this population is more discriminating in response to the behaviors most likely to engender social ostracism. Rather than the predicted greater acceptance of violence when the instigation is strong and/or the response is mild, it might be that there is less acceptance of violence when the instigation is mild and/or the response strong. These are pecisely where significant differences between esteem-groups have occurred. Perhaps it is a matter of perspective. Rather than low self-esteem individuals being more accepting, one could argue that high self-esteem individuals are simply less accepting. There is no way to know based on the study, and the truth probably lies somewhere in the middle. However given this population and the obtained pattern of significant/nonsignificant results, as well as the actual numbers themselves (numerical differences), a reasonable case could be made for the latter.

Returning to the results, although there were no significant differences between esteem-groups regarding frustration and either type of response, there were significant within-group differences

regarding attitudes towards frustration versus assault and verbal response versus physical response. Two possible implications are noteworthy. One, the consistent significant differences within esteem groups suggest that both the frustration-assault and verbal-physical dimensions are meaningful dimensions along which to differentiate attitutdes towards violent behaviors. And two, a possible explanation for the lack of significant between-group differences is that the two esteem groups were not extreme enough. Perhaps a more disadvantaged low-esteem group would have resulted in significant between-group differences.

Finally, it seems reasonable to mention a few characteristics of the study's population which may have had a significant but undetected impact on the findings. First, the study's sample population is probably relatively high in self-esteem and participation compared to violent offenders. The skewedness of these traits might have had the effect of masking or diminishing possible consequences normally associated with them. Also, the two esteem groups were probably more alike in developmental background than they were different. This homogeneity might account for the lack of significant between-group differences regarding frustration and type of response, as well as the low magnitude of correlations obtained.

It is true that the population used did conform to normative data regarding self-esteem. However the normative data for the TSCS was collected with populations similar in the characteristic of "participation" to that of this study; in other words, based on subjects well within the social mainstream. Fitts (1965) writes "the norms are over-

represented in number of college students, (and) white subjects...".
I would speculate that both the norms and this population really
represent the upper end of the continuum, or more accurately fail to
include the truly low end of the self-esteem continuum. Even ignoring
this bias, as judged by the esteem-groups' z-scores, we were unable to
obtain as great a polarization as we desired. The high-esteem group
was fairly close to the mean, again possibly inhibiting the detection
of any between-group differences.

Another noteworthy characteristic, as mentioned earlier, is the
significant difference between this sample and the population most
intimately involved in perpetrating violence. Most violent offenders
have a low educational level, in contrast to our sample of college
undergraduates. This difference is not simply one of years in school,
but as discussed earlier (and supported by the correlations found in
this study), is comprised of very different life experiences which
permeate and broadly influence the individual. Given the significant
results obtained in our sample it seems reasonable to predict even
more extreme/significant results if the study were conducted with a
more disadvantaged population.

Another possibility is that subjects in this sample (as opposed
to a more disadvantaged one) had more input affecting their attitudes
towards violence. These subjects would have had more exposure to
thoughts and perspectives provided by formal schooling. If so,
factors like self-esteem would play a proportionally smaller role due
to competing inputs. If that were found to be true, these same mea-
sures might account for a greater percentage of the variability among

disadvantaged subjects who do not have as much input affecting the formation of their attitudes. The significant results found in this study argue, at the minimum, for further studies.

Summary

This paper began with the intent of contributing to the understanding of individual violence. In particular, it attempted to answer the question of why some individuals are violent while others in similar situations are not. In this respect I think the study was successful. The hypothesized variable of an individual's self-esteem was shown to be significantly correlated with attitudes towards aggressive and violent behaviors. Furthermore, support was obtained for the significant developmental impact of the factors of participation and exposure which were hypothesized to contribute to the ultimate development of individual violence. And finally, significant correlations were obtained for self-reported violent behaviors and both self-esteem and attitudes towards violence.

Taken together the factors of an individual's a) self-esteem, b) social competencies, c) exposure to violence, and d) attitudes toward violence provide a theoretical framework for answering the question of why some individuals are violent. That these factors were successful in differentiating individuals within this study suggests that they may be significantly involved in the process of producing violent individuals. More work needs to be done to better ascertain the nature of both the factors themselves and their role regarding violent behaviors. However as a first step this study is

promising. It offers the duel hope of furthering our understanding of individual violence and identifying possible areas of intervention so as to short-circuit the development of future violent individuals.

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A P P E N D I C E S

A P P E N D I X   A

SAMPLE EXPERIMENTAL MANIPULATION

I. List three of your best achievements or successes regarding your academic life in the past year or two.

II. How did you <u>feel</u> when they occurred?

III. Why do they classify as successes?

IV. Most behavior is not isolated. Although it is sometimes hard to recognize our responsibility, we have control and influence the outcome. We create our successes. What did <u>you do</u> that contributed to, or made the above successes? Can <u>you</u> see a pattern to your behavior within the above situations that led to their successes, and which could lead to other successes?

V. How do you <u>feel</u> as you now think of these successes?

Neutral Condition

I. List three short stories and/or poems you have read in the past year or two.

II. For each, did you like or dislike them? Why/why not?

III. How would you classify or categorize each of the three?

IV. Read the following:

> A mighty creature is the germ,
> Though smaller than a pachyderm.
> His custormary dwelling place
> Is deep within the human race.
> His childish pride he often pleases
> by giving people strange diseases.
> Do you, my poppet, feel infirm?
> You probably contain a germ.

V. What do you think of this poem? How would you categorize it?

APPENDIX B

RANDOMLY SELECTED SAMPLE RESPONSES TO
EXPERIMENTAL MANIPULATION

Successes

I.   List three of your best achievements or successes regarding
     your academic life in the past year or two.

          Honor Society (junior and senior years)
          Spanish award for my class
          High honor student

II. How did you feel when they occurred?

          Proud, intelligent

III. Why do they classify as successes?

          They are things that have to be worked for to be
          achieved.

IV. Most behavior is not isolated. Although it is sometimes hard
     to recognize our responsibility, we have control and influence
     the outcome. We create our successes. What did you do that
     contributed to, or made the above successes? Can you see a
     pattern to your behavior within the above situations that led
     to their success, and which could lead to other successes?

          I like to do well academically because in my opinion
          this is impressive to other people and who doesn't like
          to impress people.

V.   How do you feel as you now think of these successes?

          I just hope that college will hold the same successes
          as did high school. I would like to graduate college
          with some of these too.

Failures

I. List three of your worst performances or failures regarding
    your academic life in the past year or two.

   1. First semester senior year received a 1.5 accum
       average, including my first failing mark.
   2. Received a D in English my junior year of high school.
   3. My SAT scores weren't as high as I would have liked.

II. How did you _feel_ when they occurred?

   I felt embarrassed in some ways. I also was upset that
   I didn't do as well I could have. I wasn't happy with
   my effort.

III. Why do they classify as failures?

   They classify as failures because I didn't do as well
   as I could have. If I had given more effort I wouldn't
   have failed.

IV. Most behavior is not isolated. Although it is sometimes hard
    to recognize our responsibility, we have control and influence
    the outcome. We create our failures. What did you do that
    contributed to, or made the above failures? Can you see a
    pattern to your behavior within the above situations that led
    to their failures, and which could lead to other failures?

   Procrastination and laziness are two problems that
   can affect my school work.

V. How do you _feel_ as you now think of these failures?

   I think that in a way these failures are lessons.
   They show you what can happen when you don't give
   some effort.

APPENDIX   C

PARTICIPATION SURVEY

Directions: Read each question and check one number (e.g., ✗) that best describes your experiences regarding that activity. Please answer each question <u>twice</u>. First based on your experiences while growing up through elementary school (approximately ages 4-11 years). Then again, based on your experiences through Junior and Senior High Schools (approximately ages 12-18 years). Your responses will remain <u>confidential</u>.

For each of the questions and answers use the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No/Never			Average			Very Frequently

DID YOU:

1. attend religious services

2. belong to and/or participate in religious centered activities or groups

3. go away on family vacations

4. attend any sort of summer recreation program

5. go away from home to a summer camp or friend's house

6. play in an organized sports program (e.g., little league, swim program, etc.)

7. play sports in general (i.e., unorganized sports)

8. go to libraries or museums

9. play on any school sports teams

10. belong to any school clubs or activity groups after school hours

11. participate in school plays

12. go on school trips after school hours

13. belong to the Boy Scouts, 4-H, or any other group program

14. have a hobby (e.g., build models, collect stamps, etc.)

Response Scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No/Never			Average			Very Frequently

DID YOU:

15. have certain family chores or responsibilities to do on a regular basis (<u>other</u> than your own bedroom)

16. have to clean/care for your own bedroom and/or personal belongings

17. receive an allowance from your parents or relatives

18. take lessons or classes other than regular school (e.g., dance, musical instruments, singing, etc.)

19. have pets to take care of

20. have a paying job (other than household chores), e.g., newpaper boy, mowing other people's lawns, shoveling driveways, baby sitting, busboy in a diner, etc.

21. belong to a neighborhood/social club/or similar group of your peers

22. have to babysit a younger brother or sister

23. attend parties, dances, sporting events or other group social activities

For the last two questions, please use the following scale:
<u>Hours/week</u>

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
one or less						seven or more

24. please rate the time/week that you spent reading

25 please rate the time/week that you spent watching TV

A P P E N D I X   D

SURVEY OF LIFE EXPERIENCES

To help us assess the "true" nature and patterns of parenting, we ask that you respond to each item twice—first as relates to your mother, and second as relates to your father. Please respond honestly to help us establish an accurate portrait of parenting and its interactive influences. All information is completely ANONYMOUS. Do not put your name on your response sheet.

While growing up, did your mother/father:

1...praise you?

2...ridicule or criticize you?

3...encourage you?

4...punish you?

5...reward you?

6...verbally threaten you?

7...physically threaten you? (e.g., raise a hand to slap/hit you)

8...use physical force in punishing you? (e.g., slap, spank, hit, beat up, pull hair, shake, scratch, etc.)

9...display their affection for you verbally? (e.g., say "I love you")

10...show their affection for you physically? (e.g., hug, kiss, hold hands with you, put their arm around you, have you sit on their lap, etc.)

11...throw objects when mad or frustrated?

12...hit walls or furniture?

13...use physical force on a sibling of yours (brother/sister)?

14...use physical force on each other?

15...display their affection towards one another in your presence verbally? (e.g., say "I love you", "you're the greatest", etc.)

17...threaten or use physical force on a non-family member?

18...not punish you when you deserved it?

19...not reward you when you deserved it?

SURVEY OF LIFE EXPERIENCES II

To help us further evaluate the nature of your experiences please respond once to each of the following items, as they relate to <u>you</u>.

Have <u>you</u>:

20...verbally threatened another?

21...complimented or praised another?

22...harrassed a particular individual on several different occasions

23...ridiculed or criticized another?

24...communicated feelings of affection toward another verbally?

25...shouted aloud in anger at someone else?

26...communicated feelings of affection (excluding sexual activity) toward another physically?

27...been in a physical fight of any sort while angry or mad?

28...been in a physical fight, although <u>not</u> angry or mad?

29...harrassed, harmed, or killed an animal? (kicked, thrown rocks at, chased, smashed, exploded, etc.)

30...punched or kicked another human being in anger?

31...abused or mistreated furniture or property while mad, angry or frustrated

32...done something harmful to another because it made you feel better or good?

33...done something helpful to or for another because it made you feel better or good?

34...physically beat up on another human being?

<u>Note</u>: Pro-social item scores were transformed to yield consistent high scores equal to greater exposure to aggressive and violent behaviors

APPENDIX E

DEPENDENT MEASURES

(Vignettes Involving Aggressive and Violent Behaviors)

Vignette #1:

John had always prided himself on being a lady's man. For the past week he had been in hot pursuit of this chick; happyhour, roses, Bart's for ice cream, dancing, TOC for drinks... and tonight dinner and... Now back at her place he was coming on strong and she was resisting. "Look John you're a nice guy, but I don't want to! To be honest I'm not interested! I mean, as a man you just don't turn me on. You're just not masculine and sexy! I'd like to, but not with you." At that he slammed the door and stormed outside. About twenty feet away a cat appeared. John grabbed the biggest rock he could find and nailed it good.

VIGNETTE #2

Al is sitting at a Bar with a few couples. A guy staggers up to them and starts making rude and abusive comments about the females and the "wimps" they're with. When Al suggests that the guy go entertain someone else, he points his finger directly at Al's face and says "Shut up asshole, no one's talking to you!" At that Al lunges at the guy hitting him and pushing him out the door of the Bar.

VIGNETTE #3

Tony and his girlfriend were walking home one night. As they passed an alley a guy asked for a light. Tony walked over and put his hands in his pockets to find a match. At that the guy pulled a knife and yelled "Up against the wall!" and to the girl "You move and he dies-- come over here." Against the wall, Tony said "OK, take it easy, you can have all of our money--just don't use the knife." "You bet your sweet ass I can have your money" the guy says, pressing the knife against Tony's neck, "...and your girl too--come on baby strip or he gets it!" As she stands there, he presses harder and a line of blood appears across Tony's throat. "Now lady--move it!" As he turned to look at her, Tony grabbed his wrist and began wrestling with him. After kicking and tumbling a bit, he dropped the knife and Tony got the better of him. Holding the guy's head with both hands, Tony repeatedly smashes it against the wall. When the guy stopped strug- gling Tony picked up the knife and said "So you want to play with knives?" With that he thrust the knife into his gut.

VIGNETTE #4

While at a party, Mark noticed that his friends weren't really party-
ing with him, or even including him in their conversations. A bit
later, he overheard some guys talking with a few females about him.
"Yeah, well he's OK, but he's different. I don't know how to quite
describe it." "No he's not a nurd or anything, he's just..." With
that Mark screamed at the top of his lungs: "Fuck you! You two
faced scum bags! You assholes think you're so great, come on outside
and I'll dance on your fucking faces--you wimps!"

VIGNETTE #5

While walking in town, two very attractive females approached Dave
and asked for directions. Out of nowhere Tom cut right in front of
Dave and proceeded to supply the directions. When he finished the
girls thanked him, smiled and left. As Tom turned around Dave punched
him square in the mouth and then twice more rapid-fire in the face.
Tom went down and Dave growled over him menacingly: "Do that again
and I'll really kick your ass!"

VIGNETTE #6

After a series of disagreements with him, Jim began calling Roger
names. He said Roger was a "worm" and a "chicken" and a few other
foul and fairly despicable things. After listening to this for a
while, Roger said: "Up yours you asshole!" and walked away.

VIGNETTE #7

Jim is a science fiction buff. He is busy reading his most recent
novel when his father enters the room. His father sees what he is
reading and says "Why don't you grow up and stop reading that trash.
What are you some type of mental midgit?" With this, Jim jumps up
throwing his book down and yells at his father to stop picking on him.
He then storms out of the room, slamming the door behind him.

VIGNETTE #8

Bill was having a hard time explaining a statistics problem to some
females in his class. They were listening to him, and he knew they'd
get it soon. Suddenly Elliot appeared and after a moment of listening
said: "Oh that's easy; any moron could do that" and then he proceeded
to successfully explain the problem. The females understood and
Elliot walked away a hero. When they asked Bill who he was, Bill
said: "That wimp!? He's a real bookworm, pansy-ass! If he doesn't
mind his own business I'm going to kick his ass for him!"

VIGNETTE #9

Sam was asking everyone he could think of, he had a hot date and
needed some money. As he turned the corner he saw Rip, who happened
to be counting money; and who happened to owe him $20 for the past
two weeks. When asked for the money, Rip exploded in laughter and
said: "Fat chance chump! I need all of this money. You'll get yours
when I'm ready." Given that Rip was twice his size there wasn't a
whole lot Sam could do to him. However, as Sam left the building
later on, Rip's car was parked right there. He looked around and not
seeking anyone, he picked up a rock and smashed the windshield.

VIGNETTE #10

Rob was talking with a female at a party. He was relaxed and enjoying
the conversation. Suddenly Ralph appeared and says right in front of
the female, "Hey Rob nice chick--ask her to dance." Rob turned his
back and tried to ignore him. "What's the matter Rob, afraid to
dance? Go ahead and ask her!" "Ralph take a walk and shut up." "No
Rob really don't be a chicken! Ask her to dance. I'll bet $20 she'll
dance if you ask her. Don't be a wimp Rob--go for it!" At that Rob
said: "Ralph either you leave now or I'm going to stuff your big
mouth with my fists and physically throw you out of this party."

VIGNETTE #11

Steve was feeling pressure. It was like he was walled in. His
parents kept lecturing him, "...this is for your own good..." Alright
already! He heard them, but they wouldn't shut up. The words kept
coming! He was drowning in words. He felt smothered--overwhelmed by
words. He couldn't even focus on what they were saying anymore, he
just saw their mouths moving and words coming at him. Finally he let
out a loud yell: "Ahh!! Shut the hell up! God damn it, just leave
me alone before I punch your faces in!"

VIGNETTE #12

Wayne was surrounded by guys from another town. "Man you think you're
so tough, why don't you do something?" "Can't you see, he's not
tough! He's a coward, a chicken, a punk!" Wayne knew they wanted an
excuse to beat-up on him and there were too many of them. "Man I had
your old lady last night. Oh...she moaned..." "Yeah, but so what
cause everyone has had his old lady--that's cause he's such a wimp!"
Wayne grit his teeth and glared at them: "Fuck you, you're dead
asshole. Not now but soon when you're not expecting it; you're mine!
You're dead!"

VIGNETTE #13

Alan and his girlfriend were psyched. They had wanted to see this
movie for two weeks and now after waiting two hours in line, people
were entering the theater. Gradually the procession funneled into
the building--slowly, steadily until right as Alan was about to enter
the manager held up his hand to Alan's chest and said: "Sorry, no
more room. Try again tomorrow night." Disappointed, Alan turned and
walked away.

VIGNETTE #14

Don had been buried in a pile of papers and research reports so
intently, that he hadn't noticed the hours pass. He still had lots
to do before he could sleep and realized he was really thirsty.
Nothing would be open this late, but fortunately he had 50¢ in change.
He found a soda machine, put the money in and pressed the button--
nothing happened. He pressed again, then all the buttons--including
coin return--still nothing! Finally he began banging the machine with
his fists and kicking the coin return.

VIGNETTE #15

Bob hurried to the Bursur's office, it was going to close soon. Much
to his relief he found lines at all the windows. When he finally got
up to the counter, the lady said: "Before we can give you your check,
you must fill out some forms." With that she produced two lengthy
forms. Bob then asked to borrow a pen, at which she said: "I'm
sorry you'll have to take them home. I can't wait for you to fill
them out, it's closing time." Bob responded: "I waited for you, you
can wait for me--that's what you're paid for!" As she ignored this
and all other requests and comments, Bob said: "You know what you
can do with these fucking forms--stuff them...and yourself!" With
that he tore the forms to pieces and threw them across the counter
towards the retreating lady.

VIGNETTE #16

It had been raining pretty hard all day. John decided this was no day
to walk. He'd wait for the bus. Soon the bus stop got crowded--
others had the same idea as John. When the bus arrived, it was
already full. As nobody got off, the driver said sorry we're full.
At that a few people scrambled around John and aboard the bus anyway,
managing to squeeze in. John just figured "well a little rain won't
hurt anyway" and he started walking away.

VIGNETTE #17

It was Friday afternoon, Pete was broke. He hated waiting on line
in a Bank, but he needed the money. As he waited he realized he had
only deposited his loan check the other day--the bank required 5 days
before you could draw from a check. When he got to a teller, the
teller confirmed his fear: "I'm sorry you have to wait five days
before you can withdraw money from a check." With that Pete began
arguing: "Look, it's a bank check and it was a guaranteed HELP loan.
Besides, I'm only taking out a little bit, not the whole amount!
Come on, I really need the moeny. This is ridiculous! Can't you
just give me _my_ money?"

VIGNETTE #18

Jack hurried out of his last class and across campus to where he
parked his car. He wanted to renew his license at the Registry of
Motor Vehicles, and knew it was getting late. When he arrived at the
Registry, the lady at the counter was just getting off her stool. As
he started to speak, she said: "Sorry we're closed--you'll have to
come back tomorrow. With that, Jack launched into a tirade about the
injustice of bureaucracies followed by "fuck you, you Nazi bitch!"

VIGNETTE #19

Joe and Dave were out on a double date and tonight wasn't their night.
First the car wouldn't start, then his girlfriend was late so they
missed the movie they wanted to see. Then after waiting in line for
half an hour for another movie, it sold-out. Annoyed, but still
trying they decided to go to a bar. At the door the bouncer let the
girls and Dave in, but held out his arm to stop Joe--"No jeans...even
if they are new, designer jeans." At that Joe exploded, repeatedly
punching the bouncer like a madman.

VIGNETTE #20

Tom and his parents hadn't been getting along. They would always say
things and then for no reason at all, change their minds. Like when
Tom wanted to borrow the car for a date--all week long fine, then the
afternoon before his date "no" because they might need it. And the
time he had waited for a ride because his mother offered it, only to
find after a half hour she had changed her mind. Now again, he was
late for an important meeting, waiting for a ride to town, only to
discover they had decided to stay in. When he asked in that case to
borrow the car, they said no because they might want to go out later.
At that Tom stormed upstairs, slammed his door shut and without
thinking punched his fist through the wall.

VIGNETTE #21

Doug raced up to health services to be on-time for his 9 am appointment. After filling out the form, he sat down and waited...and waited. After 40 minutes he asked about his appointment. "Oh, we tried to phone you, the doctor won't be in til one." It was inconvenient, but he agreed to return. At one the receptionist informed him the doctor wouldn't be in til 3 pm. Again annoyed, he agreed to return. At 3 he once again signed in and waited. After 20 minutes the receptionist came over and said the doc was in but running late--it would probably be another hour or so. At that Doug threw up his arms, got up and walked out.

VIGNETTE #22

It was one thing after another all day long! It started this morning with a cold shower after waiting half an hour to get in there. That made him miss the bus by seconds and naturally half of his first class. Later he had raced home to receive a 5 o'clock phone call from his girlfriend, only to find his roommate tying up the phone. When he finally got off, Mike waited around but his call never came. Eventually he decided to go into town for a Bart's ice cream--he needed one. For the second time, he walked out only to see the bus pulling away. Then after walking all the way there, the girl behind the counter at Bart's greeted him with a curt "We're closed". Mike responded ""Oh, OK. Have a good night." and thought to himself I can't win.

VIGNETTE #23

Jeff was psyched! It was Friday evening, he had a date with the prettiest girl in his lecture class, he was dressed to kill, and he felt great. They decided to go to dinner. The first place they tried was packed and it would be a few hours wait. No problem, they'd try somewhere else. Unfortunately, the second, third and fourth places were all similar stories. Now Jeff was getting annoyed. They were hungry, it was getting late, this was getting tiring, and worst it was killing a wonderful night. Finally they saw a little place--not great or classy, but also not crowded. As they entered the maitre d' greeted them "Welcome, two for dinner?" "Yes" The maitre d' grabbed two menus and was about to seat them when he suddenly stopped. "Oh, I'm very sorry sir, but house rules...no jeans." At which Jeff erupted, "Hell can't you make an exception. I mean they're clean. It's not like we're slobs. Come on, what's wrong with the way I look? Why don't you be a human being for once in your life!"

VIGNETTE # 24

Paul has been studying all night for an exam he has the next day.
After he finally takes the exam and returns to his dorm, the only
thing on his mind is to sleep. However, each time he attempts to
sleep, the phone rings or someone knocks on the door. When he finally
falls asleep he is suddenly awakened by his next door neighbor's
stereo which is being played loud enough to shake the walls. Infuri-
ated, Paul storms into his neighbor's room yelling "You fucking ass-
hole shut that God damn thing off or I'm going to shove it up your
ass."

A P P E N D I X   F

SCALES USED TO RATE VIGNETTES
(DEPENDENT MEASURES)

VIGNETTE # _____

1. Given the situation, was the behavior:

ACCEPTABLE   UNACCEPTABLE
   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

2. Given the situation was the behavior:

TOO STRONG   TOO WEAK
   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

3. Was his behavior typical of the way the average person behaves?

  NO   YES
   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

4. Given similar provocation, could you ever see yourself behaving
    similar to that of the individual in the vignette?

FREQUENTLY   NEVER
   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

5. How satisfying was it for the individual to have behaved the
    way he did?

EXTREMELY   EXTREMELY
SATISFYING   UNSATISFYING
   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Note: Ratings for items 1, 4, and 5 were transformed to yield
     consistent high ratings equal to greater acceptance of
     aggressive and violent behaviors.