

Gender, Reflected Appraisals, and Labeling: A Cross-Group Test of an Interactionist Theory of Delinquency*

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Abstract

This article builds upon a symbolic interactionist model of delinquency (Matsueda 1992) by assessing whether an interactionist model can account for the gender gap in delinquent behavior. We argue that delinquency is determined in part by the self as conceived by symbolic interactionists, which in turn is determined by a process of labeling by significant others. We estimate a cross-gender model of delinquency using data from the National Youth Survey and find that, for both males and females, parental appraisals significantly affect youths' reflected appraisals, which in turn predict delinquency. Nevertheless, we find some gender interactions: for males, parental labeling and reflected appraisals have a larger effect on delinquency, and males are more likely to be falsely accused by parents. When we take into account gender differences in both levels of independent variables and the magnitude of effects of those variables, our model explains a substantial portion of the gender gap in delinquency.

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Gender is one of the strongest and most consistent correlates of crime and delinquency. When measured by official statistics, the gender gap is substantial: males commit three to seven times as many delinquent acts as females. When measured by self-reports, the gender gap is significant but not as large: males report roughly twice as many delinquent acts as females (Canter 1982; Hindelang 1971; Smith & Visser 1980; Steffensmeier & Steffensmeier 1980). These statistics have prompted some to refer to delinquent behavior as a "male phenomenon." Indeed, most traditional theories of delinquency have focused explicitly on explaining male delinquency. In response to this traditional focus, some researchers have called for separate theories of female delinquency (Adler 1975; Klein 1973; Leonard 1982). Others have resisted this call, arguing that first additional research is needed to test whether traditional male-centered theories account for female delinquency (Smith & Paternoster 1987).

A number of studies have tried to explain the male-female differential in delinquent behavior. Initial research focused on external controls such as parental supervision and attachment. In their seminal study, Jensen and Eve (1976) find that supervision and emotional support account for part, but not all, of the gender gap in delinquency (see also Gove & Crutchfield 1982; Smith & Paternoster 1987). Similarly, Cernkovich and Giordano (1987) find that females are the objects of greater parental control and supervision than are males, and that such control significantly predicts delinquency. They also find that attachment to parents varies by gender and is significantly related to delinquent behavior. Shover et al. (1979) find that attachment is significantly related to property and aggressive offenses for both males and females (although more strongly for males), and that males report less control and greater opportunity to participate in delinquency. Others find, however, that females are not necessarily subjected to more control than are males, but rather that the type of control varies by gender (Hill & Atkinson 1988).

More recent research on gender and delinquency has focused on the macro-level structural roots of power differences between males and females. In their power-control theory, Hagan and his colleagues (Hagan 1989; Hagan, Gillis & Simpson 1985, 1990; Hagan, Simpson & Gillis 1987) specify that gender differences in delinquency result from gender differentials in power and control, which in turn can be traced to the intersection of gender and social class. Conceptualizing class as neo-Marxian class categories, Hagan, Gillis, and Simpson (1985) argue that as one moves from dominant to subservient social classes, the gender gap in delinquency increases because the relative power of females decreases. Within classes, females engage in less delinquency than males because they are subject to greater instrumental control within the family. After reconceptualizing class in Dahrendorf's (1959) terms, Hagan, Simpson, and Gillis (1987) argue that the gender gap in delinquency is greater in patriarchal families, where wives have little power relative to husbands and daughters have little freedom relative to sons. At the individual level, Hagan and his colleagues specify that class, gender, and power differentials are translated into delinquency through differentials in controls. Relative to males, females are supervised more closely, have less of a taste for risk, and perhaps perceive a greater certainty of sanction, all of which dissuade them from delinquent behavior. This

specification is consistent with traditional individual-level research on gender and delinquency, which has examined differences in social controls.

Two points emerge from these two lines of research. First, differentials in external social controls do not completely explain the gender gap in delinquency. Other micro-level mechanisms — such as gender role socialization, labeling, and self-conception — may be necessary to specify how macro-level structures impinge upon individual behavior and translate into gender differences in delinquency (Heimer 1995, 1996). Second, most research on gender and delinquency has been concerned with interaction effects by gender in the processes that lead to delinquent behavior, rather than with gender differences in levels of independent variables. Smith and Paternoster (1987) tested social control, differential association, strain, and deterrence theories and, finding few gender interactions, concluded that a difference in exposure to factors, such as association with persons who maintain definitions favorable to crime, leads to delinquency for both males and females. Heimer (1995), however, tested an interactionist model of delinquency and found that the gender gap in delinquency was due slightly more to differences in slopes than differences in levels of independent variables.

This article examines a symbolic interactionist micro-level model of gender and delinquency. We apply Matsueda's (1992) symbolic interactionist theory of delinquency and the self as reflected appraisals. We examine gender differences in the causes, consequences, and content of reflected appraisals of the self. We also examine whether an interactionist model can explain the gender gap in delinquency by decomposing the gap in delinquency into components explained by levels of independent variables, explained by differences in effects of independent variables, and unexplained by the model.

Gender, Socialization, and Delinquency: A Symbolic Interactionist Theory of the Self

To examine the interrelationships among gender, self-concept, labeling, and delinquency, we draw on Matsueda's (1992) symbolic interactionist model of delinquency. We briefly outline the major tenets of the model, and then derive hypotheses of gender and delinquency.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTION, REFLECTED APPRAISALS, AND LABELING

From an interactionist perspective, the important mechanism by which interactants influence each other is role taking, which consists of projecting oneself into the role of others, and appraising from their standpoint the situation, oneself in the situation, and possible lines of action (Blumer 1969; Mead 1934). The self that emerges through this role-taking process consists of an individual's perception of how others view him or her, and should be somewhat stable across similar situations. This self, termed the "looking glass self" by Cooley (1922) and the "self as an object" by Mead (1934), is a process in which perceptions of how significant others see the individual are reflections of how they actually see him or her (Felson 1985, 1989; Kinch 1963). In other words, the self is a reflected appraisal and should constitute an important locus of social

control. The content of the self — that is, the kind of object formed from the standpoint of generalized others — is critical in determining the direction that social control takes. For example, youths who see themselves as bad kids, deviants, or rule violators may be more likely to engage in delinquency than those who see themselves as conformers (Matsueda 1992). Moreover, this self should be rooted in reference groups through a process of informal labeling or social identification (Lofland 1969). The self, then, is linked to social structure through the organization of reference groups and lines of communication (Shibutani 1955).

Etiological statements of labeling theory focus on the negative consequences of labeling an individual as delinquent (Lemert 1951, 1972; Tannenbaum 1938). The response of the community — initially parents, peers, and teachers, and later, members of the juvenile justice system — to initial acts of primary deviance is to label the youth as “bad” or “delinquent.” These labels are not randomly distributed across the social structure but are more likely to be applied to the powerless, disadvantaged, and poor, in part because the community sometimes acts on stereotypical images of delinquency. Thus, while delinquent labels are more likely to be applied to youth who engage in rule-violating behavior, it may be that the disadvantaged are more likely to be labeled regardless of behavior, i.e., to constitute the “falsely accused” (Becker 1963). The delinquent label, in turn, influences the self-image of the youth, who comes to view himself or herself from the standpoint of others as “delinquent,” which increases the likelihood of future delinquency. The result is a self-fulfilling prophecy, in which the process of deviance amplification or secondary deviance creates a disproportionate number of delinquents among the disadvantaged.

Empirical research on these propositions has been inconsistent. Some studies find that official labeling affects self-images; others do not. Still others conclude that the relationship holds only for youth less heavily involved in delinquency (Jensen 1980). Similarly, research on official labeling and delinquent behavior has been inconsistent (Hagan & Palloni 1990; Ray & Downs 1986; Thomas & Bishop 1984), leading some to conclude that research should focus on the effects of informal rather than official labels (Paternoster & Iovanni 1989). Indeed, Matsueda (1992) and Menard and Morse (1984) find that, controlling for prior delinquency, perceptions of negative informal labeling have substantial effects on subsequent delinquency.

To examine the effects of parents’ informal labels on reflected appraisals and delinquency, Matsueda (1992) integrates labeling theory and interactionist principles on the formation of the self to specify a symbolic interactionist theory of delinquency. He focuses on four domains of content of the self: the self as rule violator, sociable, distressed, and likely to succeed. Consistent with labeling theory, he finds that parents are more likely to label their children rule violators if the children have committed delinquent acts, are nonwhite, or reside in an urban setting. As predicted by symbolic interactionism, he also finds that, net of prior delinquency, parental labels significantly increase youths’ reflected appraisals of themselves as rule violators, and as sociable and distressed. In general, reflected appraisals strongly influence delinquent behavior and mediate much of the effect of parental labels on delinquency. Specifically, reflected

appraisals of self as a rule violator and as sociable have significant positive effects on delinquent behavior, while reflected appraisals of self as distressed have a significant negative effect. Parental labels of youths as rule violators and as sociable also significantly increase youths' delinquency. In conducting these analyses, Matsueda (1992) uses data for males only and does not make cross-gender comparisons.

GENDER SOCIALIZATION AND SOCIAL CONTROL

According to symbolic interactionism, organized groups control the behavior of their members by serving as generalized others, which constitute a core element of the self. This general process of social control should be invariant across gender. That is, following Matsueda's (1992) specification, for males and females alike, reflected appraisals of self should be a reflection of actual appraisals (labels) made by significant others, and delinquent behavior should in part result from reflected appraisals as a bad or deviant youth. But, because of differences in the structural location of male and female gender roles, the magnitude or content of social control may vary across gender. In other words, gender differences may exist in the extent to which labeling by significant others influences the development of reflected appraisals, in the extent to which these reflected appraisals influence behavior, and in the content of the reflected appraisals developed. These gender differences, then, should explain much of the gender gap in delinquency.

Heimer (1989) has argued that this gender gap in interaction and delinquency may be linked to the historical emergence of gender roles. She notes that, historically, a dichotomy of gender roles has existed in which female roles revolve around child rearing and domestic labor, stressing skills of nurturing and managing relationships; while male roles entail paid labor in the marketplace, stressing technical skills, autonomy, and emotional toughness (see also England & Farkas 1986; Oakley 1972). In limiting females to the domestic sphere, gender socialization has also facilitated the control of female sexuality. In this "social organization of gender" (Chodorow 1978), females are socialized to be nurturant and caring, while males are socialized to be instrumental and independent (Block 1983; Eagly 1987; Gilligan 1982). It follows that socialization to gender roles will cause females to be more concerned with relationships, maintain more open lines of communication, and perhaps be more controlled by the appraisals of significant others. Conversely, males will be less concerned about relationships, freer to act autonomously, and more likely to engage in delinquency (Heimer 1989).

Social psychological research on gender differences in the self supports this view. Researchers have found that the female self-concept is heavily influenced by how she perceives that others view her, while the male self-concept is more autonomous of the appraisals of others. Gender socialization causes adolescent girls to be concerned with relationships, which causes them to be more vulnerable to peer influence (Hoelter 1984), to be more concerned with self-appraisals as well-liked and friendly (Rosenberg & Simmons 1975), and to develop self-esteem from reflected appraisals as a good person (Schwalbe & Staples 1991). Conversely, boys are socialized to be more autonomous, causing

them to be more concerned with achievement and competence, to be less vulnerable to peer influence, and to develop self-esteem from social comparisons.¹

These gender differences may affect the relationship between the self (reflected appraisals) and delinquent behavior. If females are more relationship-oriented and more influenced by what others think of them, their behavior may be more susceptible to reflected appraisals. This, however, may vary by different domains of *content* of the self. For males, domains of the self that emphasize autonomy and independence may be more salient because they are more consistent with a male role. In contrast, for females, domains that emphasize relationships and dependence may be more salient. Moreover, gender socialization may lead to differences in *levels* of various reflected appraisals, which may influence the gender gap in delinquency.

These gender differences in reflected appraisals and delinquency may be structured by a labeling process. Labeling theory implies that males are more likely than females to be labeled delinquent, in part because they engage in more objective acts of rule violation, and in part because common stereotypes portray delinquency as a male phenomenon (Farrell & Swigert 1978). But at the same time, because the family and juvenile justice system hold a double standard for evaluating and controlling sexual behavior, females may be more subject to labeling for status offenses (Chesney-Lind 1989; Schur 1984). Females are more likely to be arrested for status offenses (Chesney-Lind 1977; Teilmann & Landry 1981), even though males are significantly more likely to report such offenses (Canter 1982), both because juvenile justice officials seem impelled to respond more harshly to such behavior when engaged in by females, and because parents appear more willing to report their daughters than their sons to the authorities for offenses such as incorrigibility. Thus, status offenses committed by females not only constitute a serious affront to role expectations, but also undermine both parental and official control of female sexuality (Chesney-Lind 1977; Schur 1984).

Labeling may also affect females more strongly than males. If females are more relationship-oriented, they may be more sensitive to the opinions of others and more vulnerable to negative labels (Ray & Downs 1986). Stated differently, they may be more sensitive to the perceived costs of labeling, such as informal sanctions, stigmatization, and shaming by significant others (Braithwaite 1989; Jensen & Erickson 1978). Such gender differences in the effect of labeling on delinquency should operate through differential effects on female versus male reflected appraisals as delinquent.

Gender socialization and labeling may also affect reflected appraisals as distressed, which may influence gender differences in delinquency. Females are more likely than males to experience distress (Gore & Mangione 1983). This could be because females are relegated to domestic roles that offer little gratification or status (Gove & Tudor 1973), because females possess fewer role identities than males (Thoits 1986), or because females are more emotionally involved in the lives of significant others, causing them to become distressed when a significant other experiences negative life events (Kessler & McLeod 1984). For girls, greater distress could be due to role conflict, especially in the transition to adulthood. Girls are taught to focus on and be successful in

interpersonal relationships in the domestic sphere, while at the same time they are prepared by the school to assume instrumental roles in the public sphere. The conflict generated by this dichotomy may cause greater distress for females and more difficulties coping with the transition to early adolescence (Bush & Simmons 1987). Such gender-specific role strain and the accompanying distress could lead to increased delinquency (Berger 1989). Stinchcombe (1964) found that, in the late fifties, girls oriented to marriage were less achievement-oriented and more delinquent than girls oriented to the labor market. For our purposes, the important point is that these processes could lead to gender differences in reflected appraisals as distressed, which in turn could lead to gender differences in delinquent behavior.

This discussion implies four hypotheses. First, broadly speaking, reflected appraisals may be more important on average for adolescent females than for adolescent males and may have a greater impact on behavior for females. Second, differences in the importance of reflected appraisals by gender may vary by different domains of *content* of the self: for males, rule violation and delinquency may be more salient because they are consistent with a male role, whereas distress may be more salient for females. Third, gender differences in socialization and labeling may lead to differences in levels of certain domains of the self, including being sociable, successful, delinquent, and distressed. Fourth, the gender gap in delinquency may be explained by a symbolic interactionist model, through gender differences in *levels* of the reflected appraisal process, and magnitudes of *effects* in this process.

Data, Methods, and Hypotheses

To test these propositions, we use data from the National Youth Survey (NYS), a longitudinal study of delinquency and drug use conducted by Elliott and his colleagues (Elliott et al. 1983; Elliott, Huizinga & Ageton 1985; Elliott, Huizinga & Menard 1989). The NYS employed a multistage cluster sampling design to gather a probability sample of households in the U.S. in 1976. Three stages of sampling geographical units resulted in the random selection of 7,998 households and all 2,360 eligible youths residing in them. Of those 2,360 youths, 1,725 consented to participate in the study and (along with one of each one's parents) were interviewed initially in 1977.² The sample that resulted is reasonably representative of all noninstitutionalized 11-17 year-olds in the U.S. Our analyses use the first three annual waves of data. Attrition for the second and third waves of the survey is remarkably low. In 1978 the rate of respondent loss was 4%, and in 1979 the cumulative loss was 6%. A comparison of stayers and leavers revealed no influence of attrition on distributions of age, sex, ethnicity, class, residence, or reported delinquency (Elliott, Knowles & Canter 1981).

The NYS used personal interviews to collect self-reports of delinquency, parents' appraisals of their children, and youths' reflected appraisals of themselves from the standpoint of parents, friends, and teachers.³ The content of the appraisals comprises four substantive dimensions: (1) sociable, measured by "well-liked" and "get along well with others"; (2) likely to succeed, measured by a single indicator; (3) distressed, measured by "often upset" and "have

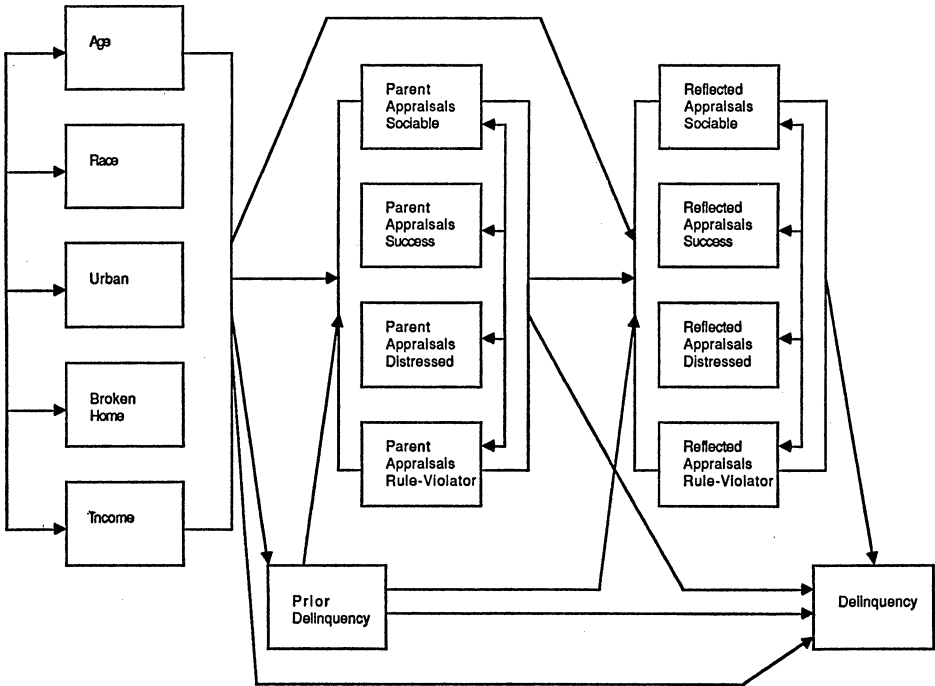
a lot of personal problems"; and (4) rule violator, measured by "get into trouble" and "break rules" (Matsueda 1992). Self-reported delinquency is assessed in these analyses by a 24-item scale of general delinquency, because recent research provides little evidence that delinquents specialize in offenses (Hindelang, Hirsch & Weis 1981; Klein 1984; Wolfgang, Figlio & Sellin 1972).⁴ We also conducted analyses replacing the 24-item scale first with a 5-item status offense scale and then with a single indicator of sexual intercourse to test hypotheses about females being more likely than males to be labeled delinquent for involvement in these offenses. We use the categorical rates of involvement in delinquency, rather than actual frequencies, since the former have less skewed distributions. Finally, the NYS also includes measures of background characteristics and structural variables relevant to our labeling hypotheses: age, race, urban residence, broken home, and family income.⁵ (See Appendix A for a description of the variables included in the model.)

To analyze these data, we specify measurement models of the reflected appraisal process, as well as a structural model of the causes and consequences of reflected appraisals. Specifying and estimating measurement models of indicators of parental and reflected appraisals allows us to test specific hypotheses about the structure underlying the observed indicators and to estimate and control for response error in the survey measures. (A detailed analysis of the measurement models is presented in Appendix B.) We estimate simultaneously the measurement and substantive models using Jöreskog and Sörbom's (1988) LISREL 7 and Bentler's (1989) EQS programs. To test equality constraints on parameters across gender, we use the Lagrangian Multiplier test in the EQS program. We also estimate a covariance structure model with structured means, which allows us to decompose the gender gap in delinquency into components representing gender differences in *levels* of independent variables versus differences in *effects* (slopes) of independent variables.

The substantive model is shown in Figure 1. Our estimation of this model extends Matsueda's (1992) analysis of males to a cross-gender comparison. The model specifies causal relationships among four blocks of latent constructs: (1) exogenous background variables measured at time 1; (2) endogenous parental appraisals of youths as sociable, likely to succeed, distressed, and rule violators, measured at time 1; (3) endogenous youth reflected appraisals of self as sociable, likely to succeed, distressed, and rule violators, measured at time 2; and (4) delinquency measured at time 3. The causal ordering of the variables follows our theoretical specification: parental appraisals cause reflected appraisals, which in turn cause delinquent behavior. The time ordering of variables follows this causal ordering to reduce ambiguities in making causal inferences.⁶

Following Matsueda (1992), we specify hypotheses derived from labeling and symbolic interactionist theories and a gender socialization perspective and test them using data for both males and females. Our hypotheses are enumerated in Table 1. We examine three labeling and six symbolic interactionist hypotheses that should apply to both males and females. But while symbolic interactionism specifies that the same general process of labeling and reflected appraisals should explain delinquency for both males and females, our discussion of gender socialization suggests that the concrete manifestation of

FIGURE 1: A Substantive Model of Parental Appraisals, Reflected Appraisals, and Delinquency



such processes may vary across gender. We specify six gender socialization hypotheses to capture how these concrete conditions may differ for males and females. Taken together, the hypotheses presented in Table 1 imply that the gender gap in delinquency is largely explained by (1) gender differences in levels of labeling and reflected appraisals, and (2) gender differences in the magnitude of effects in this process, as specified by the gender socialization perspective.

Estimation of a Cross-Gender Model of Delinquency

In presenting the results, we focus on our labeling and symbolic interactionist hypotheses, emphasizing hypothesized gender differences. We concentrate on analyses employing the 24-item scale of general delinquency but occasionally refer to models using the five-item status offense scale and the single indicator of sexual intercourse. Overall, the model fits reasonably well for both groups: $L^2 = 777.94$, $df = 434$ for males; and $L^2 = 736.62$, $df = 434$ for females. Maximum likelihood parameter estimates of the substantive model appear in Table 2 for males and Table 3 for females.

Our results provide some support for hypotheses derived from labeling theory. For both sexes, background variables reflecting structurally disadvantaged positions increase the likelihood of being labeled a rule violator by parents (line 5 of Tables 2 and 3). These effects, however, are larger for females. The total effects on parental labels as a rule violator exerted by race ($L^2 = 5.53$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$), broken home ($L^2 = 6.97$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$), and income ($L^2 = 8.58$, $df = 1$, $p < .005$) are significantly larger for females. We also find the effect of prior delinquency on parental labels to be significantly larger for females ($L^2 = 12.37$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). Thus, although females engage in less delinquent behavior than do males, delinquency is more likely to result in a parental label of rule violator for females, perhaps because female offending is inconsistent with gender-specific expectations and readily violates parents' stereotypical conceptions of delinquency as a male enterprise. This finding also demonstrates less evidence of false accusations of females. The association between prior delinquency and parental labeling is greater for females than for males.

But in those cases in which females *are* falsely accused, parents base their labels on stereotypical images of delinquents as black, from broken homes, and from low-income families. We find more evidence of *disadvantaged* groups being falsely accused among females, for whom race, broken home, and income affect parental labels as rule violators even net of delinquency. For males, only race and age exert significant direct effects (compare line 5 of Tables 2 and 3). Moreover, the direct effects of race ($L^2 = 6.07$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$), broken home ($L^2 = 11.78$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$), and income ($L^2 = 7.19$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$) on parental labels are significantly larger for females. These results imply that males are more likely to be falsely accused not because of structural disadvantages captured by our background variables, but perhaps because being male and exhibiting a "bad attitude" conforms to society's image of delinquents (see Stinchcombe 1964).⁷ For females to be falsely accused requires that they come from disadvantaged backgrounds.⁸

We hypothesized that the effect of prior behavior on parental labels as rule violators would be particularly strong for females when we replaced the general delinquency index with a scale of status offenses. Yet we do not find this to be the case: the effect of status offenses on parental appraisals of youths as rule violators is almost identical across gender (unstandardized coefficient of .30 for males and .29 for females). When we estimated the model with sexual intercourse as a single indicator of delinquency, we again found no significant difference in parental labeling for the two groups. The effect of sexual behavior on parental labels as a rule violator is only slightly smaller for males (.119) than for females (.131). Thus, it appears that, contrary to our prediction, parents are not more likely to label daughters than sons for engaging in status offenses. This finding is inconsistent with prior research on gender differences in juvenile justice responses to status offenses (Chesney-Lind 1977; Teilmann & Landry 1981). But juvenile justice responses are not only perceptions of behavior, but also explicit attempts to control. It may be that parents' perceptions of status offenses are similar for males and females, but their attempts to control this behavior are greater for females.

The hypothesis that the labeling process is more consequential for females than for males is also unsupported. In fact, we find the opposite: the *total* effect

TABLE 1: Hypothesis Derived from Labeling, Symbolic Interactionism, and Gender Socialization

Labeling Hypothesis

1. Background characteristics reflecting structural disadvantages (e.g., low income, broken home, race) and prior delinquency will affect parental labels of youth (particularly as a rule violator).
2. Disadvantaged backgrounds will affect parental labels both indirectly through prior delinquency and directly (net of prior delinquency), if parents make false accusations based on stereotypical images of delinquents.
3. Deviance amplification implies that informal labeling will affect future delinquency and, combined with the hypothesis of false accusations, may lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Symbolic Interactionist Hypotheses

1. Parental appraisals will have substantial direct effects on their reflected appraisal counterparts, net of prior behavior.
2. Reflected appraisals of self, particularly as a rule violator, will increase delinquency.
3. The effect of parental appraisals on delinquency will be mediated by reflected appraisals of self.
4. Prior delinquency will increase reflected appraisals as a rule violator.
5. Prior delinquent behavior will influence future delinquency both directly and indirectly through the reflected appraisal process.
6. The effects of background variables on delinquency will be mediated by the reflected appraisal process.

Gender Socialization Hypotheses

1. The labeling process will be more consequential for females than for males: the total effects of parental labels on delinquency will be larger for females.
 2. Because of social control of female sexuality, the likelihood of being labeled a rule violator as a result of status offenses, particularly sexuality, will increase parental labeling for girls more than for boys.
 3. Because females are more relationship oriented than males and maintain more open communication with significant others, they will be more accurate in their perceptions of others' appraisals of them.
 4. The accuracy of perceptions of others' appraisals differs by content of the appraisals: parental appraisals of youth as a rule violator and successful will have larger effects on reflected appraisals for males than for females, while parental appraisals as sociable and distressed will have larger effects on reflected appraisals for females.
 5. The effect of reflected appraisals as a rule violator on delinquency will be larger for males than for females.
 6. The levels of reflected appraisals differ across gender, with females being less likely than males to see themselves from the standpoint of others as rule violators and more likely to see themselves as sociable.
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TABLE 2: Unstandardized and Standardized Parameter Estimates of the Substantive Model: Males

Dependent variables	Predetermined Variables							
	Age	Race	Urban	Broken Home	Income	Prior Delinq. 1	Parent Soc. 1	Parent Succ. 1
1. Prior delinquency	.022*** (.004) .170	.048 (.026) .071	.080*** (.020) .139	.069*** (.020) .127	-.004 (.004) -.035			
<i>Parental appraisals</i>								
2. Sociable 1	.022 (.011) .078	-.019 (.065) -.013	.013 (.053) .010	-.109* (.052) -.092	.008 (.011) .033	-.263** (.086) -.121		
3. Success 1	.008 (.011) .025	-.040 (.063) -.024	.001 (.051) .001	-.067 (.050) -.050	.011 (.010) .042	-.270** (.086) -.110		
4. Distress 1	.001 (.012) .002	-.020 (.069) -.012	-.001 (.056) -.001	.160** (.056) .118	-.017 (.011) -.062	.516*** (.098) .207		
5. Rule violator 1	-.054*** (.013) -.167	-.203** (.075) -.120	.091 (.061) .063	.030 (.060) .022	-.004 (.012) -.013	.697*** (.104) .276		
<i>Youth-reflected appraisals</i>								
6. Sociable 2	.000 (.007) .001	-.035 (.038) -.043	.030 (.031) .044	-.008 (.030) -.012	.002 (.006) .014	-.008 (.054) -.007	.099* (.042) .178	.021 (.027) .043
7. Success 2	-.017 (.012) -.059	.160* (.066) .104	.062 (.053) .047	.045 (.052) .036	.032** (.010) .126	-.016 (.094) -.007	.053 (.071) .051	.072 (.047) .077
8. Distress 2	.002 (.010) .006	-.145* (.058) -.105	-.041 (.046) -.035	.018 (.046) .016	-.026** (.009) -.114	.192* (.082) .093	-.085 (.062) -.090	-.043 (.041) -.051
9. Rule violator 2	.031* (.013) .091	.131 (.070) .073	-.059 (.056) -.038	.015 (.056) .011	-.020 (.011) -.067	.897*** (.102) .333	-.106 (.076) -.085	.032 (.050) .029
<i>Delinquent behavior</i>								
10. Delinquency 3	.018*** (.004) .120	.039 (.025) .049	.029 (.019) .042	.007 (.019) .011	-.006 (.004) -.042	.453*** (.038) .384	.056* (.027) .104	-.020 (.017) -.041

(N = 851)

^a Standard errors appear in parentheses. Standardized parameter estimates appear in italics.

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

TABLE 2: Unstandardized and Standardized Parameter Estimates of the Substantive Model: Males (Continued)

Dependent variables	Predetermined Variables						Intercept	R ²
	Parent Distress 1	Parent Rule Viol. 1	Youth Soc. 2	Youth Succ. 2	Youth Distress 2	Youth Rule Viol. 2		
1. Prior delinquency							.087*** (.010)	.066
<i>Parental appraisals</i>								
2. Sociable 1							.018 (.033)	.032
3. Success 1							.004 (.032)	.019
4. Distress 1							-.024 (.035)	.077
5. Rule violator 1							.101** (.037)	.127
<i>Youth-reflected appraisals</i>								
6. Sociable 2	.014 (.037) .029	-.042 (.043) -.087					-.074*** (.021)	.065
7. Success 2	.039 (.065) .043	-.187* (.075) -.206					-.071* (.035)	.103
8. Distress 2	.120* (.057) .144	.075 (.065) .092					-.081* (.032)	.165
9. Rule violator 2	-.125 (.070) -.115	.393*** (.084) .368					.198*** (.036)	.288
<i>Delinquent behavior</i>								
10. Delinquency 3	-.011 (.025) -.023	.086** (.030) .183	.155*** (.044) .160	.009 (.020) .017	-.051* (.024) -.089	.157*** (.021) .358	.017 (.012)	.461

(N = 851)

^a Standard errors are in parentheses. Standardized parameter estimates appear in italics.

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

TABLE 3: Unstandardized and Standardized Parameter Estimates of the Substantive Model: Females

	Predetermined Variables							
	Age	Race	Urban	Broken Home	Income	Prior Delinq. 1	Parent Soc. 1	Parent Succ. 1
<i>Dependent variables</i>								
1. Prior delinquency	.010*** (.003) <i>.131</i>	.009 (.017) <i>.021</i>	.029* (.012) <i>.089</i>	.034** (.012) <i>.110</i>	-.001 (.002) <i>-.015</i>			
<i>Parental appraisals</i>								
2. Sociable 1	.012 (.012) <i>.046</i>	.106 (.073) <i>.070</i>	-.009 (.053) <i>-.008</i>	-.047 (.055) <i>-.041</i>	.001 (.011) <i>.006</i>	-.277 (.161) <i>-.077</i>		
3. Success 1	.003 (.012) <i>.010</i>	.017 (.074) <i>.009</i>	-.008 (.055) <i>-.006</i>	-.047 (.056) <i>-.034</i>	.016 (.011) <i>.059</i>	-.253 (.165) <i>-.057</i>		
4. Distress 1	.019 (.013) <i>.061</i>	-.090 (.078) <i>-.051</i>	-.027 (.057) <i>-.020</i>	.121* (.059) <i>.091</i>	-.012 (.011) <i>-.046</i>	.651*** (.176) <i>.152</i>		
5. Rule violator 1	-.018 (.013) <i>-.057</i>	-.399*** (.078) <i>-.277</i>	.010 (.057) <i>.007</i>	.134* (.058) <i>.101</i>	-.024* (.011) <i>-.095</i>	1.241*** (.174) <i>.293</i>		
<i>Youth-reflected appraisals</i>								
6. Sociable 2	.003 (.008) <i>.016</i>	.041 (.050) <i>.039</i>	.005 (.035) <i>.006</i>	-.027 (.036) <i>-.035</i>	.006 (.007) <i>.038</i>	-.238* (.114) <i>-.095</i>	.216*** (.059) <i>.312</i>	-.005 (.031) <i>-.009</i>
7. Success 2	.030* (.013) <i>.089</i>	.092 (.083) <i>.049</i>	.122* (.058) <i>.083</i>	-.104 (.059) <i>-.074</i>	-.006 (.012) <i>-.022</i>	-.620** (.190) <i>-.137</i>	.081 (.095) <i>.065</i>	.060 (.052) <i>.059</i>
8. Distress 2	-.007 (.013) <i>-.022</i>	-.112 (.080) <i>-.064</i>	-.134* (.056) <i>-.098</i>	.132* (.057) <i>.101</i>	-.025** (.011) <i>-.097</i>	.329 (.182) <i>.078</i>	-.077 (.091) <i>-.066</i>	.008 (.050) <i>.009</i>
9. Rule violator 2	-.006 (.012) <i>-.018</i>	.032 (.078) <i>.017</i>	-.189*** (.054) <i>-.131</i>	.149** (.056) <i>.108</i>	.005 (.011) <i>.018</i>	1.225*** (.180) <i>.276</i>	-.078 (.089) <i>-.064</i>	-.011 (.049) <i>-.011</i>
<i>Delinquent behavior</i>								
10. Delinquency 3	.004 (.003) <i>.049</i>	.023 (.016) <i>.052</i>	.013 (.012) <i>.038</i>	.032** (.012) <i>.099</i>	-.006* (.002) <i>-.088</i>	.402*** (.039) <i>.385</i>	-.072*** (.020) <i>-.250</i>	.024* (.010) <i>.103</i>
(N = 747)								

* Standard errors appear in parentheses. Standardized parameter estimates appear in italics. Latent intercepts for females are fixed to be 0.

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

TABLE 3: Unstandardized and Standardized Parameter Estimates of the Substantive Model: Females (Continued)

Dependent variables	Predetermined Variables						R ²
	Parent Distress 1	Parent Rule Viol. 1	Youth Soc. 2	Youth Succ. 2	Youth Distress 2	Youth Rule Viol. 2	
1. Prior delinquency							.038
<i>Parental appraisals</i>							
2. Sociable 1							.018
3. Success 1							.011
4. Distress 1							.051
5. Rule violator 1							.207
<i>Youth-reflected appraisals</i>							
6. Sociable 2	<i>-.008</i> (.043) <i>-.014</i>	<i>.051</i> (.048) <i>.086</i>					.097
7. Success 2	<i>-.070</i> (.072) <i>-.066</i>	<i>-.106</i> (.079) <i>-.100</i>					.110
8. Distress 2	<i>.184**</i> (.070) <i>.188</i>	<i>.097</i> (.077) <i>.098</i>					.170
9. Rule violator 2	<i>.014</i> (.067) <i>.013</i>	<i>.255***</i> (.076) <i>.244</i>					.233
<i>Delinquent behavior</i>							
10. Delinquency 3	<i>-.009</i> (.014) <i>-.037</i>	<i>-.020</i> (.017) <i>-.083</i>	<i>.077***</i> (.023) <i>.185</i>	<i>-.006</i> (.010) <i>-.027</i>	<i>-.017</i> (.014) <i>-.069</i>	<i>.067***</i> (.015) <i>.283</i>	.303
(N = 747)							

^a Standard errors appear in parentheses. Standardized parameter estimates appear in italics. Latent intercepts for females are fixed to be 0.

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

of parental labels of youths as rule violators on delinquency is substantial for males (standardized coefficient of .29), yet not only trivially small for females, but in the wrong direction (-.002) and statistically nonsignificant. Moreover, the unstandardized coefficient is significantly larger for males than for females ($L^2 = 9.61$, $df = 1$, $p < .005$). Thus, contrary to previous research on gender differences in the labeling process, we find that the deviance amplification process involving informal labels operates for males but not for females. Being labeled a rule violator increases subsequent delinquency for males but has little total effect on delinquency for females. One possible explanation for this inconsistency with prior research is that negative labels such as rule violator may actually have a *deterrent* effect for females. Daughters may accurately perceive parental labels, but negative parental labels may dissuade them from further involvement in delinquency, as they struggle to maintain a positive image in their parents' eyes. In other words, their perceptions of the costs of being labeled rule violators may deter them from future delinquency. Boys, on the other hand, may be less concerned with such image maintenance, or more important, may view the rule violator label differently. That is, the *meaning* of the delinquent label may vary by gender: for females, this label departs from their ideal self and thus requires a change in behavior; for males, the delinquent label conforms to an image of "maleness."

Our model provides support for a symbolic interactionist theory of delinquency. The hypothesis of a looking-glass self is supported: with one exception, parental appraisals of youth exert nontrivial effects on youth's reflected appraisals (Tables 2 and 3, lines 6-9). These effects, which hold for both males and females, are particularly strong for appraisals of youths as rule violators. The one exception is appraisal as likely to succeed, which has little effect in either sample.

Our hypothesis that, as a result of gender socialization, parental appraisals will have larger effects on reflected appraisals for females than for males is not supported. Tests of the difference in coefficients for each of the four appraisals all fail to reject the hypothesis of invariance.⁹ We also speculated that this process may vary by content of the appraisal. The coefficients follow the hypothesized pattern — females are slightly more accurate in discerning parental appraisals of sociability and distress, while males are slightly more accurate in discerning appraisals of rule violation. None of these differences, however, is statistically significant.

More important, we find support for our major symbolic interactionist hypothesis that delinquent behavior is determined by reflected appraisals of self. For both males and females, reflected appraisals as rule violators exert a substantial and significant effect on delinquency. In fact, only prior delinquent behavior has a larger effect on future delinquency (line 10 of Tables 2 and 3). Thus, as symbolic interactionism proposes, the self as an object is an important locus of social control: those who see themselves from the standpoint of others as rule violators are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior.¹⁰ We also find that reflected appraisals as sociable have a significant positive effect on delinquency, which is invariant across samples. Those who see themselves from the standpoint of others as well-liked and getting along well with others are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior. This finding, perhaps reflecting

the group nature of delinquency, contradicts depictions of delinquents as isolated sociopaths.

As hypothesized from our gender socialization perspective, the effect of reflected appraisals as a rule violator on delinquency is significantly greater for males than for females. The unstandardized coefficient is .16 for males and .07 for females, with $L^2 = 22.42$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$. Viewing oneself as a rule violator from the standpoint of others leads males more than females to act on that view of self and violate the law. This is consistent with our expectation that gender socialization and the labeling process would cause reflected appraisals as a rule violator to be a more central component of the self for males and have greater consequences for behavior.

Consistent with symbolic interactionism, reflected appraisals — particularly as a rule violator — mediate much of the effect of parental labels on delinquency. Thus, to a large extent, the self as an object viewed from the standpoint of others provides the mechanism by which informal labels amplify delinquency. Nevertheless, contrary to symbolic interactionism, some parental appraisals maintain significant direct effects on delinquency net of reflected appraisals. For males, parental appraisal as a rule violator has a significant direct effect on delinquency (standardized coefficient of .18), and parental appraisal as sociable has a small but significant positive effect.¹¹ For females, parental appraisal as sociable exerts a large negative effect on delinquency, which is opposite in sign to the effect for males and opposite in sign to the effect of reflected appraisal as sociable; and parental appraisal as a success has a small but significant positive effect on delinquency.

We can speculate about possible explanations for these findings of direct effects of parental appraisals on delinquency, which are inconsistent with an interactionist perspective. Perhaps other elements of the role-taking process not included in our model would mediate the effects of parental labels on delinquency. Heimer and Matsueda (1994) specify a model that takes into account several elements of role taking (in addition to reflected appraisals), including associating with delinquent peers, holding delinquent attitudes, and anticipating negative reactions by others to delinquency. They find that incorporating association with delinquent peers into their model causes the direct effect of the parental label as a rule violator on delinquency for males to disappear. Alternatively, structural processes not captured by parent-child interaction may account for our findings. For example, for males, occupying the troublemaker role could be perceived as such by parents, who become alienated or unaffectionate toward the boy, which in turn increases delinquency net of the boy's reflected appraisals (Matsueda 1992). For females, occupying the sociable role could lead parents to perceive their daughter as sociable. These parents, perhaps recognizing the group nature of delinquency, may more strongly control and closely supervise their sociable daughter without communicating to her the reason for this stringent control. Thus, a parental appraisal as sociable would decrease the likelihood of delinquent involvement for daughters who fail to perceive the parental label. Finally, the parental labels — rule violator for males and sociable for females — could reflect other individual characteristics of parents not captured in our model that influence delinquency net of reflected appraisals.¹²

In support of symbolic interactionism, we find that some of the stability in delinquency is mediated by labeling and reflected appraisal processes. This varies by gender. For males, 30% of the effect of prior delinquency on future delinquent behavior is mediated by intervening variables in the model; for females, the figure is 14%. Our model also accounts for some of the effects of background variables on delinquency. For males, age, race, urban residence, and broken home have significant total effects on delinquency; all but age are completely mediated by the intervening mechanisms of the model. For females, age and broken home have significant total effects on delinquency; the effect of age is mediated by intervening variables, as is two-fifths of the effect of broken home.

To determine whether our linear model with different slopes for males and females can account for the gender gap in delinquency, we estimated our covariance structure model with structured means, and decomposed the gender gap in delinquency into three components: (1) the unexplained portion of the gap, (2) the portion of the gap explained by gender differences in levels of covariates, and (3) the portion due to an interaction of effects and levels (Jones & Kelley 1984). The equation is

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

$$\text{Gap} = \underbrace{\text{Intercepts} + \text{Differential effects}}_{\text{Unexplained Component}} + \underbrace{\text{Differences in levels} + \text{Interaction of effects and levels}}_{\text{Explained Component}}$$

Unexplained Component

Explained Component

The portion of the gender gap unexplained by our model reflects both the difference in intercepts by gender ($\alpha_M - \alpha_F$) and differential effects of independent variables $[\sum \bar{X}_F(\beta_M - \beta_F)]$. The difference in intercepts is the gender gap in delinquency when all independent variables are held constant at zero. Differential effects of independent variables is the portion of the gap due to gender differences in slopes evaluated at the female mean of independent variables. We treat these two components as unexplained and do not try to disentangle intercepts from effects, since to do so requires that all independent variables be measured on ratio scales (Jones & Kelly 1984). The portion of the gender gap explained by our model consists of two components. The first, $\sum \beta_F(\bar{X}_M - \bar{X}_F)$, is the segment of the gap due to differences in levels of independent variables (evaluated at the female slope, β_F). This tells us how many more delinquent acts females would commit (on average) if their mean levels of independent variables were equal to those of males. The second, $\sum (\beta_M - \beta_F)(\bar{X}_M - \bar{X}_F)$, is the segment due to the interaction of gender differences in coefficients and mean levels of independent variables. This tells us how many more delinquent acts females would commit if we simultaneously raised their mean levels of independent variables *and* the effects of those variables (to equal those of males), versus changing them one at a time.

This decomposition allows us to test the hypothesis that mean levels of reflected appraisals vary across gender and help explain the gender gap in delinquency. In support of this hypothesis, we find that the conditional mean

levels of all four reflected appraisals are significantly different for males and females. Holding constant our background variables and prior delinquency, the unexplained component of reflected appraisals is significantly different from zero (see the intercept column of Table 2).

The decomposition of the gender gap in delinquency into the four components listed above is as follows:

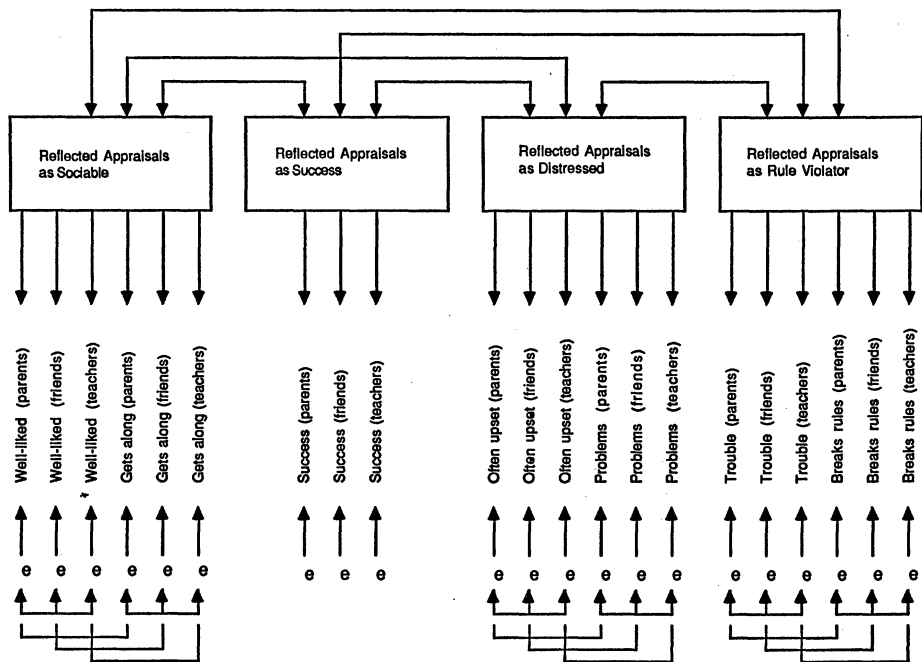
$$\begin{array}{rcccccc}
 .117 & = & .017 & + & 0 & + & .051 & + & .048 \\
 \text{Gap} & = & \text{Intercepts} & & \text{Differential} & & \text{Differences} & & \text{Interaction} \\
 & & & & \text{effects} & & \text{in levels} & & \text{of effects and levels}
 \end{array}$$

The observed gender gap in delinquency is .117, which is statistically significant. The unexplained portion of this gap, .017, is not statistically significant.¹³ Our model does well in explaining the gender gap in delinquency, accounting for 85% of the observed gap.¹⁴ The component due to differences in levels of independent variables (.051) accounts for a substantial portion (44%) of the gap. The component due to the interaction between levels and coefficients (.048) accounts for 41% of the gap. When we examine the contribution of each of our fourteen explanatory variables to the “interaction” and “levels” components of the gender gap in delinquency, we find that the parent and youth rule-violator factors together account for 72% of the interaction component (26% and 47%, respectively). We also find that prior delinquency constitutes 49% of the levels component of the gap, while the youth rule-violator factor constitutes 31%. Thus, reflected appraisals as a rule violator are important to both the levels and interaction components of the gender gap.

Because of the nonlinearity introduced by the gender interactions in our model, the gender gap in delinquency will vary by location of the observation in the distribution of independent variables. Therefore, we examined the gap at several substantively meaningful points in the distribution of independent variables. We performed a simulation, based on our model’s coefficients, to estimate the gap when we vary the mean values of independent variables for males and females. This enables us to determine from our model how best to reduce the gender gap in delinquency (e.g., would the gap be reduced more by giving males the average female values of covariates in the model, or by giving females the average male values of covariates?), as well as how to reduce the overall rate of delinquent behavior. It also allows us to assess the impact of hypothetical policies based on a labeling theory of gender and delinquency. Suppose we could envision a policy that changed levels of parental and reflected appraisals for males and females; what effect would such a policy have on the gender gap in delinquency?

We noted above that the gender gap in delinquency is .117. What would the gap be if females had the same average scores as males on all predictor variables? According to our model, the gap would be nearly halved, to .066, but at the same time the overall rate of delinquency would increase, since females would be committing more delinquent acts.¹⁵ We also examined the opposite possibility: What if males had the same average scores as females on all predictor variables? Here our model implies that the gap is nearly zero (.017).¹⁶ Thus, given the parameters of our model, a hypothetical policy of giving males the levels of independent variables of females would reduce the gender gap in delinquency more than giving females the levels of males. Moreover, since males

FIGURE 2: A Measurement Model of Reflected Appraisals of Self

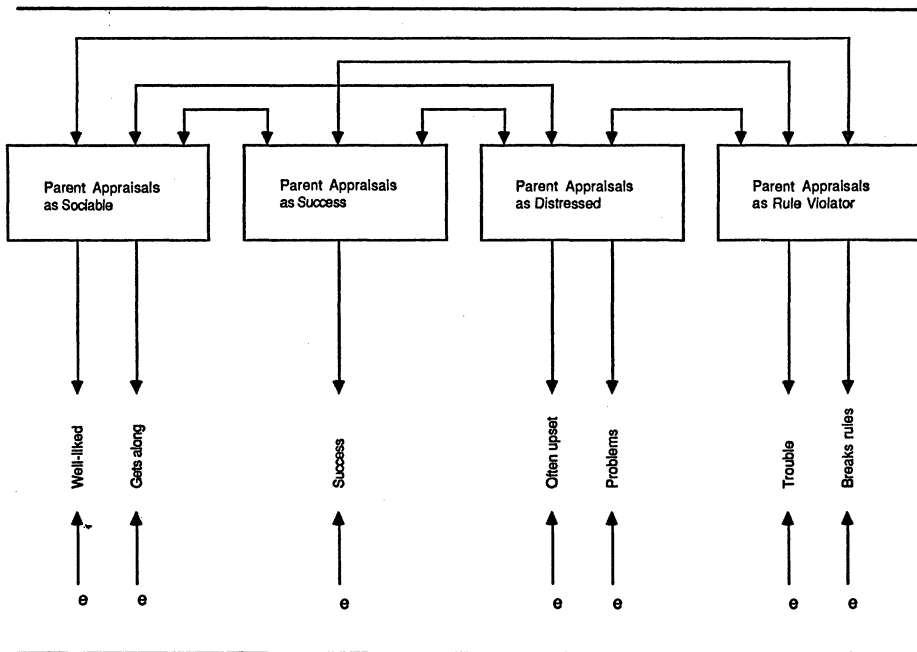


engage in more delinquent behavior than females, this policy would also reduce the overall rate of delinquency. Finally, if the average scores of predictor variables were reversed (i.e., males had the female average scores, and females had the male average scores), the gender gap would change sign (-.034). In this hypothetical scenario, females would commit slightly more delinquent acts than males. But because of the counterbalancing effects of the interactions, this gap is considerably smaller than the gap we observe when both males and females have their own average scores.

Summary and Conclusions

Our analyses support a symbolic interactionist theory of gender and delinquency. We find that the general process producing delinquency is similar across gender. For males and females parental appraisals have strong effects on reflected appraisals as a rule violator, which in turn significantly affect delinquency. At the same time, however, we find some gender differences in the precise magnitude of effects on delinquency. Informal labeling by parents and reflected appraisals as a rule violator are more consequential for males. Also, prior delinquent behavior is more likely to result in a negative parental label for females than for males when measured by a general index of delinquency, but not when measured by an index of status offenses. Finally,

FIGURE 3: A Measurement Model of Parental Appraisals of Youth



males are more likely to be falsely accused. Overall, the model does fairly well in explaining the gender gap in delinquency, with about equal contributions from differences in mean levels of independent variables and differences in coefficients across gender.

These findings are generally consistent with those of Heimer (1996), who examines gender differences in delinquency using alternative operationalizations of role taking than used here. Focusing on attitudinal, definitional, and group process dimensions of role taking, she finds that differential social control explains delinquency for both males and females but nevertheless operates differently across gender. For males, attitudes favoring general deviance and delinquent behavior influence delinquency, whereas for females, attitudes favoring general deviance, anticipated disapproval of friends, and traditional definitions of gender roles affect delinquency. She concludes that the meaning of gender is more important for the social control of females (see also Heimer 1995).

These findings, along with ours, suggest a way of integrating identity theory with differential social control to explain gender differences in delinquency. Identity theories posit that gender-specific behavior is motivated by gender identity: having a feminine identity motivates one to engage in feminine behavior and refrain from masculine behavior. From a control-system view of identity processes (Burke 1991), the motivating mechanism is one of reducing the discrepancy between one's ideal self (gender identity) and one's views of self from the standpoint of others (reflected appraisals). If rule violation and delinquency are perceived as inconsistent with an ideal female self

TABLE 4: Parameter Estimates of the Measurement Models: Males and Females^a

	Observed Mean		Intercept ^b		Observed Variance	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<i>Parental appraisals</i>						
<i>Sociable 1</i>						
Well liked	4.31	4.31	4.31	4.31	.41	.39
Gets along	4.24	4.24	4.24	4.24	.47	.45
<i>Success 1</i>						
Success	4.21	4.23	4.23	4.23	.37	.40
<i>Distressed 1</i>						
Often upset	2.54	2.64	2.57**	2.57**	1.05	1.11
Problems	2.13	2.07	2.08**	2.08**	.82	.79
<i>Rule violator 1</i>						
Trouble	1.87	1.71	1.71	1.71	.74	.62
Breaks rules	2.22	2.03	2.03	2.03	.99	.92
<i>Youth-reflected appraisals</i>						
<i>Sociable 2</i>						
Well liked (parents)	4.23	4.27	4.29	4.29	.35	.38
Well liked (friends)	4.10	4.15	4.17	4.17	.28	.38
Well liked (teachers)	3.99	4.07	4.07	4.07	.33	.30
Gets along (parents)	4.12	4.22	4.22	4.22	.33	.38
Gets along (friends)	4.04	4.15	4.14	4.14	.29	.30
Gets along (teachers)	3.99	4.10	4.09	4.09	.30	.29
<i>Success 2</i>						
Success (parents)	3.94	3.98	4.02**	4.02**	.54	.68
Success (friends)	3.74	3.91	3.89**	3.89**	.57	.56
Success (teachers)	3.79	3.90	3.90	3.90	.51	.55
<i>Distressed 2</i>						
Often upset (parents)	2.68	2.74	2.73	2.73	.98	1.07
Often upset (friends)	2.37	2.51	2.45**	2.45**	.74	1.00
Often upset (teachers)	2.30	2.27	2.31**	2.31**	.68	.82
Problems (parents)	2.24	2.30	2.30	2.30	.73	1.02
Problems (friends)	2.18	2.25	2.23	2.23	.63	.89
Problems (teachers)	2.18	2.18	2.21	2.21	.54	.75
<i>Rule violator 2</i>						
Trouble (parents)	2.30	2.02	1.99	1.99	.81	.72
Trouble (friends)	2.34	1.99	2.00	2.00	.79	.63
Trouble (teachers)	2.33	1.99	1.99	1.99	.73	.58
Break rules (parents)	2.38	2.09	2.06	2.06	.81	.77
Break rules (friends)	2.37	2.01	2.02	2.02	.78	.68
Break rules (teachers)	2.32	1.97	1.98	1.98	.71	.60

^a Males, N = 851; females N = 747.^b Coefficient constrained to be equal across groups;^c Fixed coefficient

TABLE 4: Parameter Estimates of the Measurement Models (Continued)

	Error Variance		Metric ^a Slope		Validity Coefficient	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<i>Parental appraisals</i>						
<i>Sociable 1</i>						
Well liked	.22	.21	.81	.81	.68	.68
Gets along	.17	.19	1.00 ^c	1.00 ^c	.80	.77
<i>Success 1</i>						
Success	.00 ^c	.00 ^c	1.00 ^c	1.00 ^c	1.00 ^c	1.00 ^c
<i>Distressed 1</i>						
Often upset	.67	.73	1.00 ^c	1.00 ^c	.60	.58
Problems	.17	.16	1.30	1.30	.89	.89
<i>Rule violator 1</i>						
Trouble	.34	.26	1.00 ^c	1.00 ^c	.73	.77
Breaks rules	.49	.43	1.14	1.14	.72	.73
<i>Youth-reflected appraisals</i>						
<i>Sociable 2</i>						
Well liked (parents)	.27	.23	1.03**	1.03**	.52	.61
Well liked (friends)	.18	.25	1.01	1.01	.58	.59
Well liked (teachers)	.22	.18	1.03**	1.03**	.55	.66
Gets along (parents)	.20	.21	1.19	1.19	.63	.68
Gets along (friends)	.20	.17	1.00 ^c	1.00 ^c	.57	.66
Gets along (teachers)	.20	.13	1.08**	1.08**	.59	.74
<i>Success 2</i>						
Success (parents)	.25	.28	.95	.95	.73	.76
Success (friends)	.23	.16	1.00 ^c	1.00 ^c	.76	.85
Success (teachers)	.23	.17	.95	.95	.75	.83
<i>Distressed 2</i>						
Often upset (parents)	.68	.72	1.02*	1.02*	.54	.59
Often upset (friends)	.50	.60	1.00 ^c	1.00 ^c	.59	.61
Often upset (teachers)	.41	.46	1.01	1.01	.63	.67
Problems (parents)	.28	.42	1.29	1.29	.78	.77
Problems (friends)	.30	.40	1.15	1.15	.74	.74
Problems (teachers)	.22	.33	1.09	1.09	.77	.75
<i>Rule violator 2</i>						
Trouble (parents)	.40	.32	.97	.97	.72	.74
Trouble (friends)	.33	.23	1.00 ^c	1.00 ^c	.76	.80
Trouble (teachers)	.34	.21	.95	.95	.74	.80
Break rules (parents)	.38	.38	.97	.97	.73	.71
Break rules (friends)	.35	.30	.98	.98	.75	.75
Break rules (teachers)	.30	.25	.95	.95	.76	.77

Different across groups * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

or feminine identity produced through gender socialization, this inconsistency may motivate behavior — but only for individuals for whom gender identity is highly salient in their identity hierarchy (Stryker 1980). When such individuals maintain a feminine gender identity and perceive that others view them as rule violators, the resulting perceived inconsistency gives rise to distress and motivation to decrease the incongruence. They can accomplish this decrease in several ways: by changing their ideal self (gender identity), by exaggerating behavior consistent with their ideal self, or more directly, by refraining from delinquency and thereby regaining a more favorable image in the eyes of others. Similarly, those with salient masculine identities who perceive that others view them as conformers may experience distress as a result of the perceived incongruence and engage in delinquency to regain their masculine identity in the eyes of others. This interaction effect may give rise to countervailing processes: In general, for both males and females, reflected appraisals as a rule violator increase the likelihood of subsequent delinquency. But for those for whom a masculine gender identity is very salient, reflected appraisals as a rule violator may have a particularly strong motivating effect on delinquency. In contrast, for those for whom a feminine gender identity is salient, rule-violator reflected appraisals may have a negligible or even negative effect. Future research might investigate these hypotheses.

Finally, this perspective may help specify the social psychological mechanisms by which macrolevel processes translate into gender differences in delinquent behavior. It may be fruitful to merge concepts derived from labeling theory and symbolic interactionism (e.g., Hagan & Palloni 1990) with structural processes such as power and class (e.g., Hagan, Gillis & Simpson 1985; Hagan, Simpson & Gillis 1987). The important mechanisms may lie in negative informal labels by significant others, subsequent views of the self as a deviant from the standpoint of others, and the effect of gender identity on the role-taking process. Thus, our results suggest that calls for separate theories of female delinquency may be premature. Perhaps what we need instead is a more complete general theory of criminality — including social psychological and social structural mechanisms — which we can then apply to the issue of gender differences in crime.

APPENDIX A: Descriptions of Observable Measures

<i>Age</i>	Years of age of youth respondent.
<i>Race</i>	Race of youth respondent (0 = black; 1 = nonblack).
<i>Urban</i>	Urban residence (0 = rural or suburban; 1 = urban).
<i>Income</i>	Family income (10-point scale in \$4,000 increments: 1 = \$6,000 or less; 10 = more than \$38,000).
<i>Broken home</i>	Broken home (0 = intact; 1 = at least one parent absent).
<i>Delinquency 1</i>	Index (mean) of 24 delinquent acts committed in the past year: auto theft, < \$5 theft, \$5-50 theft, > \$50 theft, bought stolen goods, ran away, concealed weapon, aggravated assault, prostitution, sexual intercourse, participated in gang fights, sold marijuana, hit parent, hit teacher, hit students, disorderly conduct, sold hard drugs, went joyriding, sexual assault, strong-armed students, strong-armed teachers, strong-armed others, committed breaking and entering, panhandled. Each delinquent act is measured on a 9-point scale: 1 = never; 2 = once or twice; 3 = once every 2-3 months; 4 = once a month; 5 = once every 2-3 weeks; 6 = once a week; 7 = 2-3 times a week; 8 = once a day; 9 = 2-3 times a day.
<i>Delinquency 3</i>	Index of 24 delinquent acts (see above) committed between years 2 and 3.
<i>Status offense 1</i>	Index (mean) of five status offenses committed in the past year: ran away, sexual intercourse, skipped school, drank alcohol, lied about age. Each status offense is measured on a 9-point scale.
<i>Status offense 3</i>	Index of five status offenses (see above) committed between years 2 and 3.

For the following measures, the parent was asked, "Now I'd like more information about how you see your son or daughter. I will read you a list of words or short phrases. Please listen carefully and tell me using the green card how much you agree or disagree with each of the words or phrases as a description of your son or daughter." (The response categories were "strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree.")

Parent appraisal as sociable 1

- Well liked "My son or daughter is well liked."
- Gets along "My son or daughter gets along well with other people."

Parent appraisal as success 1

- Success "My son or daughter is likely to succeed."

Parent appraisal as distressed 1

- Often upset "My son or daughter is often upset."
- Problems "My son or daughter has a lot of personal problems."

Parent appraisal as rule violator 1

- Trouble "My son or daughter gets into trouble."
- Breaks rules "My son or daughter breaks rules."

For the following measures, the youth was asked, "I'd like to know how your parents, friends, and teachers would describe you. I'll read a list of words or phrases and for each will ask you to tell me how much you think your parents would agree with that description of you. I'll repeat the list twice more, to learn how your friends and your teachers would describe you." (The response categories were "strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree.")

APPENDIX A: Descriptions of Observable Measures (Continued)

Youth reflected appraisal as sociable 2

Well liked (parents)	"Parents agree I am well liked."
Well liked (friends)	"Friends agree I am well liked."
Well liked (teachers)	"Teachers agree I am well liked."
Gets along (parents)	"Parents agree I get along well with other people."
Gets along (friends)	"Friends agree I get along well with other people."
Gets along (teachers)	"Teachers agree I get along well with other people."

Youth reflected appraisal as success 2

Success (parents)	"Parents agree I am likely to succeed."
Success (friends)	"Friends agree I am likely to succeed."
Success (teachers)	"Teachers agree I am likely to succeed."

Youth reflected appraisal as distressed 2

Often upset (parents)	"Parents agree I am often upset."
Often upset (teachers)	"Teachers agree I am often upset."
Often upset (friends)	"Friends agree I am often upset."
Problems (parents)	"Parents agree I have a lot of personal problems."
Problems (friends)	"Friends agree I have a lot of personal problems."
Problems (teachers)	"Teachers agree I have a lot of personal problems."

Youth reflected appraisal as rule violator 2

Trouble (parents)	"Parents agree I get into trouble."
Trouble (friends)	"Friends agree I get into trouble."
Trouble (teachers)	"Teachers agree I get into trouble."
Break rules (parents)	"Parents agree I break rules."
Break rules (friends)	"Friends agree I break rules."
Break rules (teachers)	"Teachers agree I break rules."

APPENDIX B: Analysis of the Measurement Models

We estimated measurement models of youth reflected appraisals and parental appraisals of youth separately for males and females. In these models, each observed indicator is specified as a linear combination of a latent factor plus random measurement error. We specified reflected appraisals from the standpoint of parents, teachers, and peers to coalesce into a single self representing convergence in views of the self from the perspectives of different significant others (Figure 2). Models that separate reflected appraisals into separate parent, teacher, and peer factors are clearly inconsistent with the data. As expected, we found significant correlations among errors in indicators of a given construct that refer to a common significant other. Therefore, we added 29 measurement error correlations to the model, which significantly improved the fit from $L^2 = 1248.43$, $df = 463$ to $L^2 = 777.94$, $df = 434$ for males, and from $L^2 = 1188.18$, $df = 463$ to $L^2 = 736.62$, $df = 434$ for females.¹⁷

Maximum likelihood parameter estimates of the measurement models are shown in Table 4 (parental appraisals in the top portion, and reflected appraisals in the bottom portion). Validity coefficients (standardized loadings) for indicators of the reflected appraisals factors are relatively high, ranging from .52 to .78 for males, and from .59 to .85 for females. Observed means for the two groups show that females have higher means than males for indicators of the "sociable," "likely to succeed," and "distressed" factors, while males have much higher means for indicators of the "rule violator" factor. Yet, when intercepts are constrained to be equal across groups, only four indicators of reflected appraisals are significantly different for males and females. Because so few indicators have intercepts that differ across groups, and because these indicators are not the most substantively crucial to our analysis, we constrained all intercepts in our final measurement models to be equal across groups. Observed variances reveal that, in general, indicators of reflected appraisals of self as sociable, likely to succeed, and distressed show more variation among females than among males. This is due to generally larger random response errors among females. Indicators of reflected appraisals of self as a rule violator, however, demonstrate more variation among males. A test of measurement error invariance (for both reflected and parental appraisals measurement models combined) shows that the hypothesis of invariance is rejected ($L^2 = 150.84$, $df = 27$, $p < .001$).

We normalized by fixing the metric slope of one indicator of each construct to unity. Testing lambda invariance (for combined measurement models of reflected and parental appraisals), we found the hypothesis of global lambda invariance unsupported ($L^2 = 36.34$, $df = 20$, $p < .05$). More detailed analyses revealed that the metric slopes for only four indicators (three indicators of reflected appraisals as sociable and one of reflected appraisals as distressed) are statistically distinguishable across groups. The absence of lambda invariance for these four indicators implies that male and female respondents use slightly different metrics in interpreting these Likert-scale indicators. But sensitivity analyses varying the reference indicator of reflected appraisals as sociable demonstrate that our substantive results are not sensitive to choice of reference indicator. For this reason, and because the two factors that underlie the four variables in question are not central to our theoretical arguments (which concern primarily parental and reflected appraisals as a rule violator), we constrained all metric slopes to be equal across groups.

Figure 3 presents a measurement model of parental appraisals of youth, which contains four factors that parallel those in the youth reflected appraisals model. Validity coefficients for indicators of the parental appraisals constructs are relatively high (.60 to .89 for males, .58 to .89 for females). Observed means are similar for the two groups for all parental appraisals factors except "rule violator," which shows higher mean levels for males than for females. Only the indicators of parental appraisals as distressed, however, have intercepts that differ significantly across groups.

Notes

1. An alternative way of conceptualizing gender and the self from a symbolic interactionist standpoint explores the effects of gender identity or sex-role identification on behavior. This research finds, for example, that gender identity predicts both inflicting and receiving physical and sexual abuse (Burke, Stets & Pirog-Good 1988), school performance (Burke 1989), and delinquency (Heimer 1996). We will return to this issue in our conclusions and discuss the implications of our results concerning gender differences in the effects of reflected appraisals for research on gender identity.
2. Elliott, Knowles, and Canter (1981) explored possible sources of nonparticipation. The 635 nonparticipants did not take part in the study because of parental refusal, youth refusal, or youth ineligibility (e.g., severe mental retardation). Subsequent analyses found that the age, sex, and racial composition of the sample of participating youths was proportional to that of nonparticipating eligible youths. Moreover, figures from the U.S. Census Bureau reveal that the participating youths are representative of the total 11-17-year-old population of the U.S.
3. Hindelang, Hirschi, and Weis (1981) investigate the validity and reliability of self-reports of delinquency and conclude that self-reports are particularly well suited for the purpose of testing theories of delinquent behavior.
4. Relying on models identical to those specified and estimated in this article, but utilizing only the male sample of the NYS, Matsueda (1992) examined three subscales of delinquency: drug use, minor delinquency, and UCR Index offenses, in addition to the 24-item scale of general delinquency. He found that, with minor exceptions, the three models analyzing subscales yield the same substantive story as that analyzing the 24-item general delinquency scale.
5. We also included sex of parent in some analyses, even though relatively few fathers were interviewed in the NYS (127 fathers and 1,556 mothers were surveyed), since we expected that this variable might also affect the labeling process. We found, however, that sex of parent had no significant effects on any of the endogenous variables in the model for either male or female youths. Because of the lack of significant effects, and the small number of fathers surveyed, we excluded the sex of parent variable from further analyses.
6. To examine the robustness of the timing of measurements in our model, we estimated the model with background variables and parental appraisals measured at time 1, youth reflected appraisals at time 3, and delinquency at time 4. The results of this model are not substantially different from those reported here.
7. Alternatively, it may be that the labeling of youths as rule violators, net of delinquent behavior measured at time 1, does not represent false accusations. Rather, it may simply be that parents are basing their labels on minor forms of rule violation committed by youth that are not captured with our 24-item scale of general delinquency. To test this possibility, we followed Matsueda (1992) and twice reestimated the model, first substituting a 34-item index that includes minor forms of rule violation for the 24-item delinquency scale, and second including a separate factor of minor deviance in addition to the 24-item index. The effects of background variables on parental labels in these analyses do not change appreciably.
8. An alternative hypothesis is that the background variables affect parental labels because they reflect structural disadvantages not of the child, but of the parent. Thus, it is possible that parents who are black, have low incomes, and live without a spouse are more likely to label their daughters as rule violators, regardless of the daughters' characteristics. Because the background variables refer equally to parents and youth, we cannot rule out this interpretation.
9. The differences across gender in the effects of parental labels on corresponding reflected appraisals are $L^2 = .87$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$ for "sociable"; $L^2 = .12$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$ for "rule violator"; $L^2 = .72$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$ for "distressed"; and $L^2 = .04$, $df = 1$, $p > .05$ for "likely to succeed."
10. To examine whether reflected appraisals as a rule violator are merely serving as a proxy for delinquency at time 2, we reestimated the model, replacing time 1 delinquency with delinquency at time 2. The result is that the effect of reflected appraisals is attenuated but still significant for both males and females. In this model, however, the causal ordering among prior delinquency, parental appraisals, and reflected appraisals is ambiguous.
11. For females, parental appraisal as a rule violator has a significant positive indirect effect on

delinquency through reflected appraisal as a rule violator. The parental appraisal also exerts a small and nonsignificant negative direct effect on delinquency. The counterbalancing of the two effects results in parental appraisal having a net total effect on delinquency of zero. Thus, the total effect fails to support labeling theory's specific hypothesis of deviance amplification, while the indirect effect supports a general symbolic interactionist view.

12. We also examined whether our results about reflected appraisals are robust against models that controlled for other predictors relevant to the relationship between gender and delinquency. Models that controlled for attachment to others, parental supervision, and gender role attitudes yielded similar results for reflected appraisals for both males and females. For a thorough treatment of such variables within an interactionist model, see Heimer (1996).

13. To identify the difference between means of latent variables across gender, we normalized by constraining the latent means for females to zero while allowing those for males to take the mean values of their reference indicators (using Bentler's 1989 EQS program). This normalization procedure implies that the portion of the gender gap due to differential effects of covariates, $\sum \bar{X}_F(\beta_M - \beta_F)$, is zero, and therefore, the unexplained portion of the gap, $(\alpha_M - \alpha_F) + \sum \bar{X}_F(\beta_M - \beta_F)$, is equal to the difference in intercepts $(\alpha_M - \alpha_F)$. Thus, the difference in intercepts gives us a significance test of the unexplained portion of the gap. We could also have normalized by fixing the intercept of each reference indicator in the measurement model to be zero and freeing the latent intercepts in both groups, but we would not get a standard error on the unexplained portion of the gender gap. We estimated this alternative model and found the results to be virtually identical to those of the model that we report.

14. Of the explained portion (.099) of the gender gap in delinquency, 41% is attributable to the gender gap in prior delinquent behavior, while 59% is attributable to the gap in other variables in our model.

15. In this case, the gender gap cannot be explained by differences in levels of covariates or interaction terms, because mean values of covariates are identical across gender.

16. This results because terms with female means drop out due to our normalization procedure of fixing female latent intercepts to be zero, thereby leaving only the intercept term.

17. We added 18 correlations among identical measures that differed only in significant other (e.g., get into trouble from the standpoint of parents, peers, and teachers); 9 correlations among measures of a given construct that referred to a similar significant other (e.g., break rules and get into trouble from the standpoint of teachers); and 2 correlations between get along well with others from the standpoint of teachers and 2 other teacher indicators (personal problems and likely to succeed).

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