

GENDER IDEOLOGY AND DELINQUENCY

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

The gender gap in offending is one of the most commonly discussed and recognized facts in criminology. While we know that males commit the majority of crimes, there are various conflicting ideas as to why. Some have suggested that gender stereotypes and internalization of masculinity leads to delinquent behavior (Copes & Hochstetler 2003; Messerschmidt 2000; Mullins, Wright & Jacobs 2004) while others have found varying effects of peers and parental supervision (Heimer 1996). We also need to expand and think about why some females commit crimes while others do not. This study does not set out to explain the gender gap per se, but instead to add to existing literature; attempting to tease out factors that could mediate the relationship between sex and delinquency. For this specific paper, data from Monitoring the Future will be analyzed. This will be done by looking at eighth and tenth grade males and females and their delinquent behavior, parental and school social bonds, friends' drug and alcohol use, views on risky behavior and gender definitions.

Heimer (1996) describes gender definitions as beliefs about what it means to be masculine or feminine. Gender definitions for this study are specifically individual beliefs about job equality and the warmth of a working mother. Lorber (1994) discusses how gender is not only a social construction but also portrays social stratification and is an institution that structures every aspect of life. Examining a few institutions where gender is embedded, as Lorber (1994) discusses, such as in the family and the workplace, helps to figure out how individuals feel about traditional and nontraditional gender definitions. It can be inferred that if one believes in traditional gender definitions for job equality and warmth of mothers, that they would more than likely also adhere to other traditional gender definitions. The intent is to

examine if there is a relationship between sex, gender definitions and delinquency. By examining the potential relationship, we can try to hone in on if progressive or non-progressive gender definitions impact delinquent behavior and if the effect of gender definitions differs for males and females.

Gender inequality has been found to be related to the gender gap in offending; different gender role expectations or definitions can impact delinquent behavior of males and females (Heimer 1996; Heimer, De Coster & Unal 2006). For instance stereotypical traits of masculinity are enjoying risk taking, to be aggressive, powerful, in control, protective and adventurous (Copes & Hochstetler 2003; Mullins, Wright & Jacobs 2004). Stereotypical traits of femininity are generally the opposite of masculinity; to be passive, compassionate, emotional, fragile and nurturing (Heimer 1996). These conflicting ideals between masculinity and femininity could lead to conflicting ideas about delinquent behavior. Delinquent or non-delinquent behavior can be linked to gender definitions (Belknap & Holsinger 2006; Heimer 1996). In other words, whether an individual adheres to traditional gender norms/beliefs or not could impact participation in delinquent behavior. An example of this can be found in Messerschmidt's (2000) study, where he discussed how two young boys felt they were accomplishing masculinity by committing sexual acts of violence. Displays of masculinity could lead to participation in delinquent behavior while displays of femininity could lead to not participating in delinquency, as one adheres to traditional gender definitions this may lead to choices about delinquency, as was found in Messerschmidt's (2000) piece.

While this study is based on ideas found throughout the literature, it is more specifically based on previous research done by Heimer (1996) who used measures for gender definitions

such as, beliefs about if mothers should primarily care for children, if fathers should be the primary decision makers in the household and if women with children should work outside the home, and tried to better understand how delinquency varied for male and female youth. Heimer (1995) presents a framework or roadmap for studying gender and delinquency. She discusses how differences in sex and gender roles cause different motivational pathways to delinquency, further stating that delinquency holds different meanings for males and females. Heimer provides and implements a model for examining how gender and other variables (family bonds, peer group, gender definitions, race, etc.) may impact delinquent behavior. Her 1996 study implements parts of this roadmap, and findings showed that accepting traditional gender definitions had trivial effects on delinquency for males, while it had an impact on female delinquency. Since Heimer's study no attempts have been made to replicate it. Because of the lack of replication and because the data used by Heimer is from the 1970's, it is subject to further examination and explanation.

This study attempts to take Heimer's work and add to and expand on it by using current eighth and tenth grade data from Monitoring the Future. Sex, race and grade were controlled for, while parental involvement, parental attachment, school commitment, friends' use, liking risk and gender ideology were used as independent variables. Each of these variables fits into social bond/control, social learning or feminist theories. None of these theories are tested in their entirety, but instead just small parts from each theory are examined. This research seeks to understand how different beliefs in gender definitions are potentially correlated with delinquent activity for males and females.

It is expected that males who believe in traditional gender definitions or less equality will

be more delinquent while the opposite is expected for females; females believing in nontraditional definitions of gender or equality will be more delinquent than those who believe in traditional gender norms.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Control/Bond

Social control theory assumes that a strong bond to society decreases the likelihood of delinquent behavior. The social bond consists of attachment to significant others, commitment to conventional goals and institutions, involvement in conventional activities and belief in the values and norms of society (Hirschi 1969). Looking at these different elements of the social bond can help to more specifically explain which aspects of the social bond may impact delinquency. Even though social bond theory is considered a gender neutral theory, males were only involved in studies for quite some time.

Oftentimes social bond is measured through parental supervision and involvement. Studies have suggested that parental attachment and involvement has differing effects for males and females (Carlo, Raffailli, Laible and Meyer 1999; Heimer & De Coster 1999; Heimer et al. 2006). Parental control is often measured through questions concerning monitoring and controlling activities as well as through emotional attachment. While emotional bonds with parents are a strong source of control for females, monitoring and supervision is oftentimes found to be more consequential for males (Heimer 1996; Heimer & De Coster 1999). The type of supervision, informal or formal, also impacts control.

The social bond can also be measured through attachment or commitment to school. Studies have found that having positive feelings about school can be a protective factor against delinquent activities, while having a negative association with school can lead to delinquent behavior (Bower, Carroll & Ashman 2012). Also it has been found that receiving good grades can increase self-esteem which decreases delinquency, but variation does exist between sexes

(Heimer 1995). Adding in measurements for parental and school bonds will add strength to a study of delinquency and gender (Heimer 1995; Heimer 1996; Heimer et al. 2006). Gender socialization can explain how social bond may be related to gender and delinquency. For instance parents, peers and schools all teach and enforce gender roles. As discussed previously, parental monitoring and parental attachment have differing effects on males and females and are implemented differently by parents depending on sex; this can either strengthen or weaken the social bond.

Social Learning

Social learning is different from social control in that social control states that close social bonds protect against delinquency, while social learning states that a differential association with delinquent peers can be a predictor of delinquent behavior (Akers 1998; Hirschi 1969). Social learning states that delinquent behavior can be learned or reinforced through interactions with delinquent peers or adults. Positive reinforcement comes from delinquent peers, encouraging delinquent behavior and providing a positive social setting for delinquent behavior (Elliot, Ageton and Canter 1979). Social learning consists of differential association, differential reinforcement, definitions favorable or unfavorable to law breaking and imitation. Peers are not always a negative influence, as individuals can have peers who behave conventionally, encouraging conventional behavior. Whoever the individual surrounds themselves with will influence the behavior of the individual.

Gender can have a very strong impact on social learning, as gender is learned through interactions with parents, peers and in institutional settings such as the school. When traditional gender norms are taught and reinforced throughout everyday life, the individual is more likely to

incorporate those norms into their own identity (Akers 1998; Heimer 1996; Heimer & De Coster 1999; Heimer et al. 2006; Messerschmidt 1993; Messerschmidt 2000). Not only is understanding delinquent behavior and how it may be learned important but also understanding how gender roles are learned and internalized should be examined. Studies have suggested that female's acceptance and internalization of traditional gender norms can protect against delinquent behavior, while male's internalizing traditional gender norms can lead to delinquent behavior (Heimer 1996; Heimer & De Coster 1999; Heimer et al. 2006; Messerschmidt 2000). For females, delinquent behavior is doubly deviant, going against social norms and gender norms, while delinquent behavior for males could be reinforcing gender norms.

Feminist Theory

Traditional criminology theories do not take gender into account, missing out on a lot of important differences in delinquent paths that males and females take. Miller and Mullins (2006) define feminist criminology as follows, "*Feminist criminology* refers to that body of criminological research and theory that situates the study of crime and criminal justice within a complex understanding that the social world is systematically shaped by relations of sex and gender" (218). The examination of the social world and understanding how sex and gender play a role is extremely important. Gender is not naturally occurring but instead a complex product of history, culture and society (Daly & Chesney-Lind 1988). The combination of these along with the gendered organization of society, gender inequality and gender definitions create the differing gendered pathways into delinquency. The binary, biological view on sex is outdated and needs to be avoided when examining how sex is associated with delinquency, we now know that testosterone is not necessarily what leads to males committing delinquent behavior, but

instead learned and socialized gender roles along with other factors that can lead a person towards delinquent behavior (Messerschmidt 2000).

It is important for feminist scholars and researchers to acknowledge patriarchy and what it means or says about women, how it shapes women's lives and criminal experiences (Chesney-Lind 1989). It is through these patriarchal institutions that assumptions or ideas about gender are shaped and then through our assumptions about gender that one may or may not participate in crime (Miller & Mullins 2006). It is important to examine the background of delinquent and non-delinquent males and females to better understand how and where they ended up.

Literature suggests that when examining delinquency and specifically the gender gap in delinquency, that there are a lot of factors that can potentially impact whether one partakes in delinquent activities. Based on previous theory as well as Heimer's 1996 study some important factors are parental involvement, parental attachment and school commitment, which all examine the social bond. Also aspects of social learning such as friends' use, risky behavior and gender ideology must be taken into account, as well as basic controlling factors such as grade and race. While there have been attempts, such as what Heimer did, to further explain the gender gap, there are still gaps in the literature. A lot of theorists will examine how their specific theory, such as social bond, may impact the gender gap of offending, but leave out a lot of other key variables. Also because of the difficulty of access to youth for qualitative research as well as the inherent complications of quantitative research, such as being restricted to close ended questions and not being able to gain explanations for the answers given, it is hard to find surveys that address all possible pertinent variables.

Although this study does not adequately measure all of the above stated variables, it tries

to at least account for them all by using pre-collected survey data of eighth and tenth graders. Following in Heimer's footsteps this paper is an attempt to fill in some of the gaps currently existing within the literature, and to try and help better explain how some aspects, such as gender ideology, may impact delinquent behavior.

After examining the literature we can see that trying to explain how sex and gender role definitions can possibly impact delinquent behavior is a subject that has been studied and is continuing to be examined. There are mixed findings in how sex and gender definitions impact delinquency. Some researchers have found that internalizing and trying to accomplish stereotypical traits of masculinity can lead to delinquent behavior (Copes & Hochstetler 2003; Messerschmidt 2000; Mullins, Wright & Jacobs 2004) and some have found that parental attachment has differing impacts for males and females (Heimer 1996). Overall, the literature suggests that examining sex, gender definitions and delinquency is important and something that should be continued. This is what this study attempts to do, examine how ideas about gender role definitions impact delinquent behavior for males and females. It is expected that males who believe in traditional gender roles or less equality will be more delinquent while the opposite is expected for females; females believing in nontraditional gender roles or equality will be more delinquent than those who believe in traditional gender norms.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODS

Sample and Data

Monitoring the Future is an annual survey given to a large nationally representative sample of eighth, tenth and twelfth graders. There are four different forms given to eighth and tenth graders. The surveys are administered throughout 150 schools for eighth grade and 130 schools for tenth grade. The 2011 eighth and tenth grade data were combined. More specifically data from Form Two, sections A, C, D and E were used. Originally the data consisted of approximately 10648 respondents, after removing cases with missing data the final sample consisted of 5803 respondents. Because of the large drop in sample size, the data was examined to see what accounted for the large drop. It was determined that parents helping with homework, talking to parents about problems and race were the questions that accounted for the large drop. While nothing could be done about the parent questions, missing race was added as a dummy into the analysis to see if it would improve the sample size. While it did slightly improve the sample size, it was determined to keep race as white and nonwhite, and exclude missing race. Half of the respondents were in eighth grade, about three quarters (74%) were white and just under half (49%) were male.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variable is a summed value for delinquent behavior, consisting of questions concerning both violent and nonviolent delinquency, asking about behavior in the past twelve months. There are five nonviolent delinquency questions, all questions were on the same scale, with answers ranging from 1-5 (1 'not at all', 2 'once', 3 'twice', 4 '3-4 times', 5 '5 + times'). The questions were: stealing less than fifty dollars, stealing more than fifty dollars,

trespassing, damaging school property and selling drugs. The violent delinquency questions were also on the 1-5 scale and had the same answers as nonviolent delinquency. Violent delinquency questions were; gets into fights at work or school, gets into gang fights and hurting someone badly. To make interpretation easier, the answers were recoded from 1-5 to 0-4 (0 'not at all', 1 'once', 2 'twice', 3 '3-4 time', 4 '5+times'), so that zero meant there was no participation.

The correlations were looked at for all delinquency questions. The correlations ranged from .30 to .58, suggesting that all variables should be put into factor analysis. Once the factor analysis was conducted, the KMO measure of sample adequacy was .86, above the suggested .6. Bartlett's test of sphericity was also significant ($X^2 = 15790.36$, $p < .001$). The factor analysis revealed an eigenvalue of 3.83 and factor loadings ranged from .45 to .72. Cronbach's Alpha was .84, well above the recommended .7, suggesting that the items reliably measured delinquency. Also it was found that deleting an item from the factor would not improve the scale and that nothing needs to be dropped to improve the scale. The eight items were summed, after accounting for missing data, to create the final delinquency index. A higher score indicates higher participation in general delinquency. Taking the mean of the delinquency questions did not improve the sample size significantly; therefore it was summed so that it was similar to the other scales.

Independent Variables

Sex was turned into a dummy variable, with women being the reference group (1 'men', 0 'women'). Race was recoded so that nonwhite was the reference group (1 'white', 0 'nonwhite') and grade was recoded into a dummy variable with tenth grade as the reference group (1 'eighth', 0 'tenth').

Concepts of social bond theory were measured by questions concerning parental involvement, parental attachment and school commitment. Originally all measures involving parents were looked at and put into a factor analysis. The questions were, how often parents checked homework, parents helped with homework, parents have respondents do chores, limit television, allow out, and talking to parent about problems, with answers that ranged from 1-4 (1 'never', 2 'rarely', 3 'sometime', 4 'often'). The correlations between each question and the other questions as well as each question and general delinquency were examined and it was determined that conducting a factor analysis would not be appropriate. There were only three correlations between items which exceeded .3, they were, parents helping with homework and checking homework ($r = .47$), parents checking homework and limiting television ($r = .30$) and helping with homework and talking to parents about problems ($r = .35$). Examining correlations with delinquency yielded the following significant correlations; parents checking homework ($r = -.09$), helping with homework ($r = .11$), having respondents do chores ($r = -.06$), limiting television ($r = -.09$), allowing out ($r = -.07$) and talking to parents about problems ($r = -.13$).

Although none of the correlations between questions and delinquency were above the ideal .3, the two largest correlations, parents helping with homework and talking to parents about problems, were chosen to represent parental involvement and parental attachment, respectively. How often a parent helped with homework, had answers that ranged from 1-4 (1 'never', 2 'rarely', 3 'sometime', 4 'often'). The question, do you feel that you can talk to a parent about problems, had original answers ranging from 1-3 (1 'no', 2 'yes sometimes', 3 'yes mostly/always') but it was recoded to a dummy variable (0 'no', 1 'yes'). These measures are not as robust as they should be, previous literature has used numerous variables to measure each

concept, but the data available for this research did not make that possible. Therefore the measures for parental involvement and parental attachment are not as adequate as they could be, but reflect what was available. School commitment was measured by asking if the respondent thinks they will graduate high school, with answers ranging from 1-4 (1 'definitely won't', 2 'probably won't', 3 'probably will', 4 'definitely will')..

Aspects of social learning are measured through friends' use, liking risky behavior and gender definitions. The questions for friends' use were, how many friends' drink alcohol, how many get drunk and how many use marijuana, all had the same answers with responses ranging from 1-5 (1 'none', 2 'a few', 3 'some', 4 'most', 5 'all'), these were recoded into 0-4 (0 'none', 1 'a few', 2 'some', 3 'most', 4 'all') to make interpretation easier. The correlations of the three questions ranged from .69 to .75, so all three were used in factor analysis. The KMO measure for the factor analysis was .73 and Bartlett's test ($X^2 = 15699.9$, $p < .001$) showing significance as well. The eigenvalue was 2.39 and factor loadings ranged from .69 to .75. When reliability was checked, Cronbach's Alpha was .87, also suggesting reliability. Deleting any of the questions would not improve the scale, suggesting that the combination of items reliably measured friends' use. Items were summed together, after accounting for missing data to create the friends' use index. The summed index has answers ranging from 0-12, with higher responses meaning more friends' have used. While it would be better to have questions concerning friends' delinquency, these were not available, the next best questions were those about friends' use, which is why they were used. This does a fairly adequate job of measuring friends' use.

There were five questions concerning risky behavior; getting a kick out of danger, liking risk, liking frightening things, liking to break rules and liking exciting or unpredictable friends'.

The answers ranged from 1-5 (1 'disagree', 2 'mostly disagree', 3 'neither', 4 'mostly agree', 5 'agree'). The correlations were examined for questions concerning risk. The correlations ranged from .44 to .63, suggesting that all variables should be put into factor analysis. The factor analysis was conducted and yielded factor loadings ranging from .44 to .63 with an eigenvalue of 3.16. The KMO measure of sample adequacy was .85, above the suggested .6. Bartlett's test of sphericity was also significant ($X^2 = 11970.37$, $p < .001$). The eigenvalue was 3.16 and factor loadings ranged from .50 to .67. Cronbach's Alpha was .85, suggesting that items reliably measured attraction to risk. Deleting items from the scale would not improve it. The five items were summed, after accounting for missing data, to create the risk index which has a scale of 5-25, a higher score indicates liking risky behavior.

Originally the gender ideology index was going to consist of four questions that dealt with gender role attitudes; men and women should get equal pay for equal work, men and women should have equal job opportunity, men should work outside the home and women in the home and a working mom can be as warm as a stay at home mom. The responses for all questions ranged from 1-5 (1 'disagree', 2 'mostly disagree', 3 'neither', 4 'mostly agree', 5 'agree'). After examining correlations and running factor analysis and reliability it was determined that the items did not factor together. While correlations were fairly strong for men and women should have equal pay for equal work and women should have equal job opportunity ($r = .48$) they did not correlate strongly ($r < .20$) with men working outside the home and women in the home or with a working mom can be as warm as a stay at home mom. Factor analysis revealed a KMO of .61 and Chronbach's Alpha of .55. Also it revealed that deleting if a working mom can be as warm as a stay at home mom and that men should work outside the home and

women inside the home would improve the scale, all of this lead to the four questions not being a reliable measure of gender ideology. It did suggest however that the two questions about job equality were correlated.

When examining correlations and factor loadings in factor analysis, both suggested agreement with men and women having equal pay for equal work and women should have equal job opportunity ($r = .482$) should go together. Because of this both items were summed and this created the job equality measure for gender ideology. The summed values, after accounting for missing data, were 2-10, with higher responses indicating believing in equality (believing in nontraditional gender roles).

After noticing that the job equality questions were not correlated with the other two gender ideology questions the correlation was examined between belief that men should work outside the home and women inside the home and that a working mom can be as warm as a stay at home mom ($r = .159$), and the correlation was very weak. These two measures seem to be inherently different and do not measure the same thing, therefore the second measure used for gender ideology is measured by the questions concerning if a working mom can be as warm as a stay at home mom and belief in men working outside the home and women in the home was dropped. The decision was made to only use this question because the two questions were not correlated enough to justify a summed index and because previous literature (De Coster 2012) has consistently used this as a measure concerning gender definitions. This is a good measure of belief in a woman's ability to be a good mother and working outside the home. It is on the same 1-5 scale as the job equality questions. A higher response for this question indicates believing a working mom can be as warm as a stay at home mom, indicating equality and belief in

nontraditional gender roles.

Statistical Procedures

Univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses were conducted and examined. After examining total means, they were broken down by sex, then t-tests were done to check for significant differences between male and female means. As stated above, through the use of correlations and factor analysis summed indexes were created, which helped to reduce the number of variables and improve measurement of some constructs. For example one question on delinquent behavior cannot tell us a lot about overall delinquent behavior, but if we can sum all the delinquency questions, we can know more about that behavior and have a much better measure. Even though some responses were able to be summed, which created a more reliable and valid measure, it was found that some questions could not be summed, leaving only one question to measure an in depth concept, such as what happened with parental involvement and attachment, discussed previously. Only having one question to measure a concept does lead to lower validity and reliability, but was necessary for this particular study.

There was an interaction expected of sex and both gender ideology measures (job equality and mother's warmth) on the dependent variable of general delinquency. Because of this two interactions were created, one with an interaction term for each gender ideology measure. All relevant independent variables were put into the first block regression, those included; male, white, liking risk, friends' use, expecting to graduate high school, talking to parents about problems and parents helping with homework. Job equality and warmth of mother were used as their centered variables in corresponding regression and used as original variable in the other.

The first interaction was with job equality. Before the interaction was conducted, the

mean was found for job equality. The mean was then subtracted from job equality, creating a new measure of job equality centered. Once job equality was centered, the centered variable was multiplied by the dummy variable for male, creating a new term of male*job equality. The new interaction variable was put into the second block of the regression. While it was expected that there would be a change in the R^2 there was no change whatsoever, indicating that an interaction was not found and there was no need to further examine this particular variable.

The next interaction that was examined involved the warmth of mother variable. As done with job equality, the mean was found for warmth and subtracted from the original warmth variable, creating a centered warmth variable. The centered variable was then multiplied by the variable for male which created the new variable for male warmth. As happened with the first interaction, although a change in R^2 was expected, there was no change. Analysis was stopped here, as no interaction was found. Because no interactions were found it was decided that the next step would be to examine if there was a mediation.

Examining means and t-tests for mean differences between males and females suggested that there was a sex difference in delinquency and the other independent variables. Checking for mediation meant trying to explain if and how sex may impact the other independent variables and then how each independent variable impacted delinquency. Each independent variable was entered into a baseline control variable model (sex, race and grade) to examine if the independent variables reduced the effect of sex on delinquency, net the control variables. A final model included all independent variables and controls.

CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS

Univariate

Univariate statistics were examined to get a general idea of the data. As seen in Table 1, about half the sample were males and in the tenth grade, while 74% were white. The general delinquency index for the total sample was 2.15 (SD = 4.20) out of a possible 32. It seems that, for the total sample, parents help with homework sometimes (M = 2.88, SD = 1.11) and 74% of respondents stated that they feel like can talk to parents about problems. The mean for expecting to graduate high school indicates that most are expecting to graduate (M = 3.90, SD = .35). The friends' use index mean for the total population (M = 3.76, SD = 3.24) as well as liking risky behavior (M = 16.10, SD = 5.58) are interesting when broken down by sex, which will be examined later. The same holds true for the gender ideology questions, job equality (M=9.04, SD= 1.70) and mother's warmth (M = 3.80, SD = 1.30), both show that for the total sample respondents believe in equality and nontraditional gender roles. For further detail, as well as t-tests for differences in means between males and females refer to Table 1.

Bivariate

T-tests were conducted to test the difference in means between males and females and are presented in Table 1. The t-tests that did not yield significant differences in the means were parents helping with homework, being able to talk to parents about problems as well as friends' use. This means that for these two variables, there is no significant difference in the means for males and females. All other variables had significant mean differences. As expected, males have a significantly higher level of delinquent behavior than females. The average score for males general delinquency index was 2.73 (SD = 4.95) while the average for females was 1.58 (SD =

3.21). This indicates that males, without accounting for anything else, self-report more delinquent behaviors than females.

Males ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .41$) were slightly less confident about graduating than females ($M = 3.93$, $SD = .28$), though the difference was quite small, it was still significant. A similar finding was found for risky behavior, males ($M = 16.89$, $SD = 5.45$) were more likely to agree with liking risky behavior than females ($M = 15.34$, $SD = 5.60$), although the difference is small it is statistically significant. Interestingly when examining the total sample mean for gender ideology, respondents scored extremely high, while this remains true when separating males and females (each believes in equality), males are less likely to agree with equality than females. For job equality males ($M = 8.58$, $SD = 2.02$) score significantly lower than females ($M = 9.49$, $SD = 1.15$). The same holds true when looking at mother's warmth. Again this tells us that males are more likely to agree with traditional gender definitions than females in the workplace and in the home.

When examining bivariate correlations separately for males and females, there are some differences in strength as well as patterns of significance (refer to Table 2). For males, all independent variables are significantly correlated with delinquency, while for females all independent variables except for job equality ($p = .07$) are statistically significant. For males, job equality and delinquency are negatively correlated at $r = -.12$ ($p < .001$), this means that for males as beliefs in job equality decreases, delinquency increases. For females there is no significant relationship between delinquency and job equality. There is however a weak but significant relationship for females between mother's warmth and delinquency, which was negatively correlated at $r = -.08$ ($p < .001$). In summary, it seems that for males a stronger belief

in traditional gender roles is associated with more delinquency when no other variables are examined. For females, job equality is not related to delinquency but there is a weak but significant negative relationship for females and mother's warmth, indicating that females a stronger belief in traditional gender roles is weakly associated with more delinquency.

For both males and females parents helping with homework, talking to parents about problems, expecting to graduate high school, and mother's warmth are all significantly and negatively correlated with delinquency. In other words, as parents helping with homework, being about to talk to parents about problems and expecting to graduate decreases, involvement in delinquent activity increases. For females, the correlation between delinquency and warm mothering is negatively correlated at $r = -.08$ ($p < .001$) and for males it is also negatively correlated at $r = -.05$ ($p < .001$). As expected friends' use is significantly and positively correlated with delinquency for males ($r = .42$, $p < .001$) and females ($r = .34$, $p < .001$). As friends' drug and alcohol use increases, delinquency increases for males and females.

Multivariate

To determine if any of the independent variables mediated the relationship between sex and delinquency, coefficients from model 1 were compared to subsequent models, refer to Table 3 for details. Throughout all models we can see that being male increases delinquency, but the impact of being male differs depending on what variables are put into the model. In model 1 the baseline sex coefficient is 1.15 ($p < .001$). In model 2 the addition of race and grade did not change the sex coefficient, meaning that neither race nor grade significantly affects delinquency.

Not surprisingly parents helping with homework and talking to parents about problems, as seen in model 3, although significant, do not impact the sex coefficient. This was expected as

the bivariate analysis revealed no sex differences as well. Therefore the sex effect is not mediated by parental involvement and parental attachment. Parents helping with homework ($b = -.39, p < .001$) and talking to parents about problems ($b = -1.45, p < .001$) are both negatively associated with delinquency, as each increases, delinquency decreases. There is a marginal decline in the sex coefficient in model 4, expecting to graduate.

Model 5 shows us that friends' use, although significant, does not impact the sex coefficient at all. But, aside from the full model, this is the only model where grade is significant. Friends' use ($b = .56, p < .001$) is positively associated with delinquency, as friends' use increases delinquency increases. As seen in model 6, liking risk positively and significantly reduced the sex coefficient, lowering the sex coefficient from 1.16 ($p < .001$) to .83 ($p < .001$). Adding in risk decreased the impact of sex on delinquency, showing that sex impacts liking risk. Liking risk ($b = .21, p < .001$) is also positively associated with delinquency, as liking risk increases so does delinquent behavior.

Controlling for race, grade, and sex (model 7), a one unit increase in job equality decreases delinquency by .23 ($p < .001$) and changes the sex coefficient from the baseline 1.15 ($p < .001$) to .96 ($p < .001$). Adding in job equality decreases the impact of sex on delinquency, suggesting that sex affects attitudes about job equality which subsequently affects delinquency. Similarly we can see in model 8 that adding in mother's warmth marginally impacts the sex coefficient. More specifically a one unit increase in believing that a working mother can be as warm as a stay at home mother, increases delinquency by .20 ($p < .001$), and lowers the impact of being male to 1.07 ($p < .001$).

Overall, support can be found in models 4, 6, 7 and 8 for mediation; expecting to

graduate, liking risk and most importantly both gender ideology questions (job equality and mother's warmth) are all mediators that are significantly associated and in the expected directions with sex. We can say that sex affects gender ideology, as well as expecting to graduate and liking risk, and that gender ideology, expecting to graduate and liking risk each affects delinquency.

Model 9 reflects the full model and indicates that including all variables; sex, race, grade, parents helping with homework, talking to parents about problems, expecting to graduate, friends' use, liking risk, job equality and mother's warmth, further reduces the sex coefficient. In the full model all variables are significant and in the expected directions. In this model, controlling for all other variables, being male significantly increases delinquency by .72 ($p < .001$). Friends' use increases delinquency by .44 ($p < .001$) and liking risk increases delinquency by .12 ($p < .001$). Those who have friends' using drugs or alcohol as well as those who like risk are more likely to be delinquent. As expected, teens who have strong beliefs about equal job opportunity are less likely to be delinquent ($b = .13, p < .001$). The same holds true for teens who believe that a working mom can be as warm as a stay at home mom, although the relationship is weaker; those with strong beliefs in equal warmth between working and stay at home moms are less likely to be delinquent ($b = -.09, p < .05$). As parents helping with homework ($b = -.13, p < .001$) and being able to talk to parents about problems ($b = .73, p < .001$) increase delinquency decreases.

CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION

There is an increasing interest in understanding the gender gap in offending through a gendered lens. This study attempted to take different theoretical predictors and identify how they may contribute to delinquency differently for males and females. Sex and gender are central parts of the everyday life of teens; putting sex and gender at the forefront of research gives it the same importance that society places on it. When examining delinquency it is commonly accepted that a gender gap exists, but there are mixed explanations as to why it exists. Theoretical factors, such as aspects from social bond theory and parts of social learning, have been attributed to the gender gap, but neither can fully explain it. Heimer (1996) attempted to explain the gender gap by combining many of the theoretical predictors and analyzing how they are related to delinquency and how they varied by sex. Heimer's work was used as a reference point for the current study, taking many of the measures she used and attempting to replicate them with more current data.

Delinquent behavior was looked at for male and female youth as well as various theoretical predictors. Not only were race and grade controlled for but measures associated with parts of social bond theory (parental involvement, parental attachment and school commitment) social learning (friends' use, liking risky behavior, gender definitions) were also examined. The purpose was to find if a relationship existed between sex, delinquency and the independent variables and if one did exist what that relationship was. It was hypothesized that a relationship would exist. Specifically, it was expected that males who believed in traditional gender definitions, or scored low on gender ideology measures, would be more delinquent, while females who believed in traditional gender roles would be less delinquent. Also it was predicted

that males and females associating with delinquent friends', in this case friends' who used marijuana and drank alcohol, would be more delinquent, as well as youth who liked risk being more delinquent. It was also hypothesized that youth who had strong parental involvement and attachment as well as high school commitment would be less delinquent.

Findings

It was hypothesized that there would be an interaction between the dependent variable of delinquency, sex and both gender ideology measurements (job equality and mother's warmth) however the hypothesis was not supported. There was no interaction found, the effect of traditional views about gender definitions did not differently affect males and females behavior. Because of the lack of support for interaction analysis moved on to mediation.

Overall findings for mediation indicated that expecting to graduate, liking risk and most importantly both gender definition questions (job equality and mother's warmth) are mediators. We can say that sex affects expecting to graduate, liking risk, and attitudes about job equality and mother's warmth. We can then say that expecting to graduate, liking risk, and attitudes about job equality and mother's warmth each affects delinquency. When looking at difference in means between males and females we can see that males are more delinquent than females. Also males score higher on liking risky behavior. Females score higher on the gender ideology measures than males, indicating that females are slightly more apt to agree with measures of equality than males.

Correlations also indicate that there are strong associations between sex and all independent variables. For males all independent variables are significantly correlated with delinquency, for females all independent variables are significantly correlated except for job

equality. For males we can see that as attitude about job equality decreases, or belief in traditional gender definitions increases, delinquency increases, this was hypothesized. No significant correlation exists for females and attitudes about job equality. Contrary to expectations, a weak relationship about mother's warmth exists for both males and females, as belief in home equality decreases, indicating traditional gender role beliefs, delinquency increases. Also as friends' use increases delinquent behavior increases for both males and females.

Unfortunately some of the measures were not as robust as they were in Heimer's 1996 study, this could explain why the interaction discussed above did not work and also why the parental attachment and parental involvement measures, each measured by one question, were not significantly different for males and females, as expected. While it is not ideal to only have one question to measure a concept, such as parental involvement, it was the only option given the available data.

By running a regression using multiple models, two variables were found that significantly lowered the sex coefficient, indicating that they are mediating factors for sex and delinquency. Liking risk was one of them while the other was attitudes about job equality. There were other variables, such as mother's warmth and expecting to graduate, that lowered the sex coefficient, but not as much as friends' use and job equality. The full regression model shows that all variables are significantly correlated with delinquency in the expected directions.

Contributions to Literature

Overall this study adds to the current literature on the gender gap, adding to the understanding of gender ideology and delinquency specifically. This study finds support for the

gender gap, that males do participate in delinquent activity more than females, and attempts to explain why. As the literature has indicated friends' use (delinquent peers) as well as liking risk is positively associated with delinquency, for both males and females (Elliot, Ageton and Canter 1979; Heimer 1996), support was found for delinquent peers and liking risky behavior in this study. This study also indicates that there is a relationship between individual beliefs in gender definitions and delinquency, supporting the literature (Heimer 1996; Heimer & De Coster 1999; Heimer et al. 2006; Messerschmidt 2000). Where this study differs from the literature is that the findings here indicate that no matter the sex, belief in traditional gender norms increases delinquency, but only slightly. More specifically and arguably one of the strongest findings is that attitudes about job equality substantially lower the sex effect, meaning that males are more likely to hold traditional views and traditional views decrease delinquency. While this finding is unique it could be because of various limitations of the data that was used as well as measures used. This could also be due to the various ways that definitions or stereotypes of masculinity and femininity can be measured. For this study the gender measurement was more about how individuals viewed gender roles generally than specific internalization of gender roles. This study also shows that males believe in traditional gender roles slightly more than females, showing that females have more progressive beliefs about equality than males.

Limitations

As with any study there are many limitations that need to be addressed. One limitation is that the data used is from a pre-collected survey done in schools. A measurement issue to keep in mind when examining data collected in a school setting is that there is a potential pool of youth who are not participating in the survey because of absence or having dropped out. These missing

youth could potentially make up the majority of delinquent youth, as truancy and dropping out of school is oftentimes associated with delinquent behavior. Only data from eighth and tenth graders is being examined and three quarters of the respondents were white, which is something that should also be taken into consideration.

There is only so much depth that can be assessed in a survey, leading to some of the measures not being as robust as one would like. For instance, as discussed previously, the measures for parental involvement, parental attachment and school commitment are each only measured through one question. While it would be ideal to have a scale that combines numerous questions to measure each of these with this survey and the data available it was not possible. Even though there were for instance other questions that could address parental involvement and attachment, they did not factor or correlate in a way that made combining them possible.

Future Research

Future research should continue to examine delinquency through a gendered lens. Thus far most research that does so has been able to find unique aspects about delinquency for each sex. When theories remain gender blind, or even gender neutral, they ignore a huge component of the everyday lived experiences of youth. Gender socialization occurs in interactions and social institution that youth are in contact with daily, whether it be interactions with family members or friends', gender inequality in the workplace or differential treatment in schools. These lived experiences should be taken into account when trying to gain a better understanding of youth's behaviors (Heimer, DeCoster & Unal 2006; Miller & Mullins 2006).

Also researchers should continue down the feminist pathway, keeping in mind the social locations of youth. When studying delinquency researchers should continue to keep a gendered

lens, but not forget about the other factors that can impact delinquent behavior.

By examining delinquent behavior and its known predictors by sex, we can create better prevention, intervention and treatment programs for males and females. Instead of implementing programs that are supposed to work on a general level for all delinquents or at risk youth, making programs unique to each person in their unique social location may better be able to address the problem of delinquency.

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Table 1. Sample Description

	<u>Total (N=5803)</u>	<u>Male (N=2849)</u>	<u>Female (N=2954)</u>	<u>T-Test</u>
<u>Delinquency</u>				
Combined (0-32)	2.15 (4.20)	2.73 (4.95)	1.58 (3.21)	-10.53**
<u>Theoretical Mediators</u>				
Talk problems w/ parent (Yes=1)	.74 (.43)			
Parents help HW (1-4)	2.88 (1.11)	2.89 (1.11)	2.87 (1.11)	-.60
Expecting to graduate (1-4)	3.90 (.35)	3.87 (.41)	3.93 (.28)	6.46**
Friends use (0-12)	3.76 (3.24)	3.76 (3.25)	3.76 (3.24)	.05
Liking risky behavior (5-25)	16.10 (5.58)	16.89 (5.45)	15.34 (5.60)	-10.68**
Job equality (2-10)	9.04 (1.70)	8.58 (2.02)	9.49 (1.15)	20.96**
Warmness (1-5)	3.80 (1.30)	3.56 (1.38)	4.06 (1.18)	13.70**
<u>Controls</u>				
Sex (Male=1)	.49 (.50)			
Race (White=1)	.74 (.44)			
Grade (Tenth=1)	.50 (.50)			

** p<.001 significant difference in male and females means.

Table 2. Male and Female Correlation Matrix

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
1. General Delinquency	_____	-1.06**	.02	-.16**	-.19**	.20**	.42**	.28**	-.12**	-.05**
2. Race (1=white)	-.11**	_____	.02	.07**	.03	.05**	-.07**	.05*	.05*	-.01
3. Grade (1=tenth)	-.05**	.09**	_____	-.16**	.02	.07**	.40**	.07**	.02	.00
4. Parent Help HW	-.15**	.12**	-.13**	_____	.28**	.14**	-.17**	-.06**	.09**	.08**
5. Talk Problems with Parent	-.20**	.05**	.03	.31**	_____	.17**	-.13**	-.11**	-.09**	.06**
6. Expect Grad	-.18**	.11**	.07**	.13**	.14**	_____	-.05	-.01	.10**	.03
7. Friends Use	.34**	-.02	.35**	-.25**	-.15**	-.09**	_____	.30**	-.07**	-.05**
8. Liking Risk	.30**	.02	.02	-.15**	-.16**	-.10**	.38**	_____	.01	-.01
9. Job Equality	-.03	.14**	.09**	.02**	.00	.12**	.06**	.03	_____	.27**
10. Mother Warmth	-.08**	.04*	.04	.08**	.06**	.05**	-.01	.03	.16**	_____

** p < .001, * p < .05 (two-tailed test).

¹Correlations above the diagonal are male coefficients

²Correlations below the diagonal and in bold are female coefficients

Table 3. Regression of Delinquency on variables (N=5793)

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9
Sex (1=male)	1.15** (.11)	1.16** (.11)	1.16** (.11)	1.03** (.11)	1.16** (.10)	.83** (.11)	.96** (.11)	1.07** (.11)	.72** (.10)
Race (1=white)		-1.01** (.13)	-.85** (.12)	-.89** (.12)	-.74** (.11)	-1.08** (.12)	-.94** (.12)	-1.00** (.12)	-.65** (.11)
Grade (1=tenth)		-.00 (.11)	-.10 (.11)	.10 (.11)	-1.35** (.11)	-.11 (.10)	.03 (.11)	.01 (.11)	-1.05** (.11)
Parent Help HW			-.39** (.05)						-.13** (.05)
Talk Problems with Parent			-1.45** (.13)						-.73** (.12)
Expect Grad				-2.24** (.15)					-1.53** (.14)
Friends Use					.56** (.02)				.44** (.02)
Liking Risk						.21** (.01)			.12** (.01)
Job Equality							-.23** (.03)		-.13** (.03)
Mother Warmth								-.20** (.04)	-.09* (.04)
R ²	.02	.03	.07	.06	.19	.11	.04	.03	.24
Change in R ² (F)	---	.01**	.04**	.04**	.16**	.08**	.01**	.01**	---

**p <.001, * p< .05

¹ Regression coefficients presented with robust standard errors in parentheses

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