

ABSTRACT

COOPER, DANIELLE JAMILLA. Gendered Social Bonds and Gender Ideologies: Understanding the Gender Gap in Delinquency. (Under the direction of Stacy De Coster.)

The purpose of the research is to evaluate whether a simple “add gender and stir” approach with Hirschi’s social control theory can help explain gender differences or the gender gap in delinquency. I propose that incorporating traditional gender ideologies into the traditional “add gender and stir” approach can help extend the theory and lead to a better understanding of the gender gap. Using data from the National Youth Survey, I empirically assess the differences in the levels (means) and the effects that attachment to family, commitment to school and/or a future career, and acceptance of traditional gender ideologies have on delinquency. The findings suggest that although Hirschi’s theory offers insight into why males and females engage in delinquent behavior, it does little to explain the gender gap in delinquency. Specifically, having “stakes in conformity” curbs delinquency among both males and females. However, the data shows that these stakes in conformity do not help understand the gender gap per se. The findings also suggest that the acceptance of traditional gender ideologies play an important part in understanding the gender gap in delinquency because these ideologies promote delinquency among males but control female delinquency. These findings underscore arguments that the “add gender and stir” approach to understanding the gender gap in delinquency is insufficient. Future research should continue to explore broad gender arguments derived from gender studies.

**Gendered Social Bonds and Gender Ideologies: Understanding the Gender Gap in
Delinquency**

by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated in loving memory to all the family members and friends that have been lost during the creation of this document. I dedicate this thesis to my late grandmothers Thelma Robinson and Helen Cooper, Barbara Fressie, Maurice Gibb, Alton “Kool” Dixon, Willie Lee “Grandma Dixie” Dixon, Cecilia “Cil” Bell, Alphonso “Al” Blades, Annie J. Harvey, Sam Beaty, James Bobbitt, and Emma Lou Smith. I thank you all for always encouraging me throughout my life. Each of you has touched my life in more ways that you will ever know. The memories of you will live inside me forever. You are gone but definitely not forgotten.

BIOGRAPHY

Danielle Jamilla Cooper was born on October 5, 1977 in Miami, Florida to Kenneth and Nancy Cooper and is the older sister to Janine Cooper. After graduating from Hialeah-Miami Lakes Senior High School in Hialeah, Florida, she attended the University of Miami where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and Political Science. While pursuing a Master of Science degree in Sociology at North Carolina State University, she was a graduate research assistant for the Graduate Director who also served as the Co-Chair of the Council on Contemporary Families (CCF). She enjoyed working with CCF, a national non-profit organization that is made up of a diverse group of family researchers, academics, social work practitioners, and social activists. During her Master's pursuit, Danielle was also a teaching assistant where she taught Sociology of Family. She not only taught many lessons, she learned many along the way as well. As a result, her future plans include finding a career that will utilize all her strengths and truly make her happy for many years to come.

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INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that sex is one of the strongest correlates of delinquency, with males committing more of nearly all types of delinquent acts than females (Morris 1964; Jensen and Eve 1976; Cernkovich and Giordano 1979; Cullen, Golden, and Cullen 1979; Canter 1982; Steffensmeier and Allan 1996; Heimer and De Coster 1999). Hagan and his colleagues (1985) have proposed that any viable theory of crime and delinquency should be able to explain this gender gap. Hirschi's (1969) social control theory is among the most popular criminological theories, having been widely cited and tested (e.g. Hindelang 1973; Krohn and Massey 1980; Agnew 1985; Rosenbaum 1987; Wiatrowski and Anderson 1987; Rankin and Wells 1990; Agnew 1991; Jenkins 1995; Jenkins 1997; Costello and Vowell 1999; Hoffmann and Xu 2002; Huebner and Betts 2002; Stewart 2003). This theory also has been utilized in several instances to understand the gender gap in delinquency (e.g., Canter 1982; Friedman and Rosenbaum 1988; Cernkovich and Giordano 1992). In this thesis, I discuss Hirschi's theory and how it has been applied in the literature to explain the gender gap in delinquency using what is referred to as the "add gender and stir" approach, or an approach that assesses how theories specified to explain male delinquency can be expanded similarly also to understand female delinquency (see Kruttschnitt 1996). I also propose that the theory can be extended in additional ways that more explicitly take gender and patriarchy into consideration. Specifically, I explore the role of traditional gender structures and cultural definitions of gender in producing the gender gap in delinquency.

The paper proceeds as follows: I begin with a discussion of social control theory. I then discuss research on gender and the social bonds in social control theory. In the next section, I discuss research and theorizing on traditional gender ideologies and how such

ideologies might influence delinquency for males and for females. I derive and test hypotheses using data from the National Youth Survey (Elliott, Huizinga, and Ageton 1985).

SOCIAL CONTROL THEORY

According to Hirschi (1969), all individuals naturally are inclined to be delinquent, but this natural inclination can be controlled through proper socialization. Through proper socialization, individuals form bonds to society. Individuals with strong bonds to society are unlikely to engage in delinquent behavior. When the bond is weak, however, individuals are free to follow their natural inclinations and commit criminal acts (Hirschi 1969). Hirschi (1969) specifies four major elements of the social bond: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. The attachment and commitment bonds have received most attention in the literature, and support for the protective nature of these bonds has been consistent and strong (Hindelang 1973; Krohn and Massey 1980; Wiatrowski, Griswold, and Roberts 1981; Cernkovich and Giordano 1987b; Wiatrowski and Anderson 1987; Hill and Atkinson 1988; Burton, Cullen, Evans, Dunaway, Kethineni, and Payne 1995; Heimer and De Coster 1999; Erickson, Crosnoe, and Dornbusch 2000; Nakhaie, Silverman, and LaGrange 2000; Dornbusch, Erickson, Laird, and Wong 2001; Huebner and Betts 2002; Laundra, Kiger, and Bahr 2002; Stewart 2003). Thus, I focus on these bonds.

Attachment refers generally to the emotional closeness that an individual has with significant others, such as parents, teachers, and peers. Those that are attached to others refrain from engaging in delinquent behavior because they are fearful of putting their relationships in jeopardy (Hirschi 1969). Specifically, the individual has something to lose – a loving relationship – by engaging in delinquency. When discussing attachments in the context of social control theory, criminologists give priority to parental attachments, or close

relationships with mothers and fathers. This is because Hirschi (1969) posited that youth who do not form early attachments with their parents will be unsuccessful in forming attachments with others, including peers and/or teachers.¹ I focus on the primary parental attachments in this research, which is consistent with the general emphasis of social control theory.

Commitment refers to the energy and effort an individual puts into present and future conventional goals and activities, such as obtaining an education, having a good job, and developing a productive career. Essentially, an individual who has conventional plans for the future has something to lose by engaging in delinquency. Together, the attachment and commitment bonds represent “stakes in conformity” because they operate to curb delinquency when the individual considers what he/she has to lose – relationships and future plans – by engaging in delinquency (Hirschi 1969).

Gender and the Social Bonds

Although Hirschi posited social control theory as a general, nongendered theory of delinquency, there are compelling reasons to expect that the theory may be fruitful for understanding the gender gap in delinquency. Specifically, theoretical arguments and empirical research in sociology and psychology suggest that the bonds of attachment and commitment may operate differently for male and female youth. The emergence of such differences is linked to gender structures and gender socialization.

Gender and Attachment

When sociologists and psychologists discuss social relationships, they focus much attention on gender differences in the quality of and priority placed on social relationships.

¹ Attachment to peers has not been shown to be an effective deterrent to delinquency in the literature (Hirschi 1969; Hindelang 1973; Wiatrowski and Anderson 1987; Heimer 1996; Nakhaie et al 2000).

These differences are linked ultimately to patterns of gender socialization and gendered structures. Traditionally, girls are socialized to be dependent, cooperative, and emotionally connected with others, whereas boys are encouraged to be independent, competitive, and to define themselves in separation from others (Gilligan 1982; Norman, Murphy, Gilligan, and Vasudev 1982; Eagly 1987; Maccoby 1990; Beutel and Marini 1995; Umberson, Chen, House, Hopkins, and Slaten 1996; Canary, Emmers-Sommer, and Faulkner 1997; Wood and Eagly 2002). As a result, girls and boys develop different norms and values concerning what is important and learn to interact with others according to these norms.

Most research maintains that the development of gender differences in the quality of and priority placed on social relationships begins early in life (Chodorow 1978; Gilligan 1982; Wood and Eagly 2002). Chodorow (1978) argues that most children begin their lives identifying with females because mothers tend to be the primary caregivers of infants. Boys are compelled to break with this identification to establish a masculine identity, whereas girls are encouraged to maintain this primary attachment to their mothers. It is not that mothers care more for their female children than their male children; rather, mothers identify with daughters more than with sons because their daughters are the same sex and sex is a characteristic society renders salient in the grouping of persons (Chodorow 1978; Gilligan 1982; Bem 1993). The connectedness between mother and daughter and the separateness between mother and son, which are established early in a child's life leads to gender differences in how males and females experience and prioritize social relationships.

Consistent with this argument, Eagly and Wood (1991) argue that men and women are assigned certain social roles, which influences how they behave and experience the world (see also Eagly and Steffen 1984; Eagly 1987; Eagly and Wood 1999). Females tend to be

assigned the responsibility of childrearing and other domestic work, while males traditionally have been assigned the responsibility of breadwinning. Even when females are employed outside the home, they are in female-dominated occupations that more often require more nurturing skills than do male-dominated occupations (Kanter 1976; Roos and Reskin 1984; Hochschild 1989; Acker 1990; Reskin and Roos 1990; Padavic 1991; England 1992; Tomaskovic-Devey 1993; Reskin and Padavic 1994; Brown and England 1997; Ridgeway 1997; Bielby 2000; Kimmel 2000). They also continue to bear primary responsibility for childrearing responsibilities (Hochschild 1989; Blair and Lichter 1991; England 1992; Major 1993; Acock and Demo 1994; Hays 1996; Shelton and John 1999). Given these structured differences, males and females develop different views of social relationships and their importance. These differences are reproduced and recreated through gender differences in socialization that prepare young females for their future nurturing responsibilities.

Overall, the gender literature suggests that females may be more attached than males to their family. In other words, females may report higher **levels** of attachment to parents than do males (Jensen and Eve 1976; Hagan, Gillis, and Simpson 1985). Furthermore, the **effect** of this attachment may be stronger for females than for males because they may feel that they have more to lose by engaging in behaviors that may threaten the attachments on which they place much value and consider to be a core part of their identity (Hagan et al. 1985; Cernkovich and Giordano 1987a; Heimer and De Coster 1999). On the basis of these arguments, some criminologists have proposed that the attachment bond, which is central for controlling delinquency in social control theory, may be more efficacious in controlling female delinquency than male delinquency (Morris 1964; Hagan et al 1985; Singer and Levine 1988; Heimer and De Coster 1999; Huebner and Betts 2002; Laundra et al 2002).

Consistent with these broad theoretical arguments, empirical research demonstrates that levels of attachment to family vary by gender (Kenny 1987; Rice 1990; Kenny and Donaldson 1991; Kenny 1994; Paterson, Field, and Pryor 1994). Specifically, females at all stages of development are more likely than males to report that their parents are an important source of emotional support (Kenny 1987; Kenny 1994; Paterson et al 1994; Sun, Bell, Feng, and Avery 2000; Buist, Dekovic, Meeus, and Aken 2002). Research findings concerning the differential effects of attachment to parents on male and female delinquency, however, have been somewhat mixed. Early research reported that close relationships with parents control male delinquency more than female delinquency (Hindelang 1973; Krohn and Massey 1980; Canter 1982; Gove and Crutchfield 1982; Cernkovich and Giordano 1987b; Johnson 1987). However, more recent research demonstrates a greater controlling effect of these relationships on female delinquency than on male delinquency (Hagan et al 1985; Singer and Levine 1988; Heimer and De Coster 1999; Huebner and Betts 2002; Laundra et al 2002). Heimer and De Coster's (1999) study goes beyond earlier studies to decompose differences in levels (or means) of reported attachment across gender and differences in the effects of these attachments on delinquency. They conclude that the attachment bond is important for understanding gender differences in delinquency largely because this bond has a stronger effect on female than on male delinquency. From this research, we can conclude that one reason females are less delinquent than males is because they are influenced more strongly by attachments to family.

Gender and Commitment

The commitment bond in social control theory places emphasis on the individual's commitments to obtaining a conventional career and other valued conventional goals in

society. Researchers have operationalized this bond with measures of commitment to education, plans to attend college, and plans for a conventional career. As such, sociological literature on gender and the education system provides valuable insight into potential gender differences in levels and effects of commitment on delinquency.

Much research on gender and education has focused on potential gender bias in America's schools. From the ways in which teachers treat students (Serbin, O'Leary, Kent, and Tonick 1973; Askew and Ross 1988; Thorne 1993; Sadker and Sadker 1994; American Association of University Women 1999; Pomerantz, Saxon, and Kenney 2001; Owens, Smothers, and Love 2003; Spencer, Porche, and Tolman 2003) to how textbooks express appropriate gendered roles and behaviors (Sadker and Sadker 1994; American Association of University Women 1999; Evans and Davies 2000; Owens 2003), males and females learn important gendered lessons and experience school differently. As a result, they may respond differently to school, some becoming more committed to it than others. Recent research suggests that females are exhibiting a greater tendency toward school commitment than are males (Eccles 1987; Hossler and Stage 1992; Jenkins 1995; Noble and Bradford 2000; Stetsenko, Little, Gordeeva, Grasshof, and Oettingen 2000; Whitelaw, Milosevic, and Daniels 2000; Pomerantz et al 2001; Pomerantz, Altermatt, and Saxon 2002). This could be for three general reasons.

First, it may be the case that females consider strong performance in school as an avenue through which to strengthen relationships with people, such as parents and teachers, who will praise and reward them with love and encouragement for such performance. Since females are socialized more than males to care about what others think of them, they may put forth greater effort to impress parents and teachers by excelling in school, thereby enhancing

their performance and commitment (Gilligan 1982; Pomerantz et al 2001; Pomerantz et al 2002; Altermatt and Pomerantz 2003). Generally, one could posit that females are “doing gender” in their attempts to perform well in order to strengthen the social relationships they have been taught to value and emphasize. Males, however, may not be as concerned with pleasing others and strengthening core relationships with parents and teachers, so their performance and commitment levels may suffer. Given that females are earning better grades in school than males (Eccles 1987; Hossler and Stage 1992; American Association of University Women 1999; Pomerantz et al 2002; Sadker 2002; Altermatt and Pomerantz 2003), they simultaneously are pleasing others, such as their parents and teachers, and planning for their future. Performing well at school and planning for the future is consistent with Hirschi’s commitment bond.

One might argue, however, that performing well in school is core to general goals and values that males are socialized to emphasize. For instance, gender socialization places breadwinning as core to the male identity. Thus, males should be more motivated to perform well in school than are females in their attempts to plan for a career that allows them to become a strong provider in the future. In short, one might argue that preparing for success in the conventional world of work provides a mechanism for males to “do gender.” However, a second explanation for why females may demonstrate stronger commitment to school has to do with social-structural opportunities and constraints. This explanation posits that patriarchy affords males certain structural advantages in the labor market relative to females. Therefore, males may believe that doing poorly in school will not prove to be much of a hindrance to their future plans and careers (England 1992; Messerschmidt 1993; Reskin and Padavic 1994; Connell 1995; Connell 1996). Alternatively, females recognize that they

must perform more strongly than males to reap educational and occupational benefits both in the short- and the long-term (Eccles 1987; Noble and Bradford 2000). This, in recent times when females more often than not seek fulfillment in conventional careers, may be a factor in increasing female commitment to school and higher education.

Finally, patriarchy not only provides structural benefits for males over females, it also helps shape cultural notions of masculinity. Males are socialized to embrace masculine ideas and reject things that are not considered masculine. The literature suggests that the school is a feminine institution, which may be a reason why males are less committed than females to performing well in this institution (Willis 1977; Burke 1989; Sadker and Sadker 1994; Hagan 1997; Epstein 1998; Gilbert and Gilbert 1998; Noble and Bradford 2000; Sommers 2000; Hunsader 2002; Lahelma 2002). A feminine institution is one in which feminine norms, such as passivity, neatness, and silence, are stressed. These norms are posited to make males unhappy because they are unable to truly express themselves as independent and masculine (Askew and Ross 1988; Sadker and Sadker 1994; Whitelaw et al 2000; Hunsader 2002; Lahelma 2002).

Consistent with this, researchers posit that schools can be emasculating to males because “boys suffocate under female influence that is not balanced by positive male values” (Sadker and Sadker 1994:217). Other researchers indicate also that schools are authoritarian, which denies student autonomy, independence, and control – traits young males are socialized to demonstrate and value in most other arenas of their lives. Thus, the traits and characteristics valued by and encouraged at school may clash more with male socialization than with female socialization because they contradict the masculine emphasis on being independent and in control (Greenberg 1977). Rejection of school, therefore, may prove a

relevant avenue by which males are able to “do gender” and maintain masculine status. This rejection may take various forms, such as being disruptive in the classroom, staying away from “feminine” subjects in school, or being less involved in certain school-related activities. In short, males may demonstrate less commitment to school and conventional activities because the school is a feminine institution.

Consistent with social control theory, research shows that rejection of school can translate into involvement in delinquent activities. For example, Willis (1977) and Hagan (1997) report that males who were not committed to school and were defiant of school authority became involved in delinquent activities because they felt alienated from the structure of schools. These studies posited that the educational institution is a middle-class institution, thereby leading to rejection of school and delinquency among lower-class males. The argument about schools being a feminine institution that result in less commitment and more delinquency among males parallels the class-based arguments of Hagan (1997) and Willis (1977).

According to social control theory, the differences in levels of commitment to school and future plans witnessed in the education literature should help explain why females are less delinquent than males. Research evidence on the effects of commitment on delinquency across sex is somewhat mixed (see Mason and Windle 2002). Some find that commitment controls male delinquency more than female delinquency (Krohn and Massey 1980), while others report that commitment has more of a deterrent effect on female delinquency than on male delinquency (Rankin 1980; Burton et al 1995; Simpson and Elis 1995; Laundra et al 2002). Based upon the literature reviewed here and upon the fact that more recent studies

report a stronger effect of commitment on female delinquency, I propose that commitment will control female delinquency more than male delinquency.

TRADITIONAL GENDER IDEOLOGIES AND DELINQUENCY

Overall, social control theory states that the reason females are less delinquent than males is that they have stronger bonds to conventional society than do males. This general argument does not address a central argument in the gender and crime literature as to why females are less delinquent than males. The gender and crime literature posits that traditional male socialization promotes delinquency (Hindelang 1973; Cullen et al 1979; Shover, Norland, James, and Thornton 1979; Thornton and James 1979; Norland, Wessel, and Shover 1981; Horwitz and White 1987; Willemsen and van Schie 1989), whereas traditional female socialization controls delinquency (Heimer 1996; Heimer and De Coster 1999). This is because definitions of masculinity are consistent with delinquent behaviors in their emphasis on aggressiveness, independence, and risk-taking. Alternatively, definitions of femininity, which emphasize passivity, caring, and dependence, are the antithesis of delinquency (see Schur 1984).

Several researchers suggest that males who accept traditional gender ideologies may commit more delinquency because they are trying to claim masculinity or “do gender” (Messerschmidt 1993; Heimer 1996; Heimer and De Coster 1999; Messerschmidt 2000). For males who struggle to “do gender” (West and Zimmerman 1987), delinquency provides the opportunity to demonstrate physical strength. However, for females the proper way to “do gender” is to act in socially acceptable ways (Burke 1989; Heimer 1996), which does not include engaging in delinquent behavior. When females are involved in delinquency, some argue that they are viewed as “doubly deviant” because they not only violate the law but also

violate cultural norms concerning what it means to be female (Harris 1977; Schur 1984; De Coster 2003). All of this suggests that acceptance of traditional gender ideologies will control female delinquency but may promote male delinquency in attempts for males and females to claim gender.

SUMMARY AND HYPOTHESES

Integrating ideas from the literature discussed thus far, I posit that the gender structure of society influences cultural definitions of what it means to be male or female in society (West and Zimmerman 1987; Risman 1998; Heimer and De Coster 1999). These definitions of gender have implications for the value males and females place on social relationships and for their commitment to education and future goals related to education. Specifically, gendered structures and socialization lead females more than males to value and emphasize social relationships and connections with others. This emphasis on attachments to others may be key to understanding why females engage in less delinquency than males; they have stronger relationships that they value more and do not want to threaten or lose by engaging in delinquency. This hypothesis is articulated as Hypothesis 1 in Table 1.

Moreover, females may use performance in school as an avenue through which to strengthen their social relationships. Given arguments that schools are feminine institutions and given that females often have more to prove in a society that rewards male performance more than female performance, it is not surprising that recent evidence demonstrates females are more strongly committed than males to school and educational goals. Gender differences in levels of commitment to school also may prove key to understanding the gender gap in delinquency because persons who work harder at a goal have more to lose by engaging in delinquency than those who do not work as hard. This is Hypothesis 2 in Table 1.

The first two hypotheses derive directly from social control theory's "stakes in conformity," suggesting that females may have more to lose than males by engaging in delinquency. I extend the logic of social control theory by positing also that traditional definitions of gender influence the very meaning of conformity. For females, conformity to gender expectations requires demonstration of passivity, caring, and submissiveness. Therefore, accepting and conforming to gender expectations is the antithesis of delinquency and should curb delinquency for females. Alternatively, engaging in delinquency may prove a useful avenue through which male adolescents who accept traditional definitions of masculinity and gender can conform to expectations and achieve gender. Thus, the Third Hypothesis in Table 1 states that acceptance of traditional gender definitions will control female delinquency but encourage male delinquency.

----- TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE -----

METHODS AND ANALYSIS

Data

The data for this analysis come from the first three waves of the National Youth Survey (NYS). The NYS is a national probability sample of 11 to 17 year olds in the United States in 1976. The dataset includes a national probability sample of 1,725 respondents. After listwise deletion of missing data, the sample consists of 1,511 respondents, 705 females and 806 males. Seventy-three percent of the sample agreed to participate in the survey. The data were gathered from youth and one of their parents or legal guardians, typically the mother. The youth in the study were between the ages of 11 and 17 at the time of the first interview. The present analysis relies on data from the youth, as well as demographic data from the parents. The first wave of in-home interviews was conducted in 1977 and asked

participants about events and behaviors that occurred in the preceding year. The second and third waves of data were conducted in 1978 and 1979, respectively. The attrition rate over the span of the study was low, 13%; and comparison of respondents across waves indicated that loss by demographic variables and law violation did not influence the underlying distributions of these variables (Elliott et al. 1985).

Measurement of Variables

The variables used in this analysis consist of delinquency, attachment to family, commitment to school, gender ideologies, and structural position/demographic variables. The substantive model can be seen in Figure 1, and detailed information on the measurement of variables is provided in Appendix A.

----- FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE -----

The vector of exogenous variables in Figure 1 consists of structural positions/demographic variables that have been shown to be related to delinquency in other studies. These variables include age, race, family income, urban dwelling, and residence in a female-headed household. Age is measured as the youth's age at the time of the first interview and ranges from 11 to 17. Race is a dummy variable, coded as 0 for nonwhite and 1 for white respondents. The measure of family income is the parent's report of total family income at the time of the first wave of interviews. Urban dwelling is a dichotomous variable, coded as 0 for nonurban dwelling and 1 for urban dwelling. Female headship also is a dichotomous variable, coded as 0 if a female does not solely head the household and 1 if the household is female headed.

The vector of exogenous variable also includes a measure of prior delinquency. Prior delinquency is measured by a scale of the mean rates of youth's reports of how often in the

prior year they engaged in a variety of delinquent behaviors, including property, violent, and drug offenses. This scale is similar to scales of general delinquency used in other studies of delinquency (see Canter 1982; Elliott et al 1985; Rosenbaum 1987; Cernkovich and Giordano 1992; Heimer 1996; Jiang and D'Apolito 1999; Liu and Kaplan 1999; Nakhaie et al 2000; Huebner and Betts 2002). Following Elliott et al (1985), I use the rates of offending because they are less skewed than frequency reports of delinquent involvement. The precise items for the scale are listed in Appendix A. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .80 for females and .86 for males, which suggests a high reliability for the prior delinquency scale for both sexes. Inclusion of prior delinquency in the models allows me to control for the possibility that delinquent youth may select out of social relationships (family attachment) and may become less interested in school and future career plans (commitment). Moreover, Kessler and Greenberg (1981) posit that inclusion of prior delinquency allows for the control of stable, unchanging characteristics of individuals over time.

The next vector of variables includes social control theory's stakes in conformity – attachment and commitment – as well as acceptance of traditional gender ideologies. Each of these variables is measured at the time of the second wave of interviews. Family attachment is measured by youth reports of how willing their family is to listen to their problems and how close the youth feels to his/her family. These measures follow directly from Hirschi's (1969) recommendation for how to measure family attachment and are the measures that have been used in recent studies of delinquency (see Wiatrowski et al 1981; Wiatrowski and Anderson 1987; Kandel and Davies 1991; Seydlitz 1991; Rankin and Kern 1994; Aseltine 1995; Heimer and DeCoster 1999; Wright and Cullen 2001; Rebellon 2002). The questions were combined and averaged to form a scale and the Cronbach's alpha for

females is .71 and .63 for males, which indicates that for both females and males the attachment questions work well together to create a larger construct of attachment to family.

Commitment to school is tapped by youth reports of how important going to college is to the youth, how important a good job/career is to the youth, and how important s/he deems school work to be. Again, this measure follows from Hirschi's (1969) prescription for the measurement of this construct as an average of responses and is similar to measures of commitment used in recent studies (Krohn and Massey 1980; Wiatrowski et al 1981; Krohn, Lanza-Kaduce, and Akers 1984; Wiatrowski and Anderson 1987; Rebellon 2002). The Cronbach's alpha on the commitment scale is .49 for females and .47 for males, which suggests a sufficient reliability for the commitment to school scale.²

The measure of traditional gender ideologies is a scale of youth responses to questions asking how much they agree with statements that women with children should not work outside the home, women are too emotional to solve problems, women should take care of children, and women are physically and emotionally weaker than men. This measure is similar to measures utilized in recent studies of gender and delinquency (Bainbridge and Crutchfield 1983; Finley and Grasmick 1985; Heimer 1997; Heimer and De Coster 1999). For females the Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .56 and for males the Cronbach's alpha is .54, suggesting that these gender ideology questions function adequately together.

Delinquency, the dependent variable, is measured at the third wave of the study and is a scale of the mean rates of youth's reports of how often they engaged in a variety of delinquent behaviors in the past year. This scale is the same as the prior delinquency scale discussed above. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .68 for females and .88 for males.

² Given that these alphas are relatively low, I conducted sensitivity analysis with a variant on the scale. When importance of a good job is excluded from the scale, the alphas increase to .53 for females and .55 for males. Estimating the models with this commitment scale does not alter the reported substantive findings.

----- TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE -----

Analytic Technique

To assess the hypotheses in Table 1, I begin with t-test comparisons of means on the variables in the study. Hypotheses 1a and 2a propose that females will report higher levels of attachment and commitment than males. Moreover, there should be significant mean differences on the delinquency measures, which provides evidence that there is a gender gap to be explained. I do not expect gender differences for other variables, as this is a national probability sample and males and females should not vary on race, class, or other demographics.

The next stage of analysis uses ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple regression procedures. OLS multiple regression techniques are appropriate for this analysis because the dependent variable is a continuous variable and all of the independent variables are either continuous or dichotomous variables. Three models are estimated for both females and males. The first model contains the truly exogenous demographic or social structural variables (age, race, female headship, and urban dwelling), as well as prior delinquency. The second models adds family attachment and commitment to school/career. This is the typical “add gender and stir” model that has been assessed in the literature on gender and social control theory in that it simply assesses the traditional social control theory arguments about “stakes in conformity,” positing that the effects of these stakes may vary across sex. The third and final models add the measure of gender ideology to assess whether or not consideration of such ideologies contributes to understanding of the gender gap in delinquency, above and beyond the more traditional gendered social control model.

In assessing the OLS results, I first assess the beta coefficients associated with each variable for both sexes (in separate models). I then compare the female coefficients to the male coefficients on the variables – attachment, commitment, and gender ideologies – that are posited to have different effects on male versus female delinquency. I do this by conducting a series of z-tests. Following the suggestion of Paternoster, Brame, Mazerolle, and Piquero (1998), I use z-tests, with the equation $z = (\beta_1 - \beta_2) / [(\text{se}\beta_1)^2 + (\text{se}\beta_2)^2]^{1/2}$. These z-tests allow me to assess hypotheses 1b, 2b, and 3 in Table 1.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics and Comparisons of Means

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the variables in the study, and t-tests of differences in means across sex. The ages of youth in the sample range from 11 to 17. The mean age for females is 13.73 with a standard deviation of 1.93, and the mean age for the males is 13.87 with a standard deviation of 1.94. As one would expect in a national probability sample, the mean age does not differ significantly across gender (see column 4). The mean for female race is .81, which shows that 81% of the females are white, while for males the mean is .80, indicating that 80% of the males are white. As can be expected, the mean race across sex is not significantly different in this national probability sample (see column 4).

The mean value for family income is 4.24 with a standard deviation of 2.33. The response values range from 1 to 10. This suggests that the respondent's family income is between \$14,000-\$18,000. The mean family income for females is 4.33, with a standard deviation of 2.37, while the mean family income for males is 4.15 with a standard deviation of 2.29. Column 4 shows that males and females in the sample come from families with

similar incomes. Table 2 also shows that the males and females in this sample are equally likely to reside in urban areas, with 25% of males residing in these areas and 26% of females.

The mean for those living in female-headed households is .16, indicating that 16% of the full sample resides in the home with only a female parent. 17% of the females in the sample reside in female-headed households, and 15% of the males reside in such households. This small difference in percentages across sex is not statistically significant (see column 4).

The full sample mean for prior delinquency is 1.15, with response values ranging from 1 to 3.00. The standard deviation is .24. Consistent with the other studies of delinquency, the mean for prior delinquency suggests that the youth are fairly law-abiding. The mean for prior delinquency among females is 1.10, with a standard deviation of .17, while for males the mean is 1.20, with a standard deviation of .29. Column 4 of Table 2 shows that the differences across sex in delinquency at wave 1 is statistically significant, with males reporting more involvement in the property, violent, and drug offenses tapped by this measure.

The overall mean for attachment to family is 4.18, with a standard deviation of .65, and a range from 1 to 5. This indicates that most youth in the study report relatively high levels of familial attachment, which is consistent with other studies. For females, the mean is 4.16, with a standard deviation of .65, and the mean for males is 4.21, with a standard deviation of .60. Column 4 in Table 2 shows that the mean reports of family attachment are not significantly different across sex. This is inconsistent with Hypothesis 1a and with arguments suggesting that females are more likely to be close to their families because they are socialized to focus more on fostering relationships than are males. It may be the case that males and females are similarly attached to their parents but females more than males fear

the loss of this attachment and are thereby more controlled by these relationships. I assess this possibility in the next section of the thesis.

The mean value for commitment to school is 4.26 and standard deviation of .74. The response values range from 1 to 5. This suggests that most youth report that school, attending college, and a future job/career is relatively important. Among females the mean for commitment to school is 4.28 with a standard deviation of .75, while among males the mean is 4.24 with a standard deviation of .74. The slightly higher report of female commitment is not statistically greater than male commitment (see column 4). This is inconsistent with Hypothesis 2a and with gendered arguments positing that females may be more committed to school and careers because they have more to prove, schools are feminine institutions, and females use school performance as a mechanism to enhance social relationships (Eccles 1987; Noble and Bradford 2000). Again, gender differences in the relevance of commitment may be due to the relative weight males and females place on these commitments when contemplating delinquency. This will be assessed in the next section.

Acceptance of traditional gender ideologies has a mean response value of 2.78 with a standard deviation of .65. The range of values is from 1 to 4.8. Thus, the youth in the sample seem to fall in the middle overall in terms of gender traditionalism. The mean for females is 2.61 with standard deviation of .69. The mean for males is 2.91 with standard deviation of .59. The mean levels on gender traditionalism differ significantly across sex, with males espousing more adherence to traditional gender beliefs (see Column 4). This difference is consistent with arguments in the gender literature suggesting that males have more to gain from traditional gender structures than do females and thereby may be more accepting of them (see Bem 1993).

The full sample mean for the dependent variable, delinquency, is 1.16, with response values ranging from 1 to 3.96. The standard deviation is .27. This suggests that the youth in this sample are infrequent participants in delinquency. The mean for delinquency among females is 1.09, with a standard deviation of .18, while for males the mean is 1.21, with a standard deviation of .32. Column 4 shows that the difference across sex in delinquency is statistically significant, with males reporting more involvement in the property, violent, and drug offenses tapped by this measure.

----- TABLES 3 AND 4 ABOUT HERE -----

Structural Positions, Demographics and Prior Delinquency

The Model A equations in Table 3 assess the effects of structural positions, demographics, and prior engagement in delinquency on male and female delinquency. These models show that white females, females who reside in single-parent households, and females who have engaged in delinquency in the past are more likely than other females to engage in delinquent behaviors. Males who are older, reside in urban areas, and have engaged in prior delinquency are the males who are more prone than other males to engage in delinquency. An interesting question that can be assessed with these models is the extent to which the effects of these variables are mediated by “stakes in conformity” and acceptance of traditional gender ideologies for males and females. A comparison of effects across Models A, B, and C demonstrates that these intervening mechanisms are more or less impotent for understanding these relationships. In other words, structural characteristics and prior delinquency continue to influence delinquency in all the estimated models. I turn now to the main focus of the paper and an assessment of the gendered hypotheses about differences in the effects of attachment, commitment, and gender ideologies across gender.

Stakes in Conformity

Model B shows that family attachments statistically reduces female delinquency but does not influence male delinquency. This appears to be consistent with Hypothesis 1b, but the z-test comparison of significant differences in coefficients across sex reported in Table 4 shows that this difference is not statistically significant. Thus, Hypothesis 1b is not supported; females are not significantly more controlled by their social relationships than are males. This is unexpected because previous research and theorizing suggested that females are more likely than males to emphasize their close relationships and to consider these relationships when contemplating delinquency.

Model B in Table 3 also shows that commitment to school and/or a future career curbs female and male delinquency, as Hirschi's social control theory would predict. Hypothesis 2b proposes that these commitments curb female delinquency more than male delinquency. However, the findings are counter to this hypothesis with male commitment proving to be statistically stronger in predicting delinquency. It may be the case that more recent data is necessary to assess these arguments, given that discussions in the education literature about female commitment and stronger performance in school are time-dependent and reflect recent shifts due to the progress of women's movements. The findings in this data tend to support more traditional claims that males are socialized to be breadwinners and thereby will be more committed to conventional careers and to performing well in school so as to prepare for such careers. This claim would suggest that males are committed to school and to future conventional careers because they do not want to be viewed as "double failures" – failures in the economic realm and failures in their performance as real men.

Gender Ideologies

Table 3 indicates that the acceptance of traditional gender ideologies curbs female delinquency but promotes male delinquency. This is consistent with Hypothesis 3. A z-test comparison of the coefficient for traditional gender ideologies across sex shows that the difference across sex here is significant (see Table 4). Consistent with arguments in the gender and crime literature, then, acceptance of traditional gender ideologies is central to understanding the gender gap in delinquency.

CONCLUSIONS

This research seeks to examine whether attachment to family, commitment to school and/or a future career, and acceptance of traditional gender ideologies can help explain the gender gap in delinquency. The findings from this study show that while Hirschi's social control theory provides insight into why both males and females engage in delinquent behaviors, the theory provides little by way of understanding gender differences, or the gender gap, in delinquency. Specifically, the findings show that having stakes in conformity curb delinquency among both males and females, although attachments to parents proves unimportant for male delinquency. However, the only significant difference in the effects of these stakes in conformity is that male delinquency is curbed more than female delinquency by commitment to conventional activities. This gender difference does not help explain why males are more delinquent than females. In fact, it does quite the opposite, suggesting that males should be less delinquent than females if commitment is the only variable considered.

Overall, this analysis suggests that an "add gender and stir" approach is not necessarily the best approach to take to understand the gender gap in delinquency. Considering arguments from the gender and crime literature, I evaluated how the acceptance

of traditional gender ideologies influenced delinquency among males and females. The accepting traditional gender ideologies controlled female delinquency but promoted male delinquency. This finding suggests that these ideologies are central for understanding the gender gap in delinquency.

Future research should delve more into the study of traditional gender ideologies and particular types of crimes and delinquency. For instance, some crimes may be more masculine than others. Messerschmidt (1986), for instance, proposes that violence may be especially masculine but that shoplifting may prove useful for females in their attempts to achieve femininity.

Research also should consider the role of commitment using more recent data that may help understand whether shifts in education and recent trends in the likelihood of females versus males to attend college and perform well into school influence how commitment to school operates in a gendered explanation of crime. Commitments curb the crime and delinquency of both males and females. If females have become more committed to schooling than in the past, this is one route that may actually reduce their delinquency as a result of greater equality between the sexes.

Alternatively, more liberal females – those who do not accept traditional definitions of gender – are likely to be more delinquent because they are not controlled by definitions of themselves as passive and submissive. There likely are important countervailing effects that will make it so female crime may or may not be influenced by the women's movement and liberated opportunities. Assessing these processes more directly and assessing a series of trends in structural opportunities and cultural shifts could speak to the debates in the literature concerning how or if women's liberation is linked to female crime (Adler 1975;

Simon and Landis 1991). There has not been much support for this argument (see Heimer's 2000 review of this literature).

The individual-level findings of this thesis provide evidence that while shifts in gender ideologies may lead to an increase in female delinquency, there are important positive effects of increased gender equality. First, breaking down traditional beliefs about gender actually will decrease male delinquency, the population that is more prone to delinquency. Second, though shifts in ideologies about gender may lead to female delinquency, conventional opportunities and greater conventional involvement in society may serve to deter female delinquency. Thus, there may be a net zero effect of increased gender equality on female delinquency. Of course, this is speculation and is something that requires further analysis with consideration of more processes.

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Table 1. Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:	Attachment to family will be more important for understanding female delinquency than male delinquency.
Hypothesis 1a:	Females will report higher levels or means of attachment to family than will males.
Hypothesis 1b:	Attachment to family will curb delinquency more for females than for males.
Hypothesis 2:	Commitment to school and/or a future job or career will be more important for understanding female delinquency than male delinquency.
Hypothesis 2a:	Females will report higher levels or means of commitment to school and/or a future career than will males.
Hypothesis 2b:	Commitment to school and/or a future career will curb delinquency more for females than for males.
Hypothesis 3:	Acceptance of traditional gender ideologies will control female delinquency but may promote male delinquency.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Selected Variables by Gender

Variable	Mean for Full Sample (1)	Mean for Females (2)	Mean for Males (3)	Mean Difference Across Sex (4)
Delinquency	1.16 (.27)	1.09 (.18)	1.21 (.32)	-.12***
Attachment to Family	4.18 (.65)	4.16 (.70)	4.21 (.60)	-.05
Commitment to School	4.26 (.74)	4.28 (.75)	4.24 (.74)	.04
Gender Ideologies	2.75 (.68)	2.60 (.71)	2.90 (.62)	-.30***
Demographic Variables				
Age	13.81 (1.94)	13.73 (1.93)	13.88 (1.94)	-.15
Race (White)	.80 --	.81 --	.80 --	.01
Family Income	4.24 (2.33)	4.33 (2.37)	4.16 (2.29)	.17
Urban	.25 --	.26 --	.25 --	.01
Female-Headed Household	.16 --	.17 --	.15 --	.02
Prior Delinquency	1.15 (.24)	1.10 (.17)	1.20 (.29)	-.10***
N (Sample Size)	1511	705	806	

Source: National Youth Survey, 1976-1978. Note: Standard deviations are reported in parentheses. *** p<.001 (one-tailed test).

Table 3. OLS Regression Models Predicting Delinquency

Variable	Females Model A	Males Model A	Females Model B	Males Model B	Females Model C	Males Model C
Adjusted R ²	.24	.34	.26	.35	.27	.35
Model F	37.62***	69.14***	32.43***	55.75***	29.62***	50.10***
Constant	.55 (.06)	.31 (.08)	.87 (.08)	.74 (.13)	.95 (.09)	.62 (.14)
Age ^a	-.03 (.00)	.01* (.00)	-.06 (.00)	.03 (.00)	-.07* (.00)	.04 (.00)
Race (White) ^a	.04** (.02)	.02 (.03)	.04** (.02)	.03 (.03)	.03* (.02)	.09 (.03)
Family Income ^b	-.06 (.00)	-.04 (.00)	.04 (.00)	.30 (.00)	-.10 (.00)	.50 (.00)
Urban ^a	-.01 (.01)	.05* (.02)	-.03 (.01)	.06** (.02)	-.03 (.01)	.06** (.02)
Female-Headed Household	.05** (.02)	.04 (.03)	.05** (.02)	.04 (.03)	.04** (.02)	.04 (.03)
Prior Delinquency	.51*** (.04)	.63*** (.03)	.47*** (.04)	.60*** (.03)	.47*** (.04)	.60*** (.03)
Attachment to Family			-.03*** (.01)	-.02 (.02)	-.03*** (.01)	-.02 (.02)
Commitment to School			-.03*** (.01)	-.06*** (.01)	-.03*** (.01)	-.06*** (.01)
Gender Ideologies					-.02** (.01)	.03* (.02)

Source: National Youth Survey, 1976-1978. Note: N=1511. Table entries are unstandardized (metric) regression coefficients (standard errors of estimates are in parentheses). * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001 (one-tailed tests).

^a Multiplied by 10. ^b Multiplied by 100.

Table 4. Z-tests on the interaction effects between Sex and the Social Bonds

Variable	Model A	Model B	Model C
Attachment to Family	--	n.s.	n.s.
Commitment to School	--	***	***
Gender Ideologies	--	--	***

Source: National Youth Survey, 1976-1978. Note: N=1511.

*** $p < .001$ (one-tailed test).

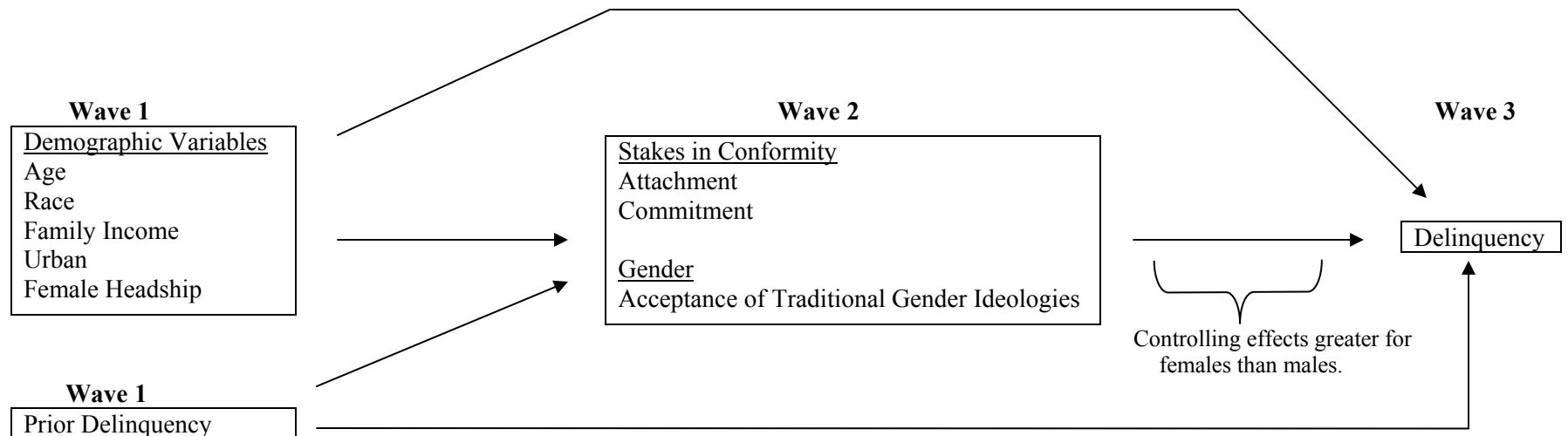


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Social Bonds, Gender Ideologies, and Delinquency Across Sex

APPENDIX

Appendix A. Description of Measures

Demographic Variables

Age	Youth's age at the time of the first interview, ranges from 11 to 17.
Race	A dummy variable, coded 0 if nonwhite and 1 if white.
Family Income	Coded as follows: 1 = \$6,000 or less; 2 = \$6,001-\$10,000; 3 = \$10,001-\$14,000; 4 = \$14,001-\$18,000; 5 = \$18,001-\$22,000; 6 = \$22,001-\$26,000; 7 = \$26,001-\$30,000; 8 = \$30,001-\$34,000; 9 = \$34,001-\$38,000; 10 = \$38,001 or more.
Urban Dwelling	A dummy variable, coded 0 if nonurban dwelling and 1 if urban dwelling.
Female Headship	A dummy variable, coded 0 if not female-headed household and 1 if female-headed household.

Stakes in Conformity Attachment

	Youth's responses to the following: <i>1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither Agree or Disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• My family is willing to listen if I have a problem.• I feel close to my family.
Commitment	Youth's responses to the following: <i>1=Not Important at All; 2=Not too Important; 3=Somewhat Important; 4=Pretty Important; 5=Very Important.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How important is it to you to go to college?• How important is it to you to have a good job/career?• How important has your school work been to you?

Gender Gender Ideologies

	Youth's responses to the following: <i>1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither Agree or Disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Women with children should not work outside the home unless there is no else to support the family.• Women are too emotional to solve problems well.• In a marriage, it is the woman's responsibility to care for any children and to take care of the home.• Women are physically and emotionally weaker than men and therefore need male protection and support.
--	--

**Youth Delinquency
(Waves 1 and 3)**

A scale summing youth's responses to the following:

How many times in the last year have you done the following?

*1=Never; 2=Once or twice a year; 3=Once every 2-3 months; 4=Once a month;
5=Once every 2-3 weeks; 6=Once a week; 7=2-3 times a week; 8=Once a day;
9=2-3 times a day.*

- Purposely damaged or destroyed property belonging to your parents or other family members?
- Purposely damaged or destroyed property belonging to a school?
- Purposely damaged or destroyed other property that did not belong to you (not counting family or school property)?
- Stolen (or tried to steal) a motor vehicle, such as a car or motorcycle?
- Stolen (or tried to steal) something else worth more than \$50?
- Knowingly bought, sold, or held stolen goods (or tried to do any of these things)?
- Carried a hidden weapon other than a plain pocketknife?
- Stolen (or tried to steal) things worth \$5 or less?
- Attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting or killing him or her?
- Been involved in gang fights?
- Sold marijuana or hashish?
- Stolen money or other things from your parents or other members of your family?
- Hit (or threatened to hit) a teacher or other adult at school?
- Hit (or threatened to hit) one of your parents?
- Hit (or threatened to hit) other students?
- Sold hard drugs such as heroin, cocaine, and LSD?
- Had (or tried to have) sexual relations with someone against their will?
- Used force (strong-arm methods) to get money or things from other students?
- Used force (strong-arm methods) to get money or things from other people (not students or teachers)?
- Stolen (or tried to steal) things worth between \$5 and \$50?
- Broken into a building or vehicle (or tried to break in) to steal something or just to look around?
- Taken a vehicle for a ride (drive) without the owner's permission?
- Used marijuana – hashish (“grass,” “pot,” “hash”)