

THE GENDERING OF VIOLENT DELINQUENCY*

KAREN HEIMER
STACY DE COSTER
University of Iowa

This article addresses two issues that have received little attention in empirical research—the mechanisms explaining variation in violent delinquency within gender and variation in levels of violence across gender, or the gender gap. Toward these ends, the article synthesizes arguments from differential association theory, feminist theory, and gender studies. The outcome is a theoretical model of gender and violent delinquency that focuses on the interplay between structural positions and cultural processes. The theoretical model includes a core construct of differential association theory—the learning of definitions favorable to violence—as well as arguments about cultural definitions or meanings of gender and gender differences in the role of familial controls and peer influence, which are derived from feminist theory and gender studies. It then examines how these cultural processes are conditioned by structural positions. One of the key arguments is that the violent delinquency of females is controlled through rather subtle, indirect mechanisms, while the violence of males is controlled in more direct, overt ways. The results of the empirical analysis support the theoretical arguments, contribute to the limited understanding of the variation in violent offending among females, and explain the sources of the gender gap in violent delinquency. The article thereby allows greater understanding of the broader phenomenon of juvenile violence.

Youth violence is considered to be a serious contemporary problem. Yet, theoretical explanations of the causes of violent delinquency have focused on males and largely ignored females (see Kruttschnitt, 1994), perhaps because there has been a tendency to view violence as a “male” phenomenon. This view is inconsistent with the findings of self-report studies, however. Studies of self-reported delinquency find gender ratios ranging

* Portions of this article were presented at the 1997 Annual Meetings of the American Sociological Association and the 1995 Annual Meetings of the American Society of Criminology. The research was supported by grants from the Central Investment Fund for Research Enhancement and the Spelman Rockefeller Fund at the University of Iowa. The data were made available by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. We thank the reviewers and editor for helpful comments. Neither the original collectors of the data nor the reviewers bear any responsibility for the analyses and interpretations drawn here.

from approximately 1.1 to 5.3, depending on the specific aggressive, assaultive offense measured (Hindelang et al., 1979; Maguire and Pastore, 1997:240–243).¹ These ratios show that although there is a substantial gender gap, girls do engage in a significant amount of violent delinquency. Better understanding youth violence, therefore, requires moving beyond the traditional focus on males to examine also the causes of violence among females and the sources of the gender gap in violence. Indeed, the recent *American Sociological Association* report on violence argues that “the neglect of girls as a relevant research population has limited our capacity to understand the full complexity of youth violence” (Levine and Rosich, 1996:11).

Understanding the complexity of the relationship between gender and violent delinquency requires a theory of the *differentiated experiences* of the genders that are rooted in inequality between the sexes (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988). We maintain that such a theory must focus on both cultural and structural processes. Researchers increasingly are becoming aware that understanding a variety of social problems requires attention to the interplay between culture and social structure (e.g., Wilson, 1991). Consistent with this thinking, some research on violent offending by males recognizes the importance of the combined influence of structural (e.g., social class, female headship) and cultural factors (e.g., parental and peer influence) (Heimer, 1997; Sampson, 1997). For example, recent work has used differential association theory to account for the joint influence of structure and culture on violent delinquency by males (Heimer, 1997). But the ways that the specific relationships among culture, structure, and violent delinquency are conditioned by gender have not yet been addressed.

That is the task of this analysis: Specifically, we reformulate differential association theory to show how structural and cultural contexts combine to explain variation in violent delinquency *within* gender and variation in levels of violence *across* gender (i.e., the gender gap). This requires reconceptualizing differential association theory to specify how the differentiated experiences of girls and boys lead to violent offending. To date, the theory has not included explicit arguments about gender. In this work, we specify a perspective that incorporates into the differential association framework insights from feminist theories and gender studies. We then

1. Research shows that the magnitude of the gender difference is greater in official data than in self-report data (e.g., Smith and Visher, 1980), presumably because self-report data tap less serious violence than official data, on average. Regardless of whether official or self-report data are examined, however, gender ratios of violent delinquency have been fairly stable since the early 1980s (Chesney-Lind, 1997:37–39; Maguire and Pastore, 1997:240–243).

assess our arguments using the data from the National Youth Survey (Elliott et al., 1985, 1989) and covariance structure analysis.

This research contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it goes beyond previous work by assessing empirically the mechanisms leading to violent delinquency by females, as well as the sources of variation in violence across gender. As such, this study pushes forward knowledge of juvenile violence more generally. Second, our study assesses how social structural and cultural factors combine to produce gender differences in violent delinquency. This work therefore goes beyond existing work on gender and (nonviolent) delinquency, which tends to focus either on social-psychological mechanisms, like familial controls (e.g., Canter, 1982; Jensen and Eve, 1976) and gender roles (e.g., Giordano and Cernkovich, 1979; Horwitz and White, 1987; Shover et al., 1979), or on structural-level mechanisms (Messerschmidt, 1986), but rarely addresses both. Third, our research reformulates a classical theory of crime, differential association theory, to address differences in the experiences of females and males. As critics often have noted, criminology too often has ignored gender or blindly applied unmodified theories of male behavior to the law violation of females (Klein, 1973; Smart, 1976).

STRUCTURE, CULTURE, AND VIOLENT DELINQUENCY: A DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION PERSPECTIVE

A strength of the differential association theory of crime is that it addresses the role of social structure as well as culture, at least implicitly. A core assumption of the theory is that society is characterized by normative conflict over the law, wherein some groups define crime as always wrong and others justify it under some circumstances (Sutherland, 1947; Sutherland et al., 1992). According to Sutherland's principle of differential social organization, groups with high rates of crime are those whose norms, values, and practices are inconsistent with the norms expressed in the legal codes. Differential social organization thus explains variation in crime across structural groupings, such as gender, social class, race, neighborhood, and so on.

Differential social organization affects the behavior of individuals through a cultural process, differential association, in which individuals learn definitions (i.e., attitudes, rationalizations) and techniques favorable and unfavorable to law violation through interacting with significant others and reference groups. Structural positions in part determine the others with whom individuals come into contact and thus shape the content of learning. Most treatments of differential association theory therefore argue that definitions of the law mediate the influence on crime of

structural factors and associations with significant others (e.g., Heimer and Matsueda, 1987; Tittle et al., 1986).²

Although much of the recent research on differential association theory has focused on global indices of delinquency, Sutherland (1947) argued for the development of more precise statements of the theory to account for specific forms of offending. Classical studies of differential association, indeed, followed this course (e.g. Cressey, 1953, 1954; Sutherland, 1937, 1949).

Recently, Heimer (1997) has specified the differential association process leading to a specific form of offending among males—violent delinquency. She shows how one aspect of social structure, socioeconomic status (SES), shapes violent behavioral histories, parenting practices, associations with aggressive peers, the learning of violent definitions, and ultimately, violent delinquency. Specifically, she argues that boys from lower SES families have less legitimate power to deal with problems; are more receptive to alternative solutions, such as the use of physical force (see Black, 1983; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Cohen, 1955); and therefore are more likely to learn definitions favorable to violence. In addition, Heimer shows that SES influences violent definitions indirectly by shaping parenting practices. Lower SES parents are less likely than higher SES parents to supervise their children closely, and consequently, these youths have more opportunities to learn violent definitions outside the family. Consistent with other work (e.g., Gecas, 1979; Kohn, 1977), she also finds that lower SES parents are more likely to use coercive discipline, such as commands, restrictions, threats, and physical punishment, which teaches youths that coercion and physical force are acceptable ways to solve problems. Heimer argues that youths can generalize from this to form definitions favorable to violence, thus becoming more likely to commit violent delinquency.³ Finally, she maintains that youths with histories of violent delinquency are likely to continue such behavior, in part because they are more likely to seek out other aggressive youths and are more receptive to learning violent definitions.

2. Similarly, objective opportunities to commit crime are likely correlated with structural positions, and their effects theoretically would be mediated in part by individuals' perceptions of these opportunities as criminal (Matsueda, 1988:283). These perceptions, like criminal definitions, are learned in interaction with others. Due to data limitations, we do not address either objective or subjective opportunities to commit violent delinquency in this study.

3. Social learning theory proposes that parents' behavior can directly influence youths' behavior, independent of learning definitions, through imitation (Akers, 1985; Akers et al., 1979). We expect this influence to be small here because imitation is strongest for novel behaviors (Krohn et al., 1985), and most youths have behaved aggressively by the time they reach adolescence. Heimer (1997) finds no support for pure imitation in the case of violent male behavior.

In short, Heimer's work specifies explicit links between one structural factor, SES, and the cultural processes leading to violent delinquency among males. However, research shows that other structural factors are associated with violent delinquency, including poverty, race, and female headship (e.g., Bursik and Grasmick, 1993; Peterson and Krivo, 1993; Sampson, 1987). Further, it is likely that gender conditions the differential association process leading to violence. The next section develops our reformulated differential association perspective on gender and violence and then addresses the role of several structural factors.

A THEORETICAL EXPLANATION OF GENDER AND VIOLENT DELINQUENCY

The joint influence of structure and culture has not been specified for female violence or for the gender gap in violence. Indeed, the dominant theory of gender and delinquency, power-control theory, posits an association among social class, parenting practices, taste for risk, and the gender gap in nonserious "common" offenses, such as status offenses, petty theft, and drug offenses (Hagan et al., 1985, 1987), but it does not address serious or violent delinquency. As its proponents acknowledge, power-control theory may not be relevant for understanding gender differences in violence (Hagan et al., 1985). The other major theoretical perspective on gender differences in the causes of crime, feminist theory (e.g., Messerschmidt, 1986), focuses most attention on structural processes and does not develop a complete and convincing argument about associated cultural elements (for further discussion, see Simpson, 1991). Recent work on masculinity and crime (Messerschmidt, 1993) does tease out certain cultural elements, but as is the case with most studies of violent offending, this work does not address violence by females. Feminist scholars argue that what is needed is a theory that addresses the differentiated experiences of females and males in patriarchal society (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988; see also Campbell, 1993). We attempt to move toward such a theoretical perspective by proposing an explanation of how culture and structure combine to create gendered experiences during adolescence, which in turn explain female violence as well as the gender gap in violent delinquency. More specifically, we use arguments from feminist and gender studies to specify the content of the differential association process leading to gender differences in violent delinquency and to show how this process is conditioned by the structural context. We consider two cultural outcomes—violent definitions and gender definitions—and two types of cultural processes—family controls and peer associations, as well as histories of violent behavior. One of our key arguments is that the cultural mechanisms that restrain violence by girls are more subtle and indirect than those that curb violence by boys.

THE CULTURAL CONTEXT

CULTURAL DEFINITIONS OF VIOLENCE

According to differential association theory, interactions with others and social structural context are important because they shape the learning of violent definitions, which in turn affects the likelihood that youths engage in violent delinquency. This will be the case regardless of gender, and both males and females will be more likely to behave violently when they have acquired high levels of violent definitions. The gender gap in violent delinquency, therefore, likely reflects a gender difference in levels of violent definitions—boys tend to acquire more violent definitions than girls, on average. Consistent with this, empirical research in psychology indicates that boys are more likely than girls to approve of aggression (e.g., Huesmann et al., 1992). Moreover, from a feminist perspective, greater acceptance of violent definitions among males is associated with their privileged position under patriarchy (see Campbell, 1993; White and Kowalski, 1994).

These empirical predictions about violent definitions can be derived from an unmodified differential association theory. They are insufficient for explaining gender differences in the process leading to violent delinquency and the gender gap in violence because they omit important aspects of the process, which we address in the following sections: First, the unmodified differential association thesis does not address potential gender differences in the ways that violent definitions are learned. Second, the unmodified theory does not address a cultural element that is important for understanding gender differences in a wide variety of behaviors—cultural definitions of gender.

CULTURAL DEFINITIONS OF GENDER

A key contribution of feminist and gender studies has been their focus on the powerful system of social control, patriarchy, that influences the social arrangements, cognitions, and behavior of females and males (e.g., Ferree and Hess, 1987; Lorber, 1994). This system of social control is effective in part because people accept and participate in reproducing definitions of the “essential natures” of the sexes as inherently different (Goffman, 1977). These definitions, which we term *gender definitions*, tend to accentuate differences and minimize similarities between the sexes (Bem, 1993; Lorber, 1994). For example, research shows that in patriarchal society *femininity* often is equated with a high capacity for nurturance, a tendency toward passivity rather than aggressiveness, and physical and emotional weakness; by contrast, *masculinity* tends to be equated with competitiveness, independence, rationality, and strength

(Burke, 1989; Burke and Tully, 1977; Jackman, 1994). These gender definitions carry strong expectations for behavior in most social interactions (Goffman, 1977; West and Zimmerman, 1987). When people internalize these traditional gender definitions, therefore, they are motivated to act in accordance with them (see Burke, 1989; Burke and Reitzes, 1981). From a feminist perspective, these mechanisms constitute an important site of the reproduction of male dominance and patriarchal relations (Walby, 1990).

Violent delinquency, of course, is counter to traditional definitions of femininity under patriarchy. Violence is inconsistent with nurturance, passivity, nonaggressiveness, and physical and emotional weakness. Indeed, girls' aggression is often subject to censure, in the form of either condemnation or a warning to behave "properly," which ultimately produces more feelings of guilt and anxiety about aggression among females than males (Campbell, 1993). In addition, females who depart from traditional definitions of femininity by engaging in violence are labeled as more deviant than aggressive males (Schur, 1984; White and Kowalski, 1994). By contrast, traditional definitions of masculinity are more consistent with violent and physically aggressive behavior. Messerschmidt (1993) has argued that crime and violence, in fact, offer a way for males to claim gender when legal avenues for affirming masculinity (e.g., paid labor) are blocked (see also Campbell, 1993:58; Miller, 1958).

In short, traditional gender definitions should be consequential for understanding gender differences in violent delinquency, and they should operate alongside violent definitions to motivate behavior. Quite simply, girls who accept traditional gender definitions should be relatively unlikely to engage in physical aggression and violence. For these girls, violent delinquency would be viewed as "doubly deviant," a violation of the law as well as their beliefs about femininity. Empirical research shows, consistent with this, that girls who accept traditional gender definitions are less likely than other girls to report involvement in property (Heimer, 1995), violent (Simpson and Elis, 1995), and general indices of delinquency (Heimer, 1996).⁴ By contrast, boys who accept traditional gender definitions may be more likely than other boys to use physical force and aggression to solve problems. Existing quantitative research does not strongly support this prediction, however (Heimer, 1995, 1996; Simpson and Elis, 1995).

We note that our conceptualization of traditional gender definitions departs from typical treatments of masculinity and femininity in the empirical literature on crime and deviance (e.g., Giordano and Cernkovich,

4. Simpson and Elis (1995) use the terms "hegemonic femininities and masculinities" to capture a construct similar to our gender definitions, but their measure focuses on career and family orientations only.

1979; Horwitz and White, 1987; Shover et al., 1979). These studies define and operationalize masculinity and femininity in diverse ways, sometimes focusing on traits and sometimes focusing on gender roles, and as a result, their findings are inconsistent (Heimer, 1996; Kruttschnitt, 1996). This diversity in definition and measurement may reflect the absence of a clearly articulated theory of masculinity/femininity and deviance. By contrast, we conceive of gender definitions as a set of attitudes and beliefs that, like violent definitions, have direct implications for violent offending.

DIRECT PARENTAL CONTROLS AND EMOTIONAL BONDING

Most feminist perspectives identify the domestic sphere as an important context in which gendered social control is produced and reproduced (see Tong, 1998). In the case of violent delinquency, we argue that gendered familial control arises when parenting processes differentially influence girls' and boys' learning of violent definitions. Although studies have not examined the effects of familial controls on violent delinquency specifically, many studies have focused on familial controls and global indices of delinquency. Following this work, and Heimer's (1997) differential association explanation of male violent delinquency, we focus on three key aspects of familial controls, which we expect to influence the learning of violent definitions—supervision, discipline, and emotional bonds to family.

Some research on delinquency proposes that gendered social control arises largely because girls experience higher levels of familial controls than do boys. These studies, which pool male and female data and include sex as an exogenous variable, find that girls are supervised more closely than boys and have stronger emotional bonds to families than boys; this is said to account for part of the gender gap in common, nonviolent delinquency (Hagan et al., 1985; Jensen and Eve, 1976). We argue that gender differences in levels of familial controls are important for violent delinquency primarily because they restrict opportunities to learn violent definitions more for girls than boys.

However, research that examines the effects of familial controls on global measures of delinquency for females and males separately suggests that the mechanisms may be more complex. Beyond a gender difference in levels (i.e., means) of familial controls, research suggests that there may be a gender difference in the impact (i.e., magnitudes of effects, slopes) of these controls on delinquency (e.g., Canter, 1982; Cernkovich and Giordano, 1987). We argue that these differences can be seen most clearly by categorizing familial controls into two distinct types—*direct parental controls*, such as supervision and coercive discipline, and *emotional bonding* or attachment to families, which constitutes a more indirect form of control. Based on feminist arguments that females are more concerned than males

with interpersonal relationships (e.g., Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982), some researchers suggest that emotional bonds will have a stronger impact on offending by females than by males (see Hagan et al., 1988). In addition, there is some indication in the literature that direct parental control, or supervision, has a larger inhibitory effect on delinquency among boys than girls, ironically (Heimer, 1996).

Based on findings and arguments such as these, Heimer (1996) has speculated that perhaps the control mechanisms affecting delinquency are more subtle and indirect in the case of girls and more overt and direct in the case of boys. This is consistent with research that finds that mothers expect their sons, more than their daughters, to conform to external standards, hold a more punitive orientation toward raising sons than daughters, and discourage the expression of affect more in sons than in daughters (Block, 1984:87-88). We propose, therefore, that the parental control processes that shape youths' learning of violent definitions, and thereby subsequent violent delinquency, will vary across gender as follows: Girls' learning of violent definitions will be shaped primarily by the indirect control achieved through emotional bonding to families, while boys' learning of violent definitions will be shaped primarily by more direct, overt parental controls, including supervision and coercive discipline.

ASSOCIATIONS WITH AGGRESSIVE PEERS

Differential association theory also posits that associations with aggressive peers are key for learning violent definitions and thus for violent delinquency. Again, gender research suggests a modification of this thesis. Specifically, studies of gender socialization indicate that by middle childhood, male peer groups bond through transgressing rules and aggression whereas female peer groups bond through disclosing intimacies (Thorne, 1993; Thorne and Luria, 1986). It seems likely, therefore, that the gender gap in violent delinquency occurs in part simply because boys are more likely than girls to have aggressive friends and experience aggression in their peer groups. This is consistent with one study that finds that the gender difference in a global index of delinquency is accounted for in part by the fact that boys have more delinquent friends than girls (Morash, 1986). However, most research on gender and delinquency neglects peer relationships. From a differential association perspective, a gender difference in numbers of aggressive friends should combine with gender differences in levels of exposure to parental controls to provide more opportunities for boys than girls to learn violent definitions.

Beyond a gender difference in numbers of aggressive friends, we also expect a difference in the magnitude of the effect of associating with these peers. Theoretical work on masculinity and crime suggests that male

youth groups encourage aggressive posturing, which can turn into violence, as a way of displaying gender (Messerschmidt, 1993; Miller, 1958). This implies that even in a situation in which boys and girls have equal numbers of aggressive friends, these peers may encourage their male friends more than their female friends to form violent definitions.

VIOLENT HISTORIES

Youths' previous experiences with violence constitute a final element of the differential association process leading to violent delinquency (Heimer, 1997). First, histories of violent delinquency foster subsequent acceptance of violent definitions when youths rationalize past violent behavior. Second, violent delinquency can become rather automatic, habitual, and stable over time, so that violent histories have direct implications for future violent behavior, apart from the mechanisms discussed here. These relationships should hold across gender. But, we expect a gender difference in levels of prior violence, of course, which will combine with gender differences in levels of parental controls and aggressive peers to offer more opportunities for boys than girls to learn violent definitions.

THE LINK BETWEEN STRUCTURAL POSITIONS AND CULTURE

From our perspective, social structure will condition cultural mechanisms in three general ways. First, we expect structural positions to influence violent definitions indirectly by shaping parental controls, peer associations, and violent behavioral histories. Extending Heimer's (1997) arguments beyond the focus on SES, we propose the following: Youths from structurally disadvantaged families, including lower social class, welfare, black, and female-headed families, are likely to experience lower levels of supervision and emotional bonding to families than other youths (Sampson and Laub, 1993; Thomson et al., 1992) and higher levels of coercive discipline, including restrictions, threats, and physical punishment (Gecas, 1979; Kohn, 1977; McLeod et al., 1994). Together, these factors increase the chances that structurally disadvantaged youths learn violent definitions.⁵ Disadvantaged youths also are more likely to form oppositional peer groups, which engage in aggressive and violent behaviors as a way of rebelling against their structural constraints (Cohen, 1955; Willis,

5. Heimer (1997) has argued that when youths experience coercive discipline (e.g., threats, removal of privileges, scolding, and physical punishment), they learn that it is acceptable to try to control difficult situations through coercion and force, and these definitions can then be generalized to become definitions favorable to using physical aggression and violence to solve problems. This is consistent with studies that find that children who experience coercive discipline are more likely than other youths to act aggressively (e.g., Patterson et al., 1992).

1977), thus encouraging the learning of violent definitions. In addition, if disadvantaged youths are more likely to have histories of violence, this will foster their learning of violent definitions.

Second, structural positions may influence the learning of violent definitions directly, independently of family controls, peer associations, and behavioral histories. Building on Heimer's (1997) arguments, we propose that structurally disadvantaged youths have restricted access to legitimate power and legitimate methods for dealing with problems (such as police intervention or lawsuits) and thus are receptive to alternative solutions (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Cohen, 1955). Such solutions can invoke a type of power that is independent of political and economic resources, namely, physical force (Messerschmidt, 1986). So, when structurally marginalized youths are threatened, humiliated, or harmed, they are likely to perceive that they have little legitimate power with which to deal with the situation, and thus, they may be more likely to form definitions favorable to using violence and force to solve problems.

Third, we expect gender definitions, just like violent definitions, to be shaped by differential social organization. Following feminist theory and gender research, we expect gender definitions to vary with the stratification of power, as reflected by such structural positions as social class, race, and residence in a female-headed household. For example, gender roles are less rigid in middle-class than in working-class and lower-class families (Brooks-Gunn, 1986; Lips, 1995; Rubin, 1976); higher SES families thus may be less likely to communicate traditional gender definitions to children. Race may also condition gender definitions (Baca Zinn, 1990; West and Fenstermaker, 1995). Specifically, African-American parents may be less likely than white parents to teach traditional gender definitions to their children (Beckett and Smith, 1981; Collins, 1990). Traditional gender definitions also may be weaker in female-headed families than male-headed families because women in the former are not subject to male domination or patriarchy within the domestic sphere.

In addition to these predictions, our earlier arguments about gender differences in the cultural mechanisms leading to violent delinquency imply gender differences in the indirect influence of structural positions on violent delinquency. For example, if direct parental controls (including supervision and coercive disciplinary strategies) are more consequential for learning violent definitions among males than females, as we have argued, the influence of structural positions on violent definitions and delinquency through these direct controls would be greater among males than among females. If indirect, emotional controls are more consequential for learning violence among females than males, structural positions will have a greater impact on females' violent delinquency through this route. Similarly, if aggressive peer groups encourage violent definitions

more among boys than girls, the indirect influence of disadvantaged structural positions on learning violent definitions through peer influence may be greater among boys than girls. Finally, if accepting traditional gender definitions dissuades violent delinquency among females, yet fosters violence among males, one can expect gender differences in the indirect effects of structural positions on violence through these gender definitions.

SUMMARY

The predictions derived from these arguments are listed in Table 1. Two of these can be derived from the classical differential association framework (Hypotheses 1 and 2). The first of these is the prototypical differential association prediction that violent delinquency results when youths learn violent definitions, regardless of gender. The second prediction is that the gender gap in violent delinquency emerges in part because boys are more likely to learn violent definitions than girls (i.e., on average, boys report higher levels of learning violent definitions than girls). However, these hypotheses are insufficient for explaining the relationship between gender and violent delinquency.

We argue that gender differences in violence emerge through a process that includes the predictions of classical differential association theory, as well as the following additional mechanisms. First, Hypothesis 3 predicts that gender differences in levels of exposure to cultural factors, such as direct parental controls, emotional bonds to family, aggressive peers, and violent histories, will help to explain the gender gap in violent delinquency. Second, in addition, the magnitudes of the effects of cultural factors, including gender definitions, direct parental controls, emotional bonds to family, and aggressive peers, will vary across gender (see Hypotheses 4 through 6); these differences in slopes also will contribute to the gender gap in violent delinquency. Finally, Hypothesis 7 says that structural positions will influence violence by both genders by affecting parents' direct and indirect controls, peer associations, violent behavioral histories, violent definitions, and gender definitions. Hypothesis 8 predicts gender differences in the way that structural positions shape violent delinquency through these cultural factors.

These arguments combine to suggest that violent delinquency by girls may be controlled through somewhat more subtle, covert channels than violent delinquency by boys. Emotional bonds may be more important for girls' learning about violence, whereas more direct parental controls may be more important for boys' learning about violence. Girls' violence also may be curbed by inculcating traditional definitions about the meaning of femininity, whereas teaching boys traditional meanings of masculinity may encourage violence. These patterns make sense if one views traditional socialization of males as more conducive to aggressive, violent behavior,

Table 1. Hypotheses

 Violent Definitions

Hypothesis 1. Violent definitions will increase the likelihood of violent delinquency among both girls and boys.

Gender Differences in Levels of Cultural Factors

Hypothesis 2. Higher levels of violent definitions among boys than girls will explain part of the gender gap in violent delinquency.

Hypothesis 3. Boys will learn more violent definitions than girls in part because boys are subject to lower levels of familial control than girls, have more aggressive friends than girls, and have more experience with prior violence than girls.

Gender Differences in the Impact of Cultural Factors

Hypothesis 4. Learning traditional gender definitions will reduce the chances of violent delinquency among females and increase the chances of violent delinquency among males.

Hypothesis 5. Emotional bonds to family will have a stronger negative effect on girls' learning of violent definitions, whereas direct parental controls will have a stronger negative effect on boys' learning of violent definitions.

Hypothesis 6. Associating with aggressive peers will have a stronger positive effect on learning violent definitions among boys than girls.

Links Between Structural Positions and Cultural Factors

Hypothesis 7. Structural positions will influence violent delinquency indirectly among both females and males, by influencing familial controls, peer associations, violent definitions, and gender definitions.

Hypothesis 8. Structural positions will influence violent definitions and violent delinquency differently among females as compared to males due to gender differences in the effects of parental controls, gender definitions, and associations with aggressive peers.

which means that controlling such behavior will require more overt and direct measures. Interestingly, Chesney-Lind and Sheldon (1998:111–112) conclude that the available research indicates that gender socialization patterns have changed relatively little since the 1970s, despite the changing roles of adult women. Our argument is that these persistent patterns of creating gender in youths may result in different pathways to restraining aggression and violence, in which females are controlled in more subtle and covert ways than are males.

This theoretical framework shares some common themes with power-control theory, but also goes beyond it. First, as we noted previously, power-control theory does not address violent delinquency. Second, power-control theory focuses on the influence of class position on the gender gap in delinquency; we broaden the focus to include disadvantaged

structural position, more generally, which is more consistent with the literature on structural variations in violent crime. Third, whereas power-control theory posits that familial controls and taste for risk combine to explain gender differences in common delinquency, we argue for a more complex process in which parental controls combine with gender definitions, violent definitions, and peer influence to explain gender differences in violent delinquency. Power-control theory itself does not address these factors, although there is some empirical evidence of the problems created for the theory by the omission of peer influence (Singer and Levine, 1988).

DATA AND MODELS

We assess our predictions using the data from the National Youth Survey (Elliott et al., 1985, 1989).⁶ The survey employed a multistage cluster sampling frame to obtain a national probability sample of 11–17-year-olds in the United States in 1976. Seventy-three percent of the final sample of youths (1,725) agreed to participate in the survey. They were interviewed in their homes for the first time in 1977, and then reinterviewed annually.⁷ Our analysis uses variables from the first three waves (1977–1979), in which the attrition rate was only 4% in 1978 and 6% in 1979. We use the youth and parent data from the 773 females and 837 males who remain after pairwise deletion of missing data.⁸

The substantive model is diagrammed in Figure 1. It also incorporates a measurement model (not included in the diagram) to correct for attenuation in substantive parameter estimates due to measurement error. Because the above arguments propose a gender difference in effects, we specify and estimate the model separately for females and males, test for similarities and differences across gender in coefficients, and finally, decompose the gender gap in violent delinquency.

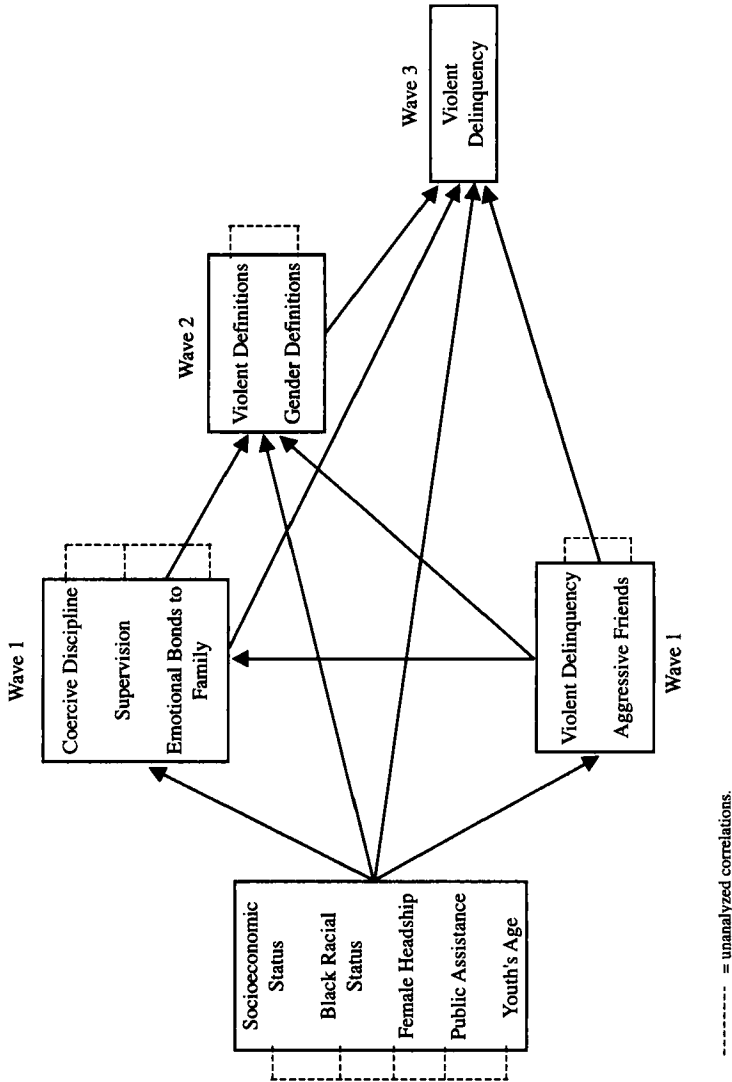
We specify the substantive model to consist of the following blocks of

6. Although the National Youth Survey data are now 20 years old, they are the only public-use data that contain rich information from a nationally representative sample on all of the constructs addressed in this study. Moreover, given that the gender ratio in violent delinquency has not changed much since the early 1980s (Chesney-Lind, 1998) and the gender socialization of adolescents by parents appears to have been fairly stable since the 1970s (Chesney-Lind and Shelden, 1997), we believe that the results of our analyses contribute to the general understanding of gender and violent delinquency.

7. Elliott and his colleagues (1983) report that representativeness of the sample with respect to sex, age, self-reported delinquency, race, and social class was not affected in any serious way by nonresponse.

8. These sample sizes are the median number of cases remaining after pairwise deletion of missing data. Using the minimum and maximum number of cases remaining after pairwise deletion as the sample size did not affect the pattern of results. We also reestimated the model using the data remaining after listwise deletion of missing data and found the same overall pattern of results.

Figure 1 Structural Model of Gender and Violent Delinquency



latent variables. First, we include a set of exogenous variables measured at wave 1 that tap the structural positions of socioeconomic status (*SES*), *race*, *residence in a female-headed household*, and *receipt of public assistance*. *Age* also is included as a control variable. *SES* is measured by three indicators; the remainder are single-indicator variables. Second, we include *prior violent delinquency*, which is measured by a 10-item scale of youths' self-reported rates of violent delinquency during the year prior to the wave 1 interview. Third, our first cultural process variable is *association with aggressive friends*, which is a single-indicator variable measured by youths' reports of how many of their friends have hit others during the year prior to the wave 1 interview. Fourth, the other cultural process variables include three variables measuring direct and indirect parental controls. Our first direct parental control is *coercive discipline*, which is measured (following Heimer, 1997) by two items asking parents to report the coercive disciplinary strategies used both by themselves and their spouses, including use of threats, removal of privileges, and physical punishment. Our second direct parental control is *supervision*, measured by three items tapping parents' reports of their knowledge of their children's friends and friends' families.⁹ Our indirect parental control, *emotional bonds to family*, is a two-indicator variable capturing how close youths feel to families. Fifth, we include two multiple-indicator variables tapping the cultural products of *violent definitions* and *gender definitions*, both measured at wave 2 by four items each. The variables selected to measure violent and gender definitions correspond to key dimensions of these constructs as discussed in the literature (see Heimer, 1997, for violent definitions and Jackman, 1994, and Burke, 1989, for gender definitions). Sixth, our outcome variable is *violent delinquency* during the year between the wave 2 and wave 3 interviews, measured using the same 10-item scale used to measure prior violent delinquency. The ordering of these blocks of variables corresponds both to our hypotheses and to the temporal ordering of the data. We list all interview items used as indicators of the latent variables in Appendix 1. All single-indicator variables are specified to be measured with error, thereby correcting for unreliability.¹⁰ Because our

9. In the analyses reported below, we substitute imputed means for missing values on parents' reports on these supervision variables (174 missing for females and 233 missing for males). The pattern of results is the same when we estimate the models without substitution for missing data.

10. We include a correction for unreliability in all measures. The reliabilities of single-indicator exogenous variables (age, black racial status, residence in a female-headed household, welfare reciprocity) are fixed to .81. The reliabilities of the single-indicator endogenous variables in the model (violent delinquency at wave 1 and wave 3 and friends' aggression) are fixed to .75 because we expect more measurement error in social-psychological and behavioral reports than in demographic variables (Alwin,

multiple-indicator constructs are adjusted for unreliability in measurement, failure to correct for unreliability in single-indicator constructs could bias coefficients in favor of the former.

ESTIMATION OF THE MODELS

The substantive and measurement models are estimated simultaneously using the maximum-likelihood procedures in LISREL 8 (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1993). We estimate the model separately for each gender. The model fits the data well for females ($L^2 = 290.71$, d.f. = 201, AGFI = .95) and males ($L^2 = 295.98$, d.f. = 201, AGFI = .96). Indeed, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is .024 for females and .024 for males, which indicates a close fit between the model and the data for both gender groups (see Browne and Cudeck, 1993). The estimates from the measurement model for both genders are given in Appendix 2.¹¹

Examining the distributions of violent delinquency indicates that there is a significant gender gap to be explained and there is reasonable variability in violence among both females and males. At wave 1 about 37% of girls and 68% of boys reported some violent delinquency during the previous year; at wave 3 about 28% of girls and 56% of boys reported some violent delinquency during the previous year. The gender gaps in violent delinquency at both waves 1 and 3 are highly significant ($t = 10.54$ and $t =$

1973). Also, research on the reliability of self-reported delinquency and friends' delinquency suggests that .75 is a reasonable and conservative estimate (Hindelang et al., 1981). Sensitivity analyses demonstrate that varying single-indicator reliabilities between .64 and .90 does not appreciably alter the substantive parameter estimates for either gender. We also specify four correlations among measurement errors that are expected to be nonzero for substantive reasons. One of these correlations, the first-order autoregressive error correlation associated with self-reported violence at the first and third waves, cannot be estimated and is fixed to .15. Sensitivity analyses demonstrate that the substantive parameter estimates do not change much for either gender when this correlation is varied between 0 and .18. The three freely estimated correlations are between the measurement errors associated with (1) family income and welfare reciprocity, (2) family income and female headship, and (3) two of the indicators of violent definitions.

11. The results of the measurement model show that the indicators of latent constructs are reasonably valid and reliable in each group, although they contain enough response error to require correction for attenuation due to unreliability. In addition, the relative magnitudes of the validity coefficients are similar across gender for most of the constructs. Because comparisons of substantive parameters across groups require invariance in the metrics of the latent constructs, we conducted a series of tests of invariance. The tests demonstrated invariance for all constructs except violent definitions. We thus conducted a series of sensitivity analyses, varying the reference indicators of this construct; the substantive parameter estimates were robust and not affected much by varying of the reference indicator. Consequently, cross-gender comparisons of the substantive parameter estimates are justified (see Bielby, 1986).

9.79, respectively, and for both $p < .0001$). In short, there is a significant gender gap in violence but a nontrivial proportion of girls are engaging in some violent delinquency.¹²

We first present the results for females and then for males, discussing similarities and differences across gender in the impact or magnitudes of effects (Hypotheses 1 and 4 through 8). Tables 2 and 3 present the unstandardized parameter estimates (b), standard errors, and standardized parameter estimates (β) for females and males, respectively. We then decompose the gap in violent delinquency across gender and assess Hypotheses 2 and 3, which focus on the contributions of gender differences in levels of predictors to the gender gaps in violent definitions and violent delinquency. This decomposition also allows us to assess how well our model, which allows both means of predictors and their slopes to vary across gender groups, explains the gender gap in violent delinquency at wave 3.

FEMALES

The results for females support the central hypotheses of our theoretical arguments (Hypotheses 1 and 4): Cultural definitions—violent definitions and gender definitions—are key for explaining violent delinquency among females (Table 2, column 8, rows 11 and 12) and mediate the effects of the other variables in the model. Indeed, a comparison of the standardized estimates in Table 2, column 8, shows that the two definitions variables are the strongest predictors of violence for females ($\beta = .397$ for violent definitions and $\beta = -.251$ for gender definitions). As expected, girls who strongly endorse violent definitions are more likely to commit violent delinquency, and girls who strongly endorse gender definitions are less likely to commit violence.

Violent and gender definitions, in turn, are influenced strongly and directly by disadvantaged structural positions. Consistent with our arguments, disadvantaged structural positions shape cultural definitions of violence and gender, which in turn influence violent delinquency (Hypothesis 7). A test of the joint total effects of SES, race, female headship, and receipt of public assistance (in a reduced-form model) indicates that disadvantaged structural position has a significant impact on violent definitions

12. We conducted extensive sensitivity analyses to assess the robustness of the substantive findings that we report below, including the following: (1) a thorough analysis of residuals in the equation predicting violent delinquency at wave 3 for both genders; (2) a reestimation of our structural equation model using the logarithm of violent delinquency; and (3) an assessment of the possibility of reciprocal effects between some of the variables in our model. Based on these, we conclude that the results reported below are robust. A brief report on these analyses and their results is available from the authors upon request.

Table 2. Unstandardized and Standardized Coefficients for the Structural Model of Gender and Violent Delinquency: Females

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable							
	Violent Delinquency Wave 1 (1)	Aggressive Friends Wave 1 (2)	Coercive Discipline Wave 1 (3)	Supervision Wave 1 (4)	Emotional Bonds to Family Wave 1 (5)	Violent Definitions Wave 2 (6)	Gender Definitions Wave 2 (7)	Violent Delinquency Wave 3 (8)
	1. Socioeconomic Status	-.011* (.005)	-.029 (.027)	-.039* (.016)	.045 (.027)	.018 (.022)	-.038** (.013)	-.101** (.024)	-.009* (.004)
2. Black Racial Status	-.122 (.024)	-.056 (.133)	-.129 (.083)	.085 (.132)	.048 (.108)	-.160 (.065)	-.257 (.116)	-.121 (.021)
3. Female Headship	.066 (.021)	.235 (.117)	.345** (.071)	-.011 (.116)	-.010 (.095)	.166* (.055)	.208 (.102)	-.047* (.018)
4. Public Assistance	.027 (.023)	.236* (.128)	-.095 (.078)	.349** (.129)	-.104 (.104)	.040 (.063)	-.287** (.113)	.029 (.020)
5. Youth's Age	.052* (.004)	.091 (.020)	.028 (.013)	-.686** (.020)	-.152 (.017)	.097 (.011)	.276* (.019)	-.007 (.004)
6. Violent Delinquency Wave 1	.128 (.066)	.040 (.104)	.021 (.138)	-.296 (.316)	-.091 (.260)	.094 (.159)	.161 (.267)	-.020 (.056)
7. Aggressive Friends Wave 1	.066 (.021)	.104 (.117)	-.072 (.071)	.149 (.116)	-.061 (.095)	.038 (.055)	-.166 (.102)	.086 (.018)
8. Coercive Discipline Wave 1	.052* (.023)	.091 (.128)	.028 (.078)	-.686** (.129)	-.152 (.104)	.097 (.063)	.276* (.113)	-.007 (.020)
9. Supervision Wave 1	.128 (.066)	.040 (.104)	.021 (.138)	-.296 (.316)	-.091 (.260)	.094 (.159)	.161 (.267)	-.020 (.056)
10. Emotional Bonds to Family Wave 1	.066 (.021)	.104 (.117)	-.072 (.071)	.149 (.116)	-.061 (.095)	.038 (.055)	-.166 (.102)	.086 (.018)
11. Violent Definitions Wave 2	.052* (.023)	.091 (.128)	.028 (.078)	-.686** (.129)	-.152 (.104)	.097 (.063)	.276* (.113)	-.007 (.020)
12. Gender Definitions Wave 2	.128 (.066)	.040 (.104)	.021 (.138)	-.296 (.316)	-.091 (.260)	.094 (.159)	.161 (.267)	-.020 (.056)
R ²	.06	.08	.12	.12	.09	.40	.18	.24

NOTE: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. $N = 773$; $L^2 = 290.707$, d.f. = 201. Standardized coefficients are below standard errors and are italicized.

* = $p < .05$, two-tailed test.

** = $p < .01$, two-tailed test.

($L^2 = 82.53$, d.f. = 4, $p < .0001$), gender definitions ($L^2 = 63.24$, d.f. = 4, $p < .0001$), and violent delinquency at wave 3 ($L^2 = 23.65$ d.f. = 4, $p < .0001$). In terms of specific effects, females of the lowest SES are more likely than

other females to learn violent definitions and traditional gender definitions (Table 2, columns 6 and 7, row 1). Girls from female-headed families are less likely to accept traditional gender definitions, although family structure appears to be unimportant for violent definitions (row 3). Race, by contrast, directly shapes violent definitions, but not gender definitions (row 2).

Interestingly, SES influences violent delinquency in different directions through violent definitions and gender definitions. On the one hand, girls from disadvantaged social classes are more likely to behave violently because they learn more violent definitions; on the other hand, they are less likely to behave violently because they learn more traditional gender definitions. It is through this second pathway that disadvantaged girls come to behave less violently than disadvantaged boys. (We return to this point in the conclusions.) But despite the dampening effect of gender definitions on violent delinquency, the total effect of SES on violent delinquency is significant ($\beta = -.15$, $p < .01$) (not in table). Girls from disadvantaged classes are more likely than other girls to behave violently, even in the face of their exposure to stronger social controls through the inculcation of traditional gender definitions.

Girls' violent definitions also are influenced by emotional bonds to family, consistent with Hypothesis 5. Specifically, girls who have strong bonds to family are less likely than other girls to learn violent definitions (column 6, row 10), and thus they are less likely to engage in violence; this is evidenced by a significant total indirect effect of emotional bonds on violent delinquency ($\beta = -.103$, $p < .01$) (not in table). Direct parental controls—supervision and coercive discipline—are inconsequential for violent definitions, by contrast (column 6, rows 8 and 9). This, combined with the insignificant direct effects (rows 8 and 9) and total effects of direct parental controls on violent delinquency ($\beta = .003$, $p > .40$ for supervision, $\beta = .003$, $p > .40$ for coercive discipline), indicates that parents control their daughters through emotional bonds rather than direct parental controls.

Violent definitions also are affected by girls' previous experiences with violence. Girls with violent histories learn more violent definitions (column 6, row 6) and thus engage in more violent delinquency at wave 3. Note that violent histories influence future violent delinquency only indirectly, by fostering violent definitions (row 6).

Associations with aggressive friends are inconsequential in the process leading to violent delinquency among girls (row 7), however. Peer influence has negligible independent effects on both types of definitions and violent offending.

Table 3. Unstandardized and Standardized Coefficients for the Structural Model of Gender and Violent Delinquency: Males

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable							
	Violent Delinquency	Aggressive Friends	Coercive Discipline	Supervision	Emotional Bonds to Family	Violent Definitions	Gender Definitions	Violent Delinquency
	Wave 1 (1)	Wave 1 (2)	Wave 1 (3)	Wave 1 (4)	Wave 1 (5)	Wave 2 (6)	Wave 2 (7)	Wave 3 (8)
1. Socioeconomic Status	-.017 (.010) <i>-.090</i>	-.087** (.032) <i>-.137</i>	-.046** (.017) <i>-.145</i>	.047 (.026) <i>.090</i>	-.003 (.021) <i>-.006</i>	-.028 (.017) <i>-.089</i>	-.055** (.018) <i>-.188</i>	.001 (.009) <i>.005</i>
2. Black Racial Status	-.047 (.040) <i>-.059</i>	-.233 (.136) <i>-.087</i>	.290** (.074) <i>.217</i>	-.115 (.110) <i>-.052</i>	-.199 (.090) <i>-.114</i>	-.063 (.072) <i>-.048</i>	.045 (.074) <i>.036</i>	-.043 (.037) <i>-.058</i>
3. Female Headship	.026 (.042) <i>.031</i>	.083 (.143) <i>.030</i>	-.141 (.076) <i>-.103</i>	.138 (.115) <i>.061</i>	.100 (.093) <i>.056</i>	-.064 (.073) <i>-.047</i>	-.112 (.075) <i>-.088</i>	.057 (.037) <i>.074</i>
4. Public Assistance	.116** (.044) <i>.151</i>	.034 (.151) <i>.013</i>	.070 (.081) <i>.054</i>	-.197 (.123) <i>-.093</i>	-.062 (.100) <i>-.037</i>	-.032 (.077) <i>-.025</i>	.159* (.081) <i>.133</i>	.071 (.041) <i>.098</i>
5. Youth's Age	.008 (.007) <i>.055</i>	-.089** (.023) <i>-.174</i>	-.036** (.013) <i>-.140</i>	-.027 (.019) <i>-.064</i>	-.070** (.016) <i>-.208</i>	.008 (.013) <i>.030</i>	.003 (.013) <i>.011</i>	-.001 (.006) <i>-.009</i>
6. Violent Delinquency Wave 1	.....	.....	.169 (.099) <i>.100</i>	-.078 (.149) <i>-.028</i>	-.378** (.122) <i>-.171</i>	.502** (.098) <i>.303</i>	-.047 (.098) <i>-.030</i>	.157** (.057) <i>.166</i>
7. Aggressive Friends Wave 1	.....	.....	-.026 (.029) <i>-.053</i>	-.028 (.044) <i>-.035</i>	-.061 (.036) <i>-.093</i>	.074** (.028) <i>.152</i>	.037 (.029) <i>.081</i>	.018 (.014) <i>.065</i>
8. Coercive Discipline Wave 1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.144* (.060) <i>.146</i>	.093 (.060) <i>.101</i>	-.014 (.029) <i>-.025</i>
9. Supervision Wave 1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	-.023 (.028) <i>-.039</i>	.023 (.029) <i>.041</i>	-.033* (.014) <i>-.097</i>
10. Emotional Bonds to Family Wave 1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	-.009 (.040) <i>-.012</i>	-.069 (.043) <i>-.098</i>	.000 (.020) <i>.000</i>
11. Violent Definitions Wave 2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.193** (.047) <i>.340</i>
12. Gender Definitions Wave 2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	-.012 (.047) <i>-.020</i>
R ²	.04	.05	.13	.04	.11	.21	.12	.25

NOTE: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. N = 837; L² = 295.976, d.f. = 201. Standardized coefficients are below standard errors and are italicized.

* = p < .05, two-tailed test.

** = p < .01, two-tailed test.

COMPARISON TO MALES

As in the case of females, accepting violent definitions is a key factor in the process leading to violent delinquency among males, consistent with

Hypothesis 1. Indeed, comparing the standardized coefficients in Table 3, column 8, shows that violent definitions are by far the strongest predictor of male violence ($\beta = .340$), just as is the case for females. The magnitude of the effect of violent definitions on violent delinquency does not vary across gender ($L^2 = 1.36$, d.f. = 1, $p > .20$).

Examining the determinants of these violent definitions reveals some key discrepancies across gender. First, strong emotional bonds to family are insignificant for boys' violent delinquency (Table 3, row 10), even though such bonds reduce females' violence by reducing the chances that girls learn violent definitions. Moreover, the gender difference in the direct effect of emotional bonds on violent definitions is significant ($L^2 = 6.59$, d.f. = 1, $p < .01$), as is the gender difference in the indirect path linking emotional bonds to violent delinquency through violent definitions ($L^2 = 7.661$, d.f. = 2, $p < .01$). Consistent with Hypothesis 5, then, emotional bonds have a significantly stronger influence on violent delinquency among females than males.

There also are important differences in the impact of direct parental controls, consistent with the second part of Hypothesis 5. Boys are more likely to acquire violent definitions when their parents use coercive discipline (Table 3, column 6, row 8); this is not the case for girls (Table 2, column 6, row 8) and the gender difference in slopes is significant ($L^2 = 5.66$, d.f. = 1, $p < .02$). In addition, supervision is important in controlling violent delinquency among males but not females. Although supervision directly reduces boys' violent delinquency rather than operating through violent definitions (Table 3, row 9), counter to our prediction, it has no significant influence on girls' violent delinquency, as discussed above. This gender difference in the direct effect of supervision on violent delinquency is significant ($L^2 = 4.10$, d.f. = 1, $p < .05$).

Consistent with Hypothesis 6, boys, unlike girls, learn violent definitions from aggressive peers (Table 3, column 6, row 7) (Cross-gender difference is $L^2 = 3.67$, $p < .06$). But, similar to girls, boys are more likely to accept violent definitions when they have prior histories of violent delinquency (row 6).

Although violent definitions are important to violence by both genders, traditional gender definitions are consequential for violent delinquency only among females and not among males (Tables 2 and 3, row 12). This difference is not statistically significant across gender ($L^2 = .54$, d.f. = 1, $p > .4$), however. Nevertheless, the finding for boys is inconsistent with the second part of Hypothesis 4, that gender definitions encourage violence among males. In short, the important cultural definitions for understanding boys' violent delinquency appear to pertain to violence and not to gender, whereas both violent and gender definitions are important for girls' violence.

Because parental controls, aggressive friends, and gender definitions affect violent delinquency differently across gender, the indirect effects on violence of the structural variables also differ across gender. As in the case of girls, a test of the joint total effects of SES, race, female headship, and welfare reciprocity (in a reduced-form model) shows that structural positions have a significant impact on violent delinquency ($L^2 = 21.35$, d.f. = 4, $p < .0005$) among boys. But, the mechanisms by which structural positions affect violent delinquency vary across gender, as predicted in Hypothesis 8. First, structural positions influence violent delinquency by shaping gender definitions only in the case of females, because gender definitions are unimportant for male violence. Second, because coercive discipline has little effect on violent definitions among girls, the influence of structural variables on violence via the pathway linking structural variables, coercive discipline, violent definitions, and violent delinquency is greater among boys. Third, because emotional bonds have little effect on boys' violence, the influence of structural positions on violence through the pathway linking structural variables, emotional bonds, violent definitions, and violent delinquency is greater among girls. Fourth, although not predicted a priori, SES and race directly influence violent definitions among girls but not boys (rows 1 and 2). Girls, apparently, learn violent definitions in interactions that are captured by these two structural position variables but not by our family and peers variables.

Finally, as in the case of girls, boys' violent delinquency is strongly influenced by their violent histories. Unlike in the model for girls, however, prior violence has a strong, unmediated direct effect on future violent delinquency among boys (Table 3, row 6, column 8). And, although the effect of violent definitions on violent delinquency (wave 3) is about twice that of violent histories (compare standardized estimates in column 8), violent definitions themselves are strongly shaped by prior experiences with violence, consistent with the findings for females.

DECOMPOSING THE GENDER GAP IN VIOLENT DELINQUENCY

We assess how well our model can account for the gender gap in violent delinquency by decomposing the gap according to the following equation (Jones and Kelley, 1984):

$$\bar{Y}_M - \bar{Y}_F = (a_M - a_F) + \sum \bar{X}_F (\beta_M - \beta_F) + \sum \beta_F (\bar{X}_M - \bar{X}_F) + \sum (\beta_M - \beta_F) (\bar{X}_M - \bar{X}_F)$$

Gender Gap	=	Differences in Intercepts	+	Differences in Slopes	+	Differences in Levels	+	Interaction Between Differences in Slopes and Levels
		Unexplained			Explained			

This equation allows us to partition the gender gap in violence into the following components: (1) gender differences in intercepts (i.e., group membership) plus gender differences in slopes (i.e., effects of the independent variables), which Jones and Kelley (1984) show constitute the unexplained component that cannot be disentangled when variables are measured with nonratio scales; (2) gender differences in levels (i.e., means) of independent variables; and (3) the interaction between gender differences in levels (i.e., means) and gender differences in slopes (i.e., effects of the independent variables).¹³

The decomposition procedure produces the following results:

.111	=	.013	+	.046	+	.052
Gender		Unexplained Component		Differences		Interaction Between
Gap		(Differences in		in Levels		Differences in
		Intercepts + Slopes)				Slopes and Levels

As mentioned above, the gender gap in rates of self-reported violent delinquency at wave 3 (.111) is highly significant ($p < .0001$). The unexplained component in the above equation, by contrast, is nonsignificant (.013, standard error = .014, $p > .25$), accounting for only a small part of the gender gap in violence (12%). This means that our model explains almost 88% of the gender gap in violent delinquency at wave 3.¹⁴

Moreover, gender differences in levels of the independent variables (.046) account for 41% of the gap in violence. Table 4 shows that this is due in large part to higher levels of violent definitions among boys than girls, consistent with Hypothesis 2, as well as to more prior violence and higher levels of gender definitions among boys than girls. This analysis indicates that girls would commit .046 more violent acts if their mean levels of all predictor variables, especially prior violence, violent definitions, and gender definitions, were equal to those of males. Further,

13. Before partitioning the gap in violence, we reestimate our model with structured means (see Bollen, 1989) using LISREL 8 to obtain estimates of the gender differences in the intercepts of the equations for females and males. We follow Bartusch and Matsueda (1996) and identify gender differences between the means of latent variables by fixing the latent means for females to zero and allowing the latent means for males to take the means of reference indicators. Using this procedure, the unexplained part of the gender gap in violence becomes equal to the difference between the female and male intercepts, which allows for the calculation of the standard error and significance test.

14. By repeating the decomposition for a model that deletes prior violence, we estimate that prior violence itself accounts for about 26% of the gender gap in violent delinquency at wave 3. Together, these findings indicate that more than 70% of the gender gap in violent delinquency at wave 3 can be traced to the gender differences in levels and gender differences in interactions between levels and slopes of variables in the model other than prior violence.

through substitution in the decomposition equation for violent delinquency, we find that *if* females had the same means on the predictor variables as the males in this sample, the female average rate of violence would increase and narrow the gender gap in violence from .111 to .065. By contrast, if males had the same means on predictor variables as the females in the sample, the male average rate of violence would drop and narrow the gender gap to .013.¹⁵

Table 4. Contribution of Each Factor to the Levels Component of Violent Delinquency (Wave 3)

1. Violent Delinquency (Wave 1)	.0398
2. Violent Definitions (Wave 2)	.0258
3. Gender Definitions (Wave 2)	-.0157
4. Aggressive Friends (Wave 1)	-.0022
5. Youth's Age (Wave 1)	-.0013
6. Black Racial Status (Wave 1)	-.0011
7. Socioeconomic Status (Wave 1)	.0011
8. Female Headship (Wave 1)	-.0008
9. Emotional Bonds to Family (Wave 1)	-.0002
10. Public Assistance (Wave 1)	.00004
11. Coercive Discipline (Wave 1)	-.00002
12. Supervision (Wave 1)	.00002

Given that the above analyses indicate that part of the gender gap in violent delinquency can be traced to a gender difference in levels of violent definitions, we repeat the decomposition procedure for the equation predicting violent definitions. This allows us to assess the prediction of Hypothesis 3, that the gender gap in violent definitions arises in part because boys are exposed to lower levels of parental controls, have more aggressive friends, and are more likely to have histories of violence than girls. This decomposition shows that gender differences in levels of predictor variables account for about 35% of the gap in violent definitions, which is largely due to gender differences in levels of prior violence and bonds to family. Gender differences in levels of aggressive friends, supervision, and coercive discipline do not appear to contribute much to the

15. The equation above also reveals the contribution to the gender gap in violent delinquency of the component capturing the interaction between gender differences in levels and slopes. This component (.056) accounts for about 50% of the gap in violence at wave 3. The variables that contribute most to this interaction component are gender definitions, violent definitions, and prior violence. This indicates that if girls had the same means and same slopes as boys (compared to either the same means or the same slopes), especially with regard to gender definitions, violent definitions, and prior violence, girls would commit .056 more acts of violence on average.

gender gap in violent definitions. These findings therefore provide only partial support for Hypothesis 3.

The findings that gender differences in levels of direct parental controls (discipline, supervision) contribute trivially to the gender gaps in both violent definitions and violent delinquency are counter to our expectation and previous research that argues that girls are less delinquent than boys primarily because they are subject to weaker parental controls, especially supervision. Once the other variables in our models are controlled, differences in the means of supervision and coercive discipline account for little of the gender gap in either violent definitions or violent delinquency.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Our findings show that cultural definitions, cultural practices, and structural positions combine to influence violent delinquency in different ways across gender, and these differences account for the observed gender gap in violent delinquency in our data. As a set, these results lend substantial support to our theoretical arguments. The major findings are as follows:

1. Learning violent definitions is an important predictor of violent delinquency among both girls and boys.
2. But there are important gender differences in the process by which youths learn violent definitions. Aggressive peers and coercive discipline (a form of direct parental control) each has a larger effect on boys' than girls' learning of violent definitions, while emotional bonds to family (a form of indirect parental control) influence girls' but not boys' learning of violent definitions.
3. In addition, supervision of youths' friendships (a second form of direct parental control) directly reduces violent delinquency by boys (rather than indirectly affecting violence by shaping violent definitions); yet, supervision is unimportant for violence by girls.
4. Accepting traditional gender definitions significantly reduces violence among girls, but does not influence violence among boys.
5. Structural positions are important for understanding violent delinquency by both girls and boys, although there are gender differences in the specific pathways by which structural positions influence violence.
6. Our decomposition analyses show that boys engage in more violent delinquency than girls in part because they learn more violent definitions and more traditional gender definitions than girls and have more previous experience with violent offending than girls.
7. The decomposition of the equations predicting violent definitions shows that boys learn more violent definitions than girls in large part

because they are more likely to have committed violence in the past and because they have weaker emotional bonds to families than girls. 8. And finally, our decomposition analyses show that the gender gap in violent delinquency at wave 3 is accounted for by the model.

CONCLUSIONS

This work contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it shows empirically that despite a sizable gender gap in violent delinquency, such behavior is not an exclusively male phenomenon, counter to popular myths that portray females as nonaggressive (see White and Kowalski, 1994). Second, it focuses on the mechanisms leading to violent delinquency among girls as compared to boys and assesses the contributions of these mechanisms to the gender gap in violent delinquency. Previous empirical work has not explained the mechanisms leading to the gender gap in violence. Moreover, previous research rarely has examined the causes of variation in violence by females, and when it has addressed such variation, it has focused mostly on the effects of structural factors without specifying precisely the underlying cultural processes (see also Simpson, 1991). This highlights a third contribution of this research: It clearly identifies and assesses links between social structural and cultural processes in the pathways leading to violence among females and males, thereby illuminating how gender-differentiated experiences during adolescence lead to violent delinquency. It does this by developing a theoretical perspective that incorporates differential association theory as well as arguments from feminist and gender studies, which is a fourth contribution of this work.

Overall, our findings support our argument that the mechanisms producing violence among females are of a more subtle, indirect nature than those producing violence among males. The findings indicate that indirect familial controls (i.e., emotional bonds) reduce the learning of violent definitions, and thus violent delinquency, among girls but not boys. In addition, direct parental controls curb violent definitions and violent delinquency among boys but not girls. Girls also learn fewer violent definitions than boys, on average, although the impact of violent definitions on violence is equal across gender. Further, girls' violence is reduced by learning traditional definitions of gender, whereas these have little effect on boys' violence. In sum, girls are less violent than boys mainly because they are influenced more strongly by bonds to family, learn fewer violent definitions, and are taught that violence is inconsistent with the meaning of being female. These mechanisms appear to be so effective among girls, that direct, overt controls like supervision and coercive discipline contribute little to the explanation of variation in female violence, while they are important for explaining variation in male violence.

The finding that direct parental controls do not explain variation in violence among girls or the gender gap in violent delinquency stands in stark contrast to studies of gender and delinquency that highlight this form of control (e.g., Hagan et al., 1985; Jensen and Eve, 1976). However, these studies examine only whether the main effect of gender on delinquency is mediated by direct parental controls; they do not assess the logically prior question of a gender difference in the magnitudes of effects of direct parental controls. Our analyses, by comparison, allow us to examine differences in the impact of parental controls across gender, as well as the contributions of gender differences in mean levels of parental controls to the gender gap in violent definitions and delinquency. However, our findings about the relative insignificance of direct parental controls may be specific to violent delinquency; further research should assess the relationships among gender, direct parental controls, and other forms of delinquency.

The finding that accepting traditional gender definitions dissuades violence among girls but has no appreciable influence on violence among boys is consistent with the results of other research (e.g., Simpson and Elis, 1995:68). Thus, rather than gender definitions motivating violence among males, their importance lies in their dampening effect on violence among females. This fits with our argument above that female violence is controlled through a subtle process that emphasizes the meaning of gender, rather than through more direct forms of control. It is at odds, however, with the hypothesis that crime is a consequence of masculinity (Braithwaite and Daly, 1994; Messerschmidt, 1993). Yet, our measure of traditional gender definitions taps ideologies and beliefs about the sexes, rather than personality characteristics or traits of masculinity and femininity; thus, the masculinity hypothesis may still hold if traits and ideologies about gender influence offending in different ways.

Our findings that structural positions are important for violence among both genders, but exert their influence through different cultural mechanisms across gender, emphasize the importance of considering the interplay between structure and culture. For example, we found that among both girls and boys, disadvantaged structural positions increase the chances of violent offending. Yet, the mechanisms by which this influence occurs vary across gender: Structural marginalization increases violent delinquency in both genders through fostering the learning of violent definitions. But disadvantaged structural positions also are associated with greater acceptance of traditional gender definitions, which dampens the impetus to violent delinquency among girls and does not affect the motivation toward violence among boys. The result is that structurally marginalized youths of both genders are more likely to commit violent

delinquency; however, among marginalized youths, the gender gap in violence remains—boys are more likely than girls to commit violent delinquency. These findings help to illuminate the cultural processes underlying a key structural argument in the literature on gender and crime—that economic marginalization increases the likelihood of violent offending in both genders, but patriarchal structures reduce the chances of this type of offending among females, which leads to higher rates of violence among males than females in the least advantaged social classes (Messerschmidt, 1986).

Overall, this work represents an important advance in the differential association tradition because it reconceptualizes the theory by incorporating theoretical arguments about gender. Specifically, we draw on feminist and gender studies to specify the role of gender definitions, as well as to develop explicit arguments about gender differences in the influence of parenting processes and peer influence. The findings illustrate the usefulness of our theoretical arguments for explaining variation in violent delinquency within gender, as well as for accounting for the gender gap in violence. Because this framework offers theoretical arguments about the links between structure and culture, it represents an advance over other explanations of gender and delinquency, which tend to focus either on structural or social-psychological processes.

Although this study pushes forward research on gender and violent delinquency in key ways, our data do not allow us to address several issues that may prove to be significant for a complete understanding of the gendering of violence. Specifically, this research cannot address a theme in feminist writings that female and male violence occurs in different domains and is expressed in different ways. Several authors, for example, have argued that female violence is of a more expressive nature and male violence is more instrumental (e.g., Campbell, 1993; also Eagly and Stefan, 1986). Others have argued that the context of female and male violence varies, with women being more likely to behave violently as a result of interpersonal conflict and being more likely to commit violence within the home (Loper and Cornell, 1996; White and Kowalski, 1994). It would be possible to expand our arguments to address such issues, which would have the advantage of framing these issues within a unified theoretical perspective.

In short, the conclusion of our research is that violent delinquency is “gendered” in significant ways. Adolescent violence can be seen as a product of gendered experiences, gender socialization, and the patriarchal system in which they emerge. Thus, consistent with feminist arguments, gender differences in violence are ultimately rooted in power differences (e.g., Chesney-Lind, 1997; White and Kowalski, 1994). What we contribute to such feminist arguments is an explicit theoretical statement of how

certain aspects of gender socialization produce gender differences in violent delinquency. Specifically, boys are more violent than girls largely because they are taught more definitions favoring such behavior; girls are less violent than boys because they are controlled through subtle mechanisms, which include learning that violence is incompatible with the meaning of gender for them and being restrained by emotional bonds to family. These findings are consistent with Block's (1984:137-138) argument that traditional gender socialization gives boys "wings" to explore and grow as individuals, and gives girls "roots" that anchor and stabilize them; yet, wings without roots can produce undercontrolled individuals and roots without wings can create overcontrolled, "tethered" individuals. So, traditional socialization patterns contribute to high levels of male violence in our society, just as they inhibit positively valued and rewarded behavior among females, such as climbing the corporate ladder. This suggests that socializing either gender similarly to the other could have negative consequences. The best scenario may prove to be a middle ground, where both genders learn distaste for violence and learn to pursue their positive potentials.

REFERENCES

- Akers, Ronald L.
1985 *Deviant Behavior: A Social Learning Approach*. 3d ed. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth.
- Akers, Ronald L., Marvin D. Krohn, Lonn Lanza-Kaduce, and Marcia Radosevich
1979 Social learning and deviant behavior: A general test of a specific theory. *American Sociological Review* 44:635-655.
- Alwin, Duane F.
1973 Making inferences from attitude-behavior correlations. *Sociometry* 36:253-278.
- Baca Zinn, Maxine
1990 *Diversity in Families*. 2d ed. New York: Harper & Row.
- Bartusch, Dawn Jeglum and Ross L. Matsueda
1996 Gender, reflected appraisals, and labeling: A cross-population test of an interactionist theory. *Social Forces* 75:145-176.
- Beckett, Joyce O. and Audrey D. Smith
1981 Work and family roles: Egalitarian marriage in black and white families. *Social Service Review* 55:314-326.
- Bem, Sandra Lipsitz
1993 *The Lenses of Gender*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.
- Bielby, William T.
1986 Arbitrary metrics in multiple indicator models of latent variables. *Sociological Methods and Research* 15:3-23.
- Black, Donald
1983 Crime as social control. *American Sociological Review* 48:34-45.

- Block, Jeanne Humphrey
1984 *Sex Role Identity and Ego Development*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bollen, Kenneth A.
1989 *Structural Equations with Latent Variables*. New York: Wiley and Sons.
- Braithewaite, John and Kathleen Daly
1994 Masculinities, violence and communitarian control. In Tim Neruburn and Elizabeth Stanks (eds.), *Just Boys Doing Business: Men, Masculinities and Crime*. London: Routledge.
- Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne
1986 The relationship of maternal beliefs about sex typing to maternal and young children's behavior. *Sex Roles* 14:21-35.
- Browne, Michael W. and Robert Cudeck
1993 Alternative ways of assessing model fit. In Kenneth A. Bollen and J. Scott Long (eds.), *Testing Structural Equation Models*. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage.
- Burke, Peter J.
1989 Gender identity, sex, and school performance. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 52:159-169.
- Burke, Peter J. and Donald C. Reitzes
1981 The link between identity and role performance. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 44:83-92.
- Burke, Peter J. and Judy C. Tully
1977 The measurement of role/identity. *Social Forces* 55:881-897.
- Bursik, Robert J., Jr., and Harold G. Grasmick
1993 Economic deprivation and neighborhood crime rates. *Law & Society Review* 27:263-283.
- Campbell, Anne
1993 *Men, Women, and Aggression*. New York: Basic Books.
- Canter, Rachelle J.
1982 Family correlates of male and female delinquency. *Criminology* 20:149-168.
- Cernkovich, Stephen A. and Peggy C. Giordano
1987 Family relationships and delinquency. *Criminology* 25:295-322.
- Chesney-Lind, Meda
1997 *The Female Offender: Girls, Women, and Crime*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Chesney-Lind, Meda and Randall G. Shelden
1998 *Girls' Delinquency and Juvenile Justice*. 2d ed. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth.
- Chodorow, Nancy
1978 *The Reproduction of Mothering*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cloward, Richard A. and Lloyd E. Ohlin
1960 *Delinquency and Opportunity: A Theory of Delinquent Gangs*. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press.
- Cohen, Albert K.
1955 *Delinquent Boys*. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press.

- Collins, P. Hill
1990 *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Cressey, Donald R.
1953 *Other People's Money*. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press.
1954 The differential association theory and compulsive crimes. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology* 45:29-40.
- Daly, Kathleen and Meda Chesney-Lind
1988 Feminism and criminology. *Justice Quarterly* 5:497-538.
- Eagly, Alice A. and Valerie J. Steffen
1986 Gender and aggressive behavior: A meta-analytic review of the social psychological literature. *Psychological Bulletin* 100:309-330.
- Elliott, Delbert S. and David Huizinga
1983 Social class and delinquent behavior in a national youth panel, 1976-1980. *Criminology* 21:149-177.
- Elliott, Delbert S., Suzanne S. Ageton, David Huizinga, Brian A. Knowles, and Rachelle J. Canter
1983 *The Prevalence and Incidence of Delinquent Behavior: 1976-1980*. Boulder, Colo.: Behavioral Research Institute.
- Elliott, Delbert S., David Huizinga, and Suzanne S. Ageton
1985 *Explaining Delinquency and Drug Use*. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage.
- Elliott, Delbert S., David Huizinga, and Scott Menard
1989 *Multiple Problem Youth: Delinquency, Substance Use, and Mental Health Problems*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Ferree, Myra Marx and Beth B. Hess
1987 Introduction. In Beth B. Hess and Myra Marx Ferree (eds.), *Analyzing Gender: A Handbook of Social Science Research*. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage.
- Gecas, Viktor
1979 The influence of social class in socialization. In Wesley Burr, Reuben Hill, F. Ivan Nye, and Ira L. Reiss (eds.), *Contemporary Theories about the Family*. Vol. I. New York: Free Press.
- Gilligan, Carol
1982 *In a Different Voice*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Giordano, Peggy C. and Stephen A. Cernkovich
1979 On complicating the relationship between liberation and delinquency. *Social Problems* 26:467-481.
- Goffman, Erving
1977 The arrangement between the sexes. *Theory and Society* 4:301-331.
- Hagan, John, A.R. Gillis, and John Simpson
1985 The class structure of gender and delinquency: Toward a power-control theory of common delinquent behavior. *American Journal of Sociology* 90:1151-1178.
- Hagan, John, John Simpson and A. R. Gillis
1987 Class in the household: A power-control theory of gender and delinquency. *American Journal of Sociology* 92:788-816.

- 1988 Feminist scholarship, relational and instrumental control, and a power-control theory of gender and delinquency. *British Journal of Sociology* 39:301-336.
- Heimer, Karen
- 1995 Gender, race, and the pathways to delinquency: An interactionist analysis. In John Hagan and Ruth D. Peterson (eds.), *Crime and Inequality*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- 1996 Gender, interaction, and delinquency: Testing a theory of differential social control. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 59:39-61.
- 1997 Socioeconomic status, subcultural definitions, and violent delinquency. *Social Forces* 75:799-833.
- Hindelang, Michael J., Travis Hirschi, and Joseph G. Weiss
- 1979 Correlates of delinquency: The illusion of discrepancy between self-report and official measures. *American Sociological Review* 44:955-1014.
- 1981 *Measuring Delinquency*. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage.
- Horwitz, Allan V. and Helene Raskin White
- 1987 Gender role orientations and styles of pathology among adolescents. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 28:158-170.
- Huesmann, L. Rowell, Nancy G. Guerra, A. Zelli, and L. Miller
- 1992 Differing normative beliefs about aggression for boys and girls. In Karo Bjorkqvist and Pirkko Niemela (eds.), *Of Mice and Women: Aspects of Female Aggression*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Jackman, Mary R.
- 1994 *The Velvet Glove: Paternalism and Conflict in Gender, Class, and Race Relations*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Jensen, Gary F. and Raymond Eve
- 1976 Sex differences in delinquency: An examination of popular sociological explanations. *Criminology* 13:427-448.
- Jones, Frank L. and Jonathan Kelley
- 1984 Decomposing difference between groups: A cautionary note on the measurement of discrimination. *Sociological Methods and Research* 12:323-343.
- Jöreskog, Karl G. and Dag Sörbom
- 1993 *LISREL 8: A Guide to the Program and Applications*. Chicago: Scientific Software International.
- Klein, Dorie
- 1973 The etiology of female crime: A review of the literature. *Crime and Social Justice: Issues in Criminology (Fall)*:3-30.
- Kohn, Melvin L.
- 1977 *Class and Conformity*. 2d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Krohn, Marvin D., William F. Skinner, James L. Massey and Ronald L. Akers
- 1985 Social learning theory and adolescent cigarette smoking: A longitudinal study. *Social Problems* 32:455-473.
- Kruttschnitt, Candace
- 1994 Gender and interpersonal violence. In Albert J. Reiss, Jr., and Jeffrey A. Roth (eds.), *Understanding and Preventing Violence*. Vol. 3. Washington D.C.: National Academy Press.

- 1996 Contributions of quantitative methods to the study of gender and crime, or bootstrapping our way into the theoretical thicket. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 12:135-161.
- Levine, Felice J. and Katherine J. Rosich
1996 *Social Causes of Violence: Crafting a Science Agenda*. Washington, D.C.: American Sociological Association.
- Lips, Hilary M.
1995 Gender-role socialization: Lessons in feminity. In Jo Freeman (ed.), *Women: A Feminist Perspective*. Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield.
- Loper, Ann B. and Dewey G. Cornell
1996 Homicide by juvenile girls. *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 5:323-336.
- Lorber, Judith
1994 *Paradoxes of Gender*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.
- Maguire, Kathleen and Ann L. Pastore, (eds.)
1997 *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 1996*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Matsueda, Ross L.
1988 The current state of differential association theory. *Crime and Delinquency* 34: 277-306.
- Matsueda, Ross L. and Karen Heimer
1987 Race, family structure, and delinquency: A test of differential association and social control theories. *American Sociological Review* 52:826-840.
- McLeod, Jane D., Candace Kruttschnitt, and Maude Dornfeld
1994 Does parenting explain the effects of structural conditions on children's antisocial behavior? A comparison of blacks and whites. *Social Forces* 73:575-604.
- Messerschmidt, James W.
1986 *Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Crime: Toward a Socialist Feminist Criminology*. Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield.
1993 *Masculinities and Crime*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Miller, Walter B.
1958 Lower class culture as a generating milieu of gang delinquency. *Journal of Social Issues* 14:5-19.
- Morash, Merry
1986 Gender, peer group experiences, and seriousness of delinquency. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 23:46-67.
- Patterson, Gerald R., John B. Reid, and Thomas J. Dishion
1992 *Antisocial Boys*. Eugene, Ore.: Castalia.
- Peterson, Ruth D. and Lauren J. Krivo
1993 Racial segregation and urban black homicide. *Social Forces* 71:1001-1026.
- Rubin, Lillian B.
1976 *Worlds of Pain*. New York: Basic Books.
- Sampson, Robert J.
1987 Urban black violence: The effect of male joblessness and family disruption. *American Journal of Sociology* 93:348-382.

- 1997 The embeddedness of child and adolescent development: A community-level perspective on urban violence. In Joan McCord (ed.), *Violence and Childhood in the Inner City*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sampson, Robert J. and John H. Laub
1993 *Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Schur, Edwin M.
1984 *Labeling Women Deviant: Gender, Stigma, and Social Control*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Shover, Neal, Stephen Norland, Jennifer James, and William E. Thornton
1979 Gender roles and delinquency. *Social Forces* 58:162-175.
- Simpson, Sally S.
1991 Caste, class, and violent crime: Explaining differences in female offending. *Criminology* 29:115-131.
- Simpson, Sally S. and Lori Elis
1995 Doing gender: Sorting out the caste and crime conundrum. *Criminology* 33:47-79.
- Singer, Simon I. and Murray Levine
1988 Power-control theory, gender, and delinquency: A partial replication with additional evidence on the effects of peers. *Criminology* 26:627-647.
- Smart, Carol
1976 *Women, Crime, and Criminology: A Feminist Critique*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Smith, Douglas A. and Christy A. Visser
1980 Sex and involvement in deviance/crime: A quantitative review of the empirical literature. *American Sociological Review* 45:691-701.
- Sutherland, Edwin H.
1937 *The Professional Thief*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
1947 *Principles of Criminology*. 4th ed. Philadelphia: Lippincott.
1949 *White Collar Crime*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Sutherland, Edwin H., Donald R. Cressey, and David F. Luckenbill
1992 *Principles of Criminology*. 11th ed. Dix Hills, N.Y.: General Hall.
- Thomson, Elizabeth, Sara McLanahan, and Roberta Braun Curtin
1992 Family structure, gender, and parental socialization. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 54:368-378.
- Thorne, Barrie
1993 *Gender play: Girls and boys in school*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Thorne, Barrie and Zella Luria
1986 Sexuality and gender in children's daily worlds. *Social Problems* 33:176-190.
- Title, Charles R., Mary Jean Burke, and Elton F. Jackson
1986 Modeling Sutherland's theory of differential association: Toward an empirical clarification. *Social Forces* 65:405-432.
- Tong, Rosemarie
1998 *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*. 2d ed. Boulder, Colo.: Westview.

Walby, Sylvia

1990 *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell.

West, Candace and Sarah Fenstermaker

1995 *Doing difference*. *Gender and Society* 9:8–37.

West, Candace and Don H. Zimmerman

1987 *Doing gender*. *Gender and Society* 2:125–151.

White, Jacquelyn W. and Robin W. Kowalski

1994 *Deconstructing the myth of the nonaggressive woman: A feminist analysis*. *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 18:487–508.

Willis, Paul E.

1977 *Learning to Labor*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Wilson, William Julius

1991 *Studying inner-city social dislocations: The challenge of public agenda research*. *American Sociological Review* 56:1–14.

Stacy De Coster is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Iowa. Her research interests are in the areas of crime, law, and deviance, as well as in the sociology of mental health. She is involved currently in research on the influence of neighborhood contexts on juvenile delinquency and adolescent depression, and her dissertation focuses on gender differences in delinquency and depression.

Karen Heimer is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Iowa. Her current research focuses on gender differences in delinquency, women's poverty and criminal offending, inequality and imprisonment rates, and the neighborhood contexts of delinquency. Direct all correspondence to Karen Heimer, Department of Sociology, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242.

APPENDIX 1. DESCRIPTION OF OBSERVABLE VARIABLES

From the Parent Interview, Wave 1

Father's Occupation	Hollingshead Occupational codes, as follows: 7 = executives and proprietors of large concerns, major professionals; 6 = managers and proprietors of medium-sized businesses and lesser professionals; 5 = administrative personnel of large concerns, owners of small independent businesses, and semiprofessionals; 4 = owners of little businesses, clerical and sales workers, and technicians; 3 = skilled workers; 2 = semi-skilled workers; 1 = unskilled workers.
Head of House Education	Educational attainment of the head of household based on Hollingshead Educational codes, as follows: 1 = some grade school; 2 = completed grade school; 3 = some high school; 4 = completed high school (12th grade or GED); 5 = some college, completed specialized training or education; 6 = completed college; 7 = postgraduate degree.
Family Income	Coded as follows: 1 = \$6000 or less; 2 = \$6001–10,000; 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.
Female-Headed Household	A dummy variable coded 1 if only a female parent resides in the home; coded 0 otherwise.
Public Assistance	A dummy variable coded 1 if parent respondent reported receiving welfare benefits within the previous year; coded 0 otherwise.

Coercive Discipline

Question asked parents how they react when their child does something wrong. The interviewer hands the parent respondent cards with different sets of behaviors on each (sequentially), and asks the parent which of the behaviors on each card s/he would choose FIRST when disciplining her/his child. The interviewer then asks the parent to report on her/his spouse's choices of discipline. Behaviors are coded 1 for coercive discipline and 0 for discipline that is not coercive. By adding the scores for the responses identified below, we computed a scale for coercive discipline style for mothers and one for fathers. This scale ranges from 0 to 2, with 2 representing the most coercive style of discipline and 0 representing the least coercive discipline style.

Set 1 behaviors

- Point out the hurtful consequences of his/her behavior = 0.
- Take away privileges = 1.
- Never accuse him/her unfairly, even if I am angry = 0.
- Demand that s/he correct the damage s/he has done = 1.

Set 2 behaviors

- Hit or threaten to hit him/her = 1.
- Explain that s/he should accept responsibility for his or her behavior and request that s/he make up for it = 0.
- Discuss his/her behavior with him/her, as well as reasons for being upset with it = 0.
- Send him/her to his/her room = 1.

Supervision of Friendships

Coded as 1 = none of them, 2 = few of them, 3 = some of them, 4 = most of them, 5 = all of them.

- “How many of your child's friends do you know?”
- “How many of your child's friends' parents do you know personally?”

- “How many of your child’s friends have you invited to your home or on family activities?”

From the Youth Interviews, Waves 1–3

Age (wave 1)	This variable is the age of youth, 11 to 17.
Black (wave 1)	Dummy variable coded 1 if black, 0 if nonblack.
Aggressive Friends (wave 1)	Coded as 1 = none of them, 2 = very few of them, 3 = some of them, 4 = most of them, 5 = all of them. “During the previous year, how many of your friends have hit or threatened to hit someone?”
Emotional Bonds to Family (wave 1)	The following questions, coded as 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. •“I feel close to my family.” •“My family is willing to listen if I have a problem.”
Violent Definitions (wave 2)	The following questions, coded as 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. •“In order to gain respect from your friends, it is sometimes necessary to beat up on other kids.” •“It is alright to beat up another person if he/she called you a dirty name.” •“It is alright to beat up another person if he/she started the fight.” •“Hitting another person is an acceptable way to get him/her to do what you want.”
Gender Definitions (wave 2)	The following questions, coded as 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. •“In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of children”

- “Women with children should not work outside the home unless there is no one else to support the family.”
- “In a marriage, it is the woman’s responsibility to care for any children and take care of the home.”
- “Women are too emotional to solve problems well.”
- “Women are physically and emotionally weaker than men and therefore need male protection and support.”

Violent Delinquency
(waves 1 and 3)

These variables are computed as means of rates of self-reported involvement in violent delinquency during the 12-month period preceding the interview. Each individual item is coded 1 = never; 2 = once or twice a year; 3 = once or twice 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. The offenses include the following: “How many times in the past year have you . . .

- . . . carried a hidden weapon other than a plain pocket knife?”
- . . . attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting or killing them?”
- . . . been involved in gang fights?”
- . . . hit or threatened to hit a teacher or other adult at school?”
- . . . hit or threatened to hit your parents?”
- . . . hit or threatened to hit other students?”
- . . . 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 a teacher or adult at school?”
- . . . used force (strong-arm methods) to get money or things from other people (not teachers or students)?”

Appendix 2. Parameter Estimates of the Measurement Model

Latent Construct	Observed Variable	Metric Slope		Validity Coefficient		Observed Variance		Error Variance		Observed Means	
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Socioeconomic Status	Family income	1.00 [†]	1.00 [†]	.63	.62	5.51	5.22	3.31	3.22	4.26	4.08
	Wage earner's occupation	.93*	.94*	.78	.77	3.09	2.96	1.20	1.22	3.94	3.87
	Wage earner's education	.65*	.73*	.75	.77	1.65	1.80	.74	.75	4.57	4.46
Black Racial Status	Black racial status	1.00 [†]	1.00 [†]	.90 [†]	.90 [†]	.12	.14	.02	.03	.14	.17
	Female-headed household	1.00 [†]	1.00 [†]	.90 [†]	.90 [†]	.15	.13	.03	.02	.18	.16
	Public assistance	1.00 [†]	1.00 [†]	.90 [†]	.90 [†]	.15	.15	.03	.03	.18	.19
Youth's Age	Youth's age	1.00 [†]	1.00 [†]	.90 [†]	.90 [†]	3.79	3.76	.72	.72	13.78	13.96
	Violent delinquency, Wave 1	1.00 [†]	1.00 [†]	.86 [†]	.87 [†]	.03	.09	.01	.02	1.08**	1.21**
	Violent delinquency scale (wave 1)										
Aggressive Friends, Wave 1	Friends hit or threaten to hit	1.00 [†]	1.00 [†]	.87 [†]	.87 [†]	.79	1.08	.20	.27	1.68**	2.08**
	Mother's power-assertive discipline	1.00 [†]	1.00 [†]	.78	.74	.33	.36	.13	.16	.39	.41
	Father's power-assertive discipline	.92*	.90*	.61	.56	.46	.51	.29	.35	.60	.66
Supervision, Wave 1	Family invites friends	1.00 [†]	1.00 [†]	.75	.68	1.13	1.20	.50	.65	3.75	3.70
	Parents know youth's friends	.80*	.86*	.81	.80	.61	.63	.21	.23	4.38	4.34
	Parents know friends' parents	.97*	1.06*	.70	.72	1.19	1.18	.60	.56	3.50	3.60
Emotional Bonds to Family, Wave 1	Close to family	1.00 [†]	1.00 [†]	.73	.83	.62	.50	.29	.16	4.22	4.25
	Family willing to listen to problems	.92*	.69*	.63	.52	.72	.60	.44	.44	4.07	4.11
	Beat up kids to gain respect	1.00 [†]	1.00 [†]	.55	.62	.42	.50	.29	.30	1.62**	1.88**
Violent Definitions, Wave 2	Beat up if started a fight	1.46*	.84*	.48	.37	1.14	.98	.88	.85	2.68**	3.23**
	Beat up if called a bad name	1.43*	1.30*	.63	.62	.66	.84	.40	.51	1.92**	2.41**
	Hit to get own way	1.21*	1.01*	.60	.62	.52	.51	.33	.32	1.86**	2.14**
Gender Definitions, Wave 2	Father greater authority with kids	1.00 [†]	1.00 [†]	.54	.43	1.19	.95	.85	.78	2.70**	3.01**
	Women should take care of children	1.04*	1.20*	.53	.49	1.32	1.02	.95	.95	3.00	2.97
	Women are too emotional	.72*	1.07*	.52	.52	.67	.72	.49	.52	2.03**	2.49**
Violent Delinquency, Wave 3	Women are weak	.99*	1.22*	.54	.56	1.16	.81	.83	.56	2.62**	2.95**
	Violent delinquency scale (wave 3)	1.00 [†]	1.00 [†]	.86 [†]	.87 [†]	.01	.08	.00	.00	1.05**	1.16**
	Violent delinquency scale (wave 3)										

[†] = fixed parameter.

* = $p < .001$, two-tailed test.

** = difference is significant at $p < .001$, two-tailed test.

