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Editors

Delinquent Girls

Contexts, Relationships, and Adaptation

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To John Coie for his guidance and support over the years; and to Noah and Riley for providing me with constant joy and smiles, as well as a reminder of what is most important – SM

To Patti Chamberlain, John Reid, and the late Beverly Fagot, for guiding me in translating research into practice – LL

To my students, who inspire me, challenge me, and make it all worthwhile – PK

Preface

You are coming into us who cannot withstand you
you are coming into us who never wanted to withstand you
you are taking parts of us into places never planned
you are going far away with pieces of our lives
it will be short, it will take all your breath
it will not be simple, it will become your will

From "Final Notations," Adrienne Rich,
Atlas of the Difficult World (1991)

Girls who break rules, defy authority, and get in trouble with the law terrify, frustrate, and confuse the adults in their lives: parents, teachers, and helping professionals they may encounter. These girls flagrantly violate our deeply held stereotypes of girls as sweetness and light, and even feminists fight the tendency to be simultaneously repulsed and fascinated by girls involved with the legal system. Court-involved girls not only break rules, but also engage in high rates of manipulative, rejecting behaviors that vex and drive away even the most caring adults who might try to help them. Adrienne Rich's poem "Final Notations" is considered by many to be a meditation on mothering, but it also captures well the way we cannot help but feel about court-involved girls. These demanding girls take "parts of us into places never planned," and helping them takes massive determination.

Scholars struggle even with how to speak of these girls, sometimes referring to them as delinquent, antisocial, "deep end girls," court-involved, or adjudicated. The phrase "delinquent girls" is perhaps the most succinct and it certainly compels our attention, and thus I can well understand the choice of that term for the title of this volume. Interestingly, most of the chapter authors seem to opt for the terms "adjudicated" or "court-involved" to describe these girls. I applaud this decision and follow their lead. Although there is no doubt that girls can engage in bad behaviors, adjudication or court involvement happens as a result not just of what the girls do, but how adults decide to respond. The terms "antisocial" and "delinquent" suggest that girls end up involved with the legal system because of characterological traits

that are internal to the girl and highly resistant to change. The evidence presented in this book clearly suggests otherwise. Girls' delinquency has increased not due to changes in girls' behaviors, but to changes in policies, such as net-widening (Chap. 1), and perhaps even as an unintended result of a focus on prevention and no-tolerance policies (Chap. 11). Using the terms "court-involved" or "adjudicated" reminds us that all we can be sure that these girls share is involvement with the legal system, which results from adults' choices, complicated policy decisions, and other forces beyond the individual girl.

In this outstanding volume, leading scientists and policy makers marshal the scientific evidence to help us move beyond the hype about increasing rates of girls' delinquency. These chapters illuminate what these rates really reflect, what factors contribute to girls' court involvement, and what can be done to help these girls. The evidence commandeered in this book ranges from national arrest data examined by criminologists to more traditional empirical investigations by child clinical psychologists to qualitative research guided by the voices of the girls themselves. This book presents the state-of-the-art science to illuminate why and how girls become involved with the legal system, and offers the best hope of helping these girls by highlighting intervention approaches guided by research evidence.

One theme that weaves throughout this volume is the importance of relationships for girls. Girls will have relationships, for better or worse, and this is no less true for court-involved girls. Girls' desperate need to belong, to have relationships, is also their best hope of help. Evidence presented here suggests that just as things can go horribly wrong for girls because of problems in relationships, good quality relationships may be able to ameliorate their pain and reduce their problematic behavior. Forming positive relationships against all odds may be the best chance of adjudicated girls getting off of delinquent trajectories. These girls may be saved by the "ordinary magic" of restoring an important adaptive system, supportive relationships with parents and peers (Masten 2001). Restoring healthy relationships for girls who feel so rejected and are so rejecting will be no mean feat, but it can be done, though it will not be simple and it will take all our will.

Several chapters in this volume reveal that the problems of court-involved girls develop and flourish in the contexts of relationships. Court-involved girls are more likely to have experienced sexual abuse than court-involved boys (Chap. 8). Adjudicated girls have highly conflictual relationships with their mothers and their court involvement sometimes begins with charges of assaulting their mothers (Chap. 3). Girls are more likely than boys are to be involved in assaults in their residences, and involving family members (Chap. 4). Court-involved girls are also likely to have few prosocial friends, which predict their likelihood of gang involvement (Chap. 5). Adjudicated girls view relationships with other girls as dangerous and are drawn to relationships with males, both romantic and non-romantic (Chap. 6), which may raise their risks of antisocial behavior and young motherhood.

Perhaps as a result of their history of disturbed relationships, court-involved girls are likely to have a variety of problems that stack the deck against their developing the types of relationships they so badly need. These early negative relationships make girls vulnerable to disturbed attachment schemas, emotional dysregulation, and a deep sense of shame (Chap. 8). If a girl trusts no one, is overcome daily by

frustration and despair, and believes she is worthless, then forming and maintaining decent relationships is a steep mountain to climb. These early, disturbed relationships may also partially explain why such large numbers of adjudicated girls also have other significant mental health problems (see Chap. 7).

However, just as girls may become adjudicated because of deep failures in relationships, forming positive, supportive relationships with adults, peers, and romantic partners may be their best hope of salvation. This volume includes two chapters that describe effective programs for helping girls who engage in antisocial behavior, the Stop Now and Plan Girls Connection Program (SNAP-GC, Chap. 10) and Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC, Chap. 9). The SNAP-GC program was created to intervene with young aggressive girls and their mothers, and focuses squarely on building relationship strengths (Chap. 10). Mothers are taught discipline, monitoring, modeling, and contingency, but also ways to bond with their daughters to enhance the closeness of the relationship. Girls are provided help with emotion regulation, and the intervention specifically targets likeability and skills in building individual friendships with other girls. The SNAP-GC program seeks to provide young girls who are already aggressive with the ordinary magic of positive relationships, by building them one skill at a time.

The Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care program (Chap. 9) seeks to provide restorative, ameliorative relationships for older girls who are already in the justice system, by providing them with foster parents carefully trained and well supported by clinicians to help them deal with challenging behaviors. Placement in foster care raises the risk for incarceration, especially for girls, and multiple placements are even more harmful (Chap. 2). The MFTC program offers girls with serious problems a chance at a positive relationship with a family, specifically, a positive relationship with a mother. Years ago I had the opportunity to spend some time with foster mothers in the MFTC program and the clinicians who support them. I will never forget their honesty about the girls' struggles, creativity in devising solutions, strategic approaches to decreasing the most difficult behaviors, and tenacity in persisting with the most infuriating girls. These women found something to like in these girls, and they clearly had hope for their future possibilities. These foster mothers and the clinicians supporting them were formidable women, using all of their breath and all of their will to give these most vexing girls a chance at positive relationships.

Regardless of what they have done or what has been done to them, court-involved girls are worthy of and desperately need good relationships with caregivers who are positive and supportive, female friends whom they can trust and turn to for companionship and support, and romantic partners with whom they can establish loving, non-violent relationships. Sadly, as this book makes clear, girls who become involved with the legal system are at great risk of having none of these and have problems that make it difficult for them to build the relationships they so badly need. Court-involved girls can be extremely provocative and resistant to help and it is tempting to view them as broken beyond repair. This compelling volume offers an alternative, by summarizing the best information about what leads girls to become involved with the court system, and by marshalling the best science to guide prevention and intervention programs.

None of us can afford to give up on court-involved girls. Their lives and their futures are too valuable. Many of them will raise children, often at too young an age. Girls are creators and inventors and stewards of our collective futures. Just as much and maybe even more than typical girls, adjudicated girls desperately need the ordinary magic of positive relationships. Helping delinquent girls build these will not be simple, but this outstanding volume will guide the way.

Dallas, TX Marion K. Underwood

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Part I
Setting the Stage

Chapter 1
Stability and Change in Girls' Delinquency and the Gender Gap: Trends in Violence and Alcohol Offending Across Multiple Sources of Evidence

Jennifer Schwartz and Darrell Steffensmeier

Females commit much less crime and delinquency than males for nearly every category of crime. The gender gap in offending is larger for more serious and violent offenses and narrower for minor behaviors. These are among the most robust and consistent findings in criminology. In recent years, however, the extent and character of gender differences in crime are increasingly being called in question by statistics and media reports suggesting a greater involvement of girls in the criminal justice system.

Girls' delinquency as reported in *official* arrest data evidences substantial changes relative to boys' delinquency in recent decades. Girls exhibit some sizeable arrest gains on boys in a number of minor offense categories. However, it is the gains in arrest for assaultive violence and for alcohol-related offenses (drunk driving, liquor law violations) that are most widely recognized by the media, policymakers, and academics. Between 1980 and 2005 in the USA, girls' arrests for violent index offenses – homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault – increased by 87%, whereas arrests of boys actually decreased by 6% (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2006). Arrest statistics show marked increases in girls' arrests for aggravated and, especially, simple assault. Girls' arrests for aggravated assault increased by 143% and by 375% for simple assault. Boys' aggravated assault arrests increased by only 37% and 150% for simple assault. These arrest trends, along with high-profile female delinquency cases and media headlines such as "Girls getting increasingly violent," and "Girls not all sugar and spice," encourage perceptions that girls' violence is rising and the gender gap closing.

The same sorts of headlines and high-profile cases relay images of drinking girls "gone wild," suggesting "Women are on a binge" and "Girls today want to outdrink the boys." Recent arrest statistics would seem to support such claims: Young women's

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drunk driving arrest rates almost doubled from 1980 to 2004, from 233 to 400 per 100,000 women (ages 18–20), increasing female representation from 9 to 20% of drunk drivers (Schwartz and Rookey 2008). Liquor law violations by boys declined over the past 25 years (800–600 per 100,000 boys ages 10–18), but girls' arrest rates increased somewhat (325–350) (Zhong and Schwartz 2010).

Reasons for the increase in girls' arrests for violent and alcohol offenses include multiple proposals. Some assume arrest gains indicate *real* changes in girls' behaviors. Under this supposition, greater female independence increases girls' opportunities and motivations for violence – the *Behavior Change Hypothesis*. However, arrest counts are a product of delinquent behavior *and* responses to it. Evidence is also mounting that girls' arrest gains are predominantly *artifacts* of recent policy and enforcement changes. Specifically, these changes elevate the visibility and reporting of girls' "delinquency" and "violence" by way of stretched definitions of deviance and the shift toward more formal dealings with youth crime and violence – the *Policy Change Hypothesis.*

To evaluate these hypotheses, we draw on a number of longitudinal data sources that each uses a different method to generate crime estimates. Data sources include official statistics collected by government agencies, such as arrest data collected by local government agencies and disseminated by the FBI. Drunken driving fatality statistics are collected by the Department of Transportation. We also draw on unofficial data, such as self-reports and victim-reports of offender characteristics. These estimates are generated independent of the legal system. *Monitoring the Future* (MTF)*,* the *National Crime Victimization Survey,* and the CDC's *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System* are highly regarded nationally representative, longitudinal surveys.

Each data source, with its unique strengths and weaknesses, offers at least a slightly different picture of crime. Because these sources of data differ in how they measure delinquency and violence, they are particularly useful for evaluating whether trends in girls' delinquency are a product of changes in the underlying violent and delinquent behavior of girls or changes in juvenile justice policies that enhance the visibility and reporting of girls' delinquency.

Our confidence of changes in girls' violence and delinquency is enhanced if all these sources agree on the nature of the trends, despite measurement differences and dissimilar sources of limitations, whereas that confidence is diminished if the sources are in disagreement.

Hypotheses About the Meaning of Girls' Arrest Increases

Behavior Change and *Policy Change* frameworks are broadly applicable to understanding shifts in all sorts of girls' offending trends. We focus here on changes in girls' *violence* because of the high-profile nature of this debate (Steffensmeier et al. 2005; Schwartz et al. 2009a, b). We briefly assess trends in girls' alcohol use and drunk driving across arrest and self-report time-series data because girls' alcohol-related arrests recently increased, public health concerns have grown regarding problem alcohol use by adolescents, and reliable unofficial data exist.

The Behavior Change Hypothesis contends that arrest gains indicate *real* changes in girls' behaviors. Dramatic changes in girls' lives and experiences may increase their propensities or opportunities to commit violent crimes. Girls today face greater struggles in maintaining a sense of self, confronting complex, often contradictory, sets of behavioral scripts that specify what is appropriate, acceptable, or possible for girls to do. For example, greater exposure to media messages portraying girls as violent, such as in movies like *Charlie's Angels* and *Kill Bill* and video games like *Tomb Raider*, might facilitate changing gender-role expectations toward greater female freedom, assertiveness, and male-like machismo and competitiveness. As it becomes more socially acceptable, girls may increasingly turn to violence as a coping strategy or a means of solving interpersonal conflicts with authority figures (e.g., school officials, parents) and peers. The latter may involve arguments with boys in dating contexts but also fights with other girls over ownership of males and defense of one's sexual reputation (Miller and Mullins 2006). Likewise, gender norms for drinking and drunkenness may be more relaxed, increasing girls' use and abuse of alcohol as they emulate masculine drinking patterns and self-medicate with alcohol to alleviate social and interpersonal strains. Heightened role strain and changing normative expectations, combined with increased economic and family stresses might increase girls' involvement in physical aggression or problem alcohol use.

The Policy Change Hypothesis contends that girls' arrest gains are an *artifact* of recent shifts in public sentiment and enforcement policies toward more formal recognition and treatment of youth crime and violence, which has elevated the visibility and reporting of girls' "delinquency" and "violence." Listed in order of importance, at least four interrelated policy shifts *escalate the arrest-proneness* of girls today relative to girls in prior decades and relative to boys (for a full treatment of these policy shifts, see Steffensmeier et al. 2005).

First, *netwidening, or the criminalization of less serious forms of violence and delinquency, will escalate female arrests because their offending is less serious and less chronic*. Criminalization includes but goes beyond "zero tolerance" policies to broadly encompass the (a) targeting of more minor forms of lawbreaking and (b) charging up of minor types of lawbreaking into offense classifications representing greater seriousness and harsher statutory penalties. Policy shifts toward *stretched definitions of what constitutes law-violating behavior* will produce disproportionately *more arrests of less serious offenders* and therefore *elevate the visibility of girls' delinquency* more than boys'. Crime trend analysts identify this netwidening particularly in ambiguous offense categories like simple or aggravated assault, where it is more the practice today that (a) disorderly conducts, harassments, endangering, resisting arrest, and so forth will be categorized as simple assaults and (b) former simple assaults will be upgraded to aggravated assault (Garland 2001; Steffensmeier and Harer 1999). These more expansive definitions of what constitutes "violence" or an "assault" leads to enhanced sanctioning for aggressive conduct among youth overall (Fuentes 1998) but *even more so among girls* who tend to commit the milder, less serious forms of physical attacks or threats (Chesney-Lind 2002; Steffensmeier 1993; Steffensmeier et al. 2005). What now tends to be dealt with formally was previously often ignored or dealt with informally. Definitions of drunk driving are

also expanded. Zero Tolerance drunk driving policies criminalize underage drinking drivers, whereas past standards were the same as for adults (e.g., 0.10% BAC level).

Second, *the criminalization of violence and delinquency between intimates and in private settings such as at home or school will portray female levels that more closely approximate male levels* because girls' violence is more likely to take place in this context than in public settings against strangers (see Chap. 4 that reports data from the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System [NIBRS] on arrest characteristics; also see Chap. 6 that discusses the strong relational orientation of girls' delinquent behavior). Several recent studies of girls' violence document the trend toward treating domestic and school violence as criminal and establish the impact of these policy shifts on girls' assault arrest trends. A review of girls' "person-to-person" cases referred to Maryland's juvenile justice system revealed the majority to be family-centered "assaults" that involved such activities as a girl hitting or throwing an object at her mother, who subsequently presses charges (Mayer 1994, as cited in Chesney-Lind 2002). Another study of nearly 1,000 girls' files from four California counties concludes "most of these [assault] charges were the result of nonserious, mutual combat situations with parents" (Acoca 1999:7–8). Case descriptions of girls arrested ranged from "father lunged at daughter while she was calling the police about a domestic dispute [when] daughter hit him" (self-defense) to "throwing cookies at her mother" (trivial argument).

Heightened public concern about school safety also escalates girls' vulnerability to arrest for assault as a result of pro-arrest policies for physical confrontations or threats occurring on or near school grounds. Many schools, especially in large urban centers, adopt zero tolerance policies toward violence, employ metal detectors and video cameras, and hire full-time school police. Both male and female youth are being arrested in substantial numbers for behavior that, prior to the creation of these preventive measures, would likely be handled as a school disciplinary matter. However, the available evidence also suggests that this netwidening in school arrest policies is disproportionately escalating girls' arrests for violent crimes, particularly for assaults involving minor physical confrontations or verbal threats (most frequently with another girl) that in the past would be ignored, responded to less formally, or resulted in lesser charges such as disorderly conduct or harassment.

Underage drinking enforcement also is increasingly focused on residential and school settings. For example, the renewed Drug Free Schools and Campuses Act (1989) added the requirement that school administrators and security officials enforce underage drinking statutes and punish violators. Recent alcohol legislation also focuses on closing loopholes to aid underage drinking enforcement in private settings (see review in Zhong and Schwartz 2010).

Third, *less tolerant family and societal attitudes toward adolescent females will amplify girls' arrests*. Escalating girls' arrest-proneness is the gradual spread of due process for girls and curtailment of officials' discretion, while at the same time maintaining the traditional "double standard" of girls (but not boys) needing protection from themselves or from immoral influences (see "bootstrapping" below). As part of a trend toward legal equality of the sexes, a series of influential court cases since

the 1970s abolished sex discrimination with regard to state alcohol policy, but also increased female culpability for their alcohol-related behaviors by discouraging differing legal standards for the sexes (Schwartz and Rookey 2008). This increased emphasis on legal equality of the sexes, the changing role of girls/women in society, and the perception that they are becoming more violent may produce an increased willingness in victims or witnesses of female crime to report suspects to the police and for the police to proceed more bureaucratically and formally in processing female suspects.

Fourth, *bootstrapping and re-labeling of minor offenses for "girl's protection" will increase girls' arrest levels for assault offenses.* One major research focus is the impact of legal reforms that make it more difficult to detain "wayward" or "at-risk" girls for status offenses. A consistent finding is the increasingly common practice to *re-label* or "*boost up"* minor offenses and behaviors traditionally categorized as status offenses (sexual misbehavior, running away, truancy, in need of supervision, incorrigibility, disorderly conduct) and instead to arrest the girls for *assault* (or some other felony offense) as grounds for detention or placement in a program or facility (Chesney-Lind 2002).

Using UCR Arrest Statistics for Trend Comparisons

Official data on delinquency comes from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) annual *Uniform Crime Reports* (UCR). Each UCR includes a compilation of thousands of local police precinct reports on *crimes known to the police* via reporting by individuals, schools, or businesses or via police detection, and *arrest reports*. The FBI compiles sex and age statistics on roughly thirty categories of crime. We pay disproportionate attention to UCR *arrest* data because of their longevity and high visibility, and because these data are at the center of a growing debate about whether girls' delinquency is becoming more serious or violent. Questions about girls' violence trends are not easily answered, however, because of concerns about reliability and validity of the data and the gendered character and context of girls' delinquency. We relate these concerns to trends in girls' violence, although these reliability and validity concerns apply to understanding and interpreting girls' delinquency trends generally.

Reliability and Validity Concerns

First, the arrest rate, like any other official measure of crime, is a function of behavior defined as criminal and the control measures established to deal with it. Comparing sex differences in arrest rates over a given period of time is risky because changes

in reporting practices and policing *may affect one sex more than the other.* Citizens, police, and other officials maintain considerable discretion in defining offenses such that official measures may not reliably reflect the same behaviors over time. For example, whereas definitions of homicide are fairly consistent over time and across place, behaviors on the margins of "violence" are far more variable. Roughly scaled from least to most serious, assault can include such behaviors as throwing something at someone, pushing, grabbing, or shoving; slapping, kicking, biting, hitting with a fist; hitting with an object; choking; threatening with a gun or knife; or using a gun or knife. To distinguish felony from misdemeanor assault and from lesser offenses such as harassment and disorderly conduct requires subjective assessments of intent and the degree of bodily injury. In recent years, more inclusive definitions of what constitutes "violence" or an "assault" emerged (Steffensmeier 1993; Steffensmeier and Harer 1999), such that trends in less serious violence, such as simple assault, are more affected by policies and practices that expand the sphere of "violence" than trends in homicide or more serious forms of violence. Over time, the legal definition of drunk driving also widened to now include drivers under 21 who consumed any measurable amount of alcohol (*Zero Tolerance*). Drunken driving arrest data for those under 21 represent drivers with successively lower blood alcohol concentrations across the 1980s/1990s, from over 0.12, 0.10, and then 0.08%. Now, 0.02% BAC is grounds for a DUI arrest.

A second problem with the UCR data is that the offense categories are broad and derived from a *heterogeneous* collection of criminal acts, meaning that between-sex comparisons of a given crime are further complicated by the differing character and context of male and female crime. For example, larceny-theft might be shoplifting a $50 item (typically a female crime) or cargo theft amounting to thousands of dollars (typically a male crime). Burglary includes both unlawful entry into an ex-partner's home to retrieve items, as well as safecracking. Further, the aggravated assault category includes incidents where the victim was hospitalized due to injuries as well as where the perpetrator brandishes a deadly weapon (e.g., kitchen knife, broken bottle) without inflicting any visible harm. Similarly, drunken driving arrest statistics include those with excessively high blood alcohol levels, more typical of males, and those closer to the legal limit. In addition, arrests are not distinguished in terms of offender culpability, such as whether the suspect is a primary or ancillary actor or whether the arrestee was acting antagonistically or defensively. Many females arrested for robbery or burglary are accomplices to males, and many females arrested for homicide or assault act in response to provocation from males (Steffensmeier and Ulmer 2005). *Offenses representing dissimilar events and covering a range of seriousness and culpability are included in the same UCR category, muddying the comparison of female-to-male crime.*

In this way, the broadness and subjectivity of UCR classification categories complicate interpretations of trends in girls' arrests. Some evidence suggests that policy changes increased the arrest probabilities of adolescent females relative to males in ways that go beyond changes in girls' underlying behavior because *recent*

social control policies inadvertently target the offending patterns of girls. Unless caution is exercised and other data are drawn on to supplement arrest statistics, inaccurate or misleading conclusions about girls' delinquency can easily be drawn.

The Visibility of Girls' Delinquency Increases When the Focus is on Minor Offending

Violence and delinquency are traditionally defined in male terms and are seen as mainly the domain of male adolescents and young men. Until relatively recently, girls' delinquency and violence were minimized, overlooked, and ignored. In reality, girls were always involved in delinquency and violence, sometimes serious forms of crime and violence; there are ample cases of "violent girls" and "girls gone wild" in generations past, just as there are high-profile cases today. Whereas girls are not as delinquent as boys overall, the evidence from self-report surveys and case studies extending back at least three to four decades show girls committing a long list of illegal acts (Steffensmeier and Allan 1996).

As noted earlier, *across the spectrum of lawbreaking, girls/women engage in less serious forms of crime and play less culpable roles than boys/men* (Steffensmeier and Allan 1996). One important implication of this axiom is that, depending on *how one measures behavior*, girls' delinquency can be seen as either very similar or very different from boys' delinquency (Steffensmeier and Allan 1996). On the one hand, they commit similar types of offenses – adolescent girls, like boys, fight, steal, cheat, lie, vandalize, drink, use drugs, and engage in other delinquent acts. Girls commit some types of delinquency (drinking underage, shoplifting) about as frequently as boys. On the other hand, (1) Girls offend less frequently than boys – because there are more male than female offenders and because male offenders commit more offenses than female offenders. (2) Boys commit more serious and more visible delinquency – thefts of greater value, fights with greater victim injury, in street settings and among secondary groups, harder drug use and drug distribution, and much greater predatory sexual deviance. (3) Male youth are also more likely to be chronic or "career" offenders.

A second implication of this axiom is that changes in laws and enforcement toward targeting less serious forms of lawbreaking (e.g., minor acts of physical violence; lowering the blood alcohol content for under-age driving; small amounts of drug use or distribution) will enhance the visibility of girls' offending and increase the risk of arrest for female more than male offenders. When authorities dip more deeply into the pool of offenders, young women's share of arrests will increase because females tend to be involved disproportionately in the less serious forms of lawbreaking. The significance of this general principle – *that the gender gap will be smaller when the measurement taps less serious forms of delinquency or crime, whereas the gap will be larger when more serious forms are included* – applies to all areas of girls' delinquency and the gender gap. We show this first by examining trends in girls' violence and second by investigating trends in alcohol use and abuse.

Girls' Violence and Gender Gap Trends: More "Real" Violence or Widening the Arrest Net?

We begin our assessment by a rigorous analysis of the arrest data on violence. We examine the full spectrum of violence, from homicide to simple assault, because the behavior change position would anticipate increases in girls' violence across all violent offense types. However, we focus more heavily on the assault crimes because, as is made clear shortly, these offenses drive girls' arrest trends for violence. Our analysis assesses trends from 1980 to 2005 in female and male juvenile arrest rates, along with the female percentage of arrests for a number of violent offenses. Also evaluated are trends in the Violent Crime Index (sum of arrests for homicide, robbery, rape, and aggravated assault) and trends in a composite assault index which combines the figures for aggravated assault and simple assault. We characterize change in the gender gap as significant on the basis of time-series tests that statistically assess significant convergence or divergence vs. trendless or stable gender gap patterns (not shown, available upon request).[1]

There is no significant change in the gender gap trend for the following violent crimes: homicide, rape, and robbery. In contrast, the gender gap in arrests is narrowing considerably for both aggravated assault and simple assault. For simple assault, the female share of arrests rises slowly in the 1980s (from about 22% in 1980 to 25% in 1990) and then rises at an accelerated pace in the 1990s (to about 35% in 2005). For aggravated assault, the female percentage remains unchanged during the 1980s (16% in 1980 and 1990), after which the female percentage rises sharply throughout the 1990s (to 25% in 2005). Increased female representation in arrests for simple assault (13% change) moderately outpaces female gains in aggravated assault (9%).

The gender gap for the Violent Crime Index is also significantly narrowing, though only because of the swamping effects of the rise in female aggravated assault arrests during the 1990s. The Index gender gap trend – steady over the 1980s with a steep rise in the female percentage in the 1990s – essentially matches the pattern for aggravated assault, whose large volume of arrests drive movement of the Index during the 1990s. If aggravated assault counts are omitted from the Violent Crime Index, the gender gap trend is stable. This stability is notable due to claims (based on the Violence Crime Index), that girls' "serious" violence is increasing. However, neither law enforcement nor the citizenry view aggravated assault as approaching the seriousness of other components of the Index, such as homicide or rape.

Movement in violence rates is similar across the sexes and all violent crime categories, but with some divergence in the mid-1990s. Adolescent female and male rates rise over much of the past two decades, particularly during 1986–1994, whereas in the late 1990s, male rates level off or decline whereas female rates stabilize or

[1] For details of our analysis, see Steffensmeier et al. 2005; Schwartz et al. 2009a. Augmented Dickey-Fuller tests statistically assess long-term trends, avoiding picking time points arbitrarily, which can lead to inaccurate results.

continue to inch upward. However, rates of adolescent male violence continue to be much higher than female rates, particularly for serious violent index crimes of homicide, rape, and robbery.

Our analysis shows girls making arrest gains on boys for aggravated and simple assault but not for homicide, rape, and robbery. More rigorous statistical analysis of arrest trends for the assault offenses supports the widely publicized view that girls' violence is rising, but the trends for other violent crimes do not. Important theoretical and methodological caveats call into question whether the assault arrest trends indicate a rising tide of girls' violence.

The sex-specific changes do not fit with the assertion that, with greater female independence or role strain, female youth will engage in more violence. To the contrary, female assault rates leveled off or declined slightly since the mid-1990s, whereas *male assault declined much further*. In this regard, a weakness of the independence/stress thesis comes from the failure to specify how changes in adolescent male behavior, as well as adolescent female behavior, account for changes in gender gap trends. Moreover, greater female independence and stress should be associated with increased female representation in all types of violent behavior, yet the narrowing gender gap is confined to assault offenses, which are more ambiguously and variably defined than homicide and other more serious forms of violence.

Comparison of Arrest Trends to Unofficial Sources: Victim and Self-Report Surveys

To help resolve the debate over girls' violence, we take a more discerning look by comparing girls' arrest trends to their violence trends as reflected in victimization and self-report data. Unlike the *Uniform Crime Reports*, these other data are not limited to cases that come to the attention of the police or result in arrests.

Girls' Violence Trends Based on Victim's Reports: National Crime Victimization Survey

Victimization surveys provide an important source on delinquent behavior. The logic underlying this data source is different than official or self-reports. Information is collected from the victim, not the person who committed the crime. In the USA in each year since 1973, the Census Bureau conducts the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) in which members of approximately 60,000 households are interviewed. Detailed characteristics are obtained when a respondent reports being a victim of some crime. Questions address the level of physical and property damage and, for violent crime, perceived characteristics of the offender(s). Based on victims identifying the offender's sex and age, the NCVS provides trend

data for several violent crimes (robbery, sexual assault, aggravated assault, and simple assault) and for the Violent Crime Index for adolescent girls and boys aged 12–17. Importantly, these NCVS estimates include offenders not reported to or apprehended by police. Germane caveats include methodological changes over time (e.g., redesigned questions) that might more markedly impact estimates of female offenders via their more minor violent offending; declines in size and representativeness of the sample, especially male respondents at higher risk of offending; and social influences on victim and surveyor that increase the willingness to report/record a female offender (Schwartz et al. 2009b).

Figure 1.1 displays NCVS violence rates for male and female adolescents and female percentages. Findings are in sharp contrast to official statistics where the gender gap narrowed significantly for both assault categories. According to victim reports, the gender gap in *violence and assault* among adolescent males and females *changed very little* from 1980 to 2005. The gender gap is stable or trendless for NCVS robbery and rape, a pattern consistent with UCR arrest trends. Similarly, the gender gap for both aggravated assault and simple assault is also stable, a pattern that is strikingly *at odds* with UCR arrest trends. The gender gap is also stable for the Violent Crime Index (robbery, rape, aggravated assault).

Reviewing arrest trends elucidates the differing patterns in girls' and boys' violence across the two national data sources on violence. During the late 1980s through the early 1990s, both the NCVS and UCR show girls' and boys' assault rates rising and then tapering off, but the rise is smaller and the decline is greater in the NCVS. In recent years, the NCVS shows *both* female and male rates of assault dropping considerably; the UCR shows *only boys' arrest* rates for assault have been declining. Similarly, the gender gap in violence is comparable between the NCVS and UCR in earlier years, but the two sources diverge in recent years (Figure 4, panel a). There was no difference across the NCVS and UCR in the female percent for the assault index in the early 1980s (~18–20%), whereas by the late 1990s the UCR jumped to roughly 33% but the NCVS held at about 20%. This difference between the two reporting programs is strong evidence for the greater impact of recent *policy shifts* on girls' than boys' arrest-proneness.

Trends in Girls' Self-Reported Violent Offending

Self-report surveys of crime and its correlates are a third major source of information and most often are conducted with adolescent respondents. Besides the detailed respondent characteristics, the main benefit of self-report data is the information on crimes committed by youth that were not discovered by the police. Although self-report delinquency surveys are often cross-sectional and localized to a particular community/region, some important surveys provide longitudinal or trend data on youth delinquency for the nation as a whole.

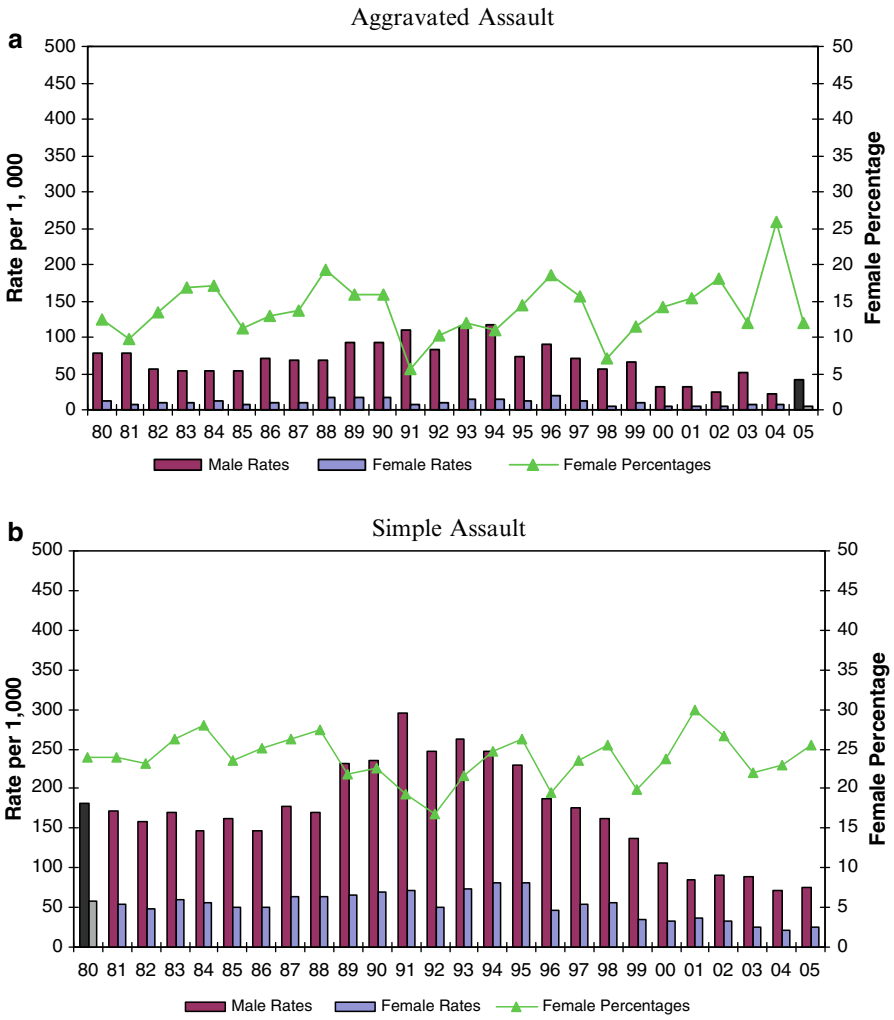

Fig. 1.1 Trends in adolescent female and male violence rates (per 100,000) and female percentage of violent offending: *National Crime Victimization Survey*, 1980–2005. (**a**) Aggravated assault. (**b**) Simple assault. (**c**) Robbery. (**d**) Violent Crime Index (includes aggravated assault, robbery, and rape). Data are adjusted to take into account effects of the survey redesign in 1992. The multiplier is offense- and sex-specific and is calculated based only on juvenile data. The formula is: $\text{Multiplier} = (n_{92} + n_{93} + n_{94})/(n_{90} + n_{91} + n_{92})$

One such source is MTF, the only national youth survey on self-reported delinquency that goes back to the mid-1970s. MTF asks a nationally representative sample of high school seniors and, since 1991, eigth and tenth graders, about violent behavior. We calculate (i) prevalence and (ii) high-frequency estimates for robbery and for an assault

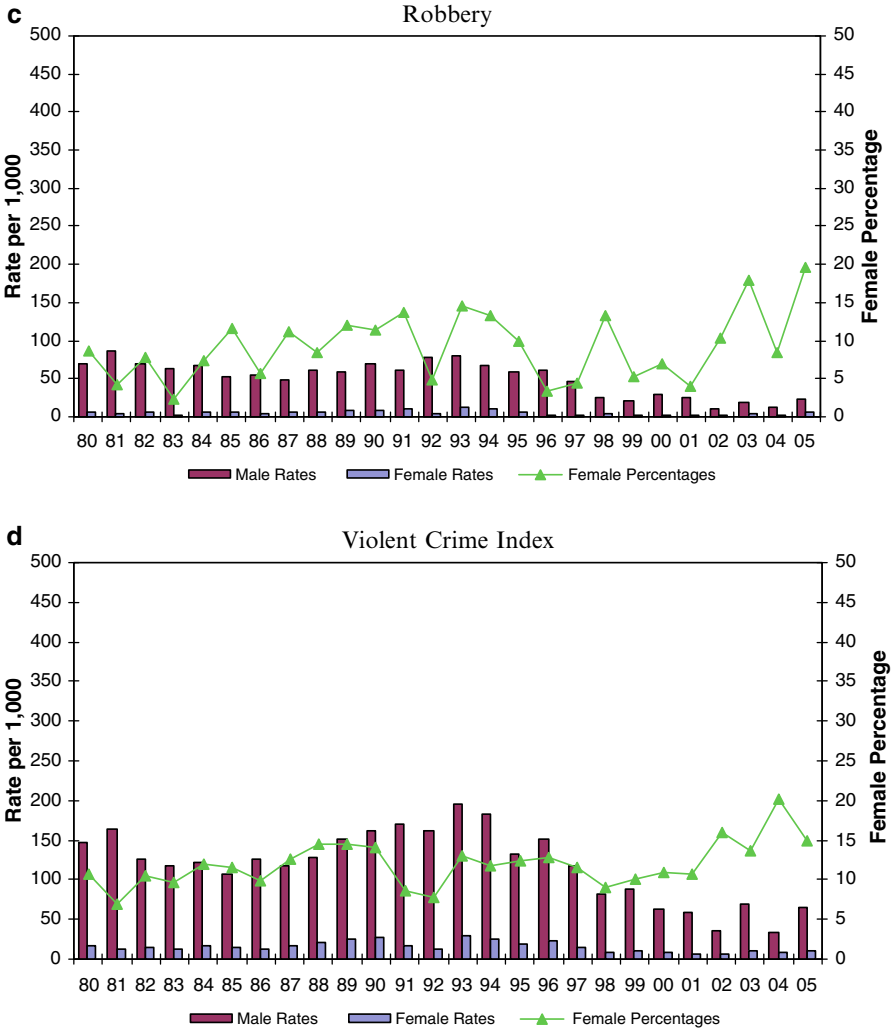

Fig. 1.1 (continued)

index comprised of three assault items for 12th graders.[2] Because the trend patterns overall and by gender are remarkably consistent across assault items, our discussion targets the assault index. Our analysis focuses on 12th graders for reasons of parsimony since their time-series data extend back to the late 1970s. Results are similar for the 1991–2005 period when all three grades are surveyed (available from the authors).

[2] The three questions ask 12th graders how often during the past 12 months have they: (a) "gotten into a serious fight at school or at work"; (b) "hurt someone badly enough to need bandages or a doctor"; and (c) "hit an instructor or supervisor." These questions ask about specific acts that are clearly violent in nature.

Figure 1.2 shows prevalence (1+) and high-frequency (5+) rates of involvement and the gender gap between 1980–2005 for the assault index and robbery among 12th graders (17–18 years old). The MTF findings contrast sharply with UCR arrest figures that show substantial gains in the female share of assaults. Instead, the MTF self-report data show that the prevalence and high-frequency levels of assault, as well as robbery for adolescent females and males, are fairly *constant* over the past two decades (including during the 1990s and early 2000) and that female involvement in violence does not increase relative to male violence.[3]

Summary of Gender Gap Trends in Violence Across Data Sources

Figure 1.3 summarizes the key results from our comparison of diverse data sources – UCR arrest trends for assault to girls' violence trends as observed in victimization and self-report sources. First, the analyses substantiate the axiom about the gendered nature of interpersonal violence and its variation depending on behavioral item and measurement – the gender gap is small for minor kinds of violence (e.g., prevalence, misdemeanor assault) and larger for more serious forms (e.g., high-frequency, aggravated assault). Figure 1.3 also vividly demonstrates the enduring gendered nature of interpersonal violence – (1) female violence is consistently lower than male levels across all measures and sources and (2) as the delinquent or violent behaviors become more serious or chronic, the gender gap systematically widens (Steffensmeier and Allan 1996). The gender gap in self-reported high-frequency assaultive violence is quite large – the female percentage averages only around 15%, compared to about 35% for less frequent minor involvement in violence. NCVS plots show the female percent for aggravated assault is around 10–15% compared to 25% for simple assaults.

Second, in contrast to conclusions about rises in girls' violence based on arrest statistics, results from sources independent of the criminal justice system (NCVS & MTF[4]) all show very little overall change in girls' assault levels and in the Violent Crime Index and, most notably, essentially no change in the female-to-male percentage of violent offending. These divergent findings across the UCR vs. sources independent of the criminal justice system point to gender-specific effects of policy changes rather than shifts in girls' aggression.

[3] The gender gap's stability, especially over the 1990s, is remarkable in light of girls' substantial assault arrest gains and in light of possible self-fulfilling effects on survey sources of the increased legitimacy of girls' violence. Recent media and popular representations might encourage adolescent females to see their aggression, or that of their peers, as more acceptable and hence as less shaming (e.g., less of a "femininity" violation), increasing their willingness to self-report it. Similarly, victims may be more inclined to report girls as violent, by labeling gray areas of aggressive behavior as "assault" that in the past would be ignored or defined in milder terms.

[4] A recently available source on youth violence trends is the National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (NYRBS) that provides national estimates of 9–12th graders' involvement in a physical fight between 1991–2003. Supplemental analyses of fighting also showed no change in the gender gap.

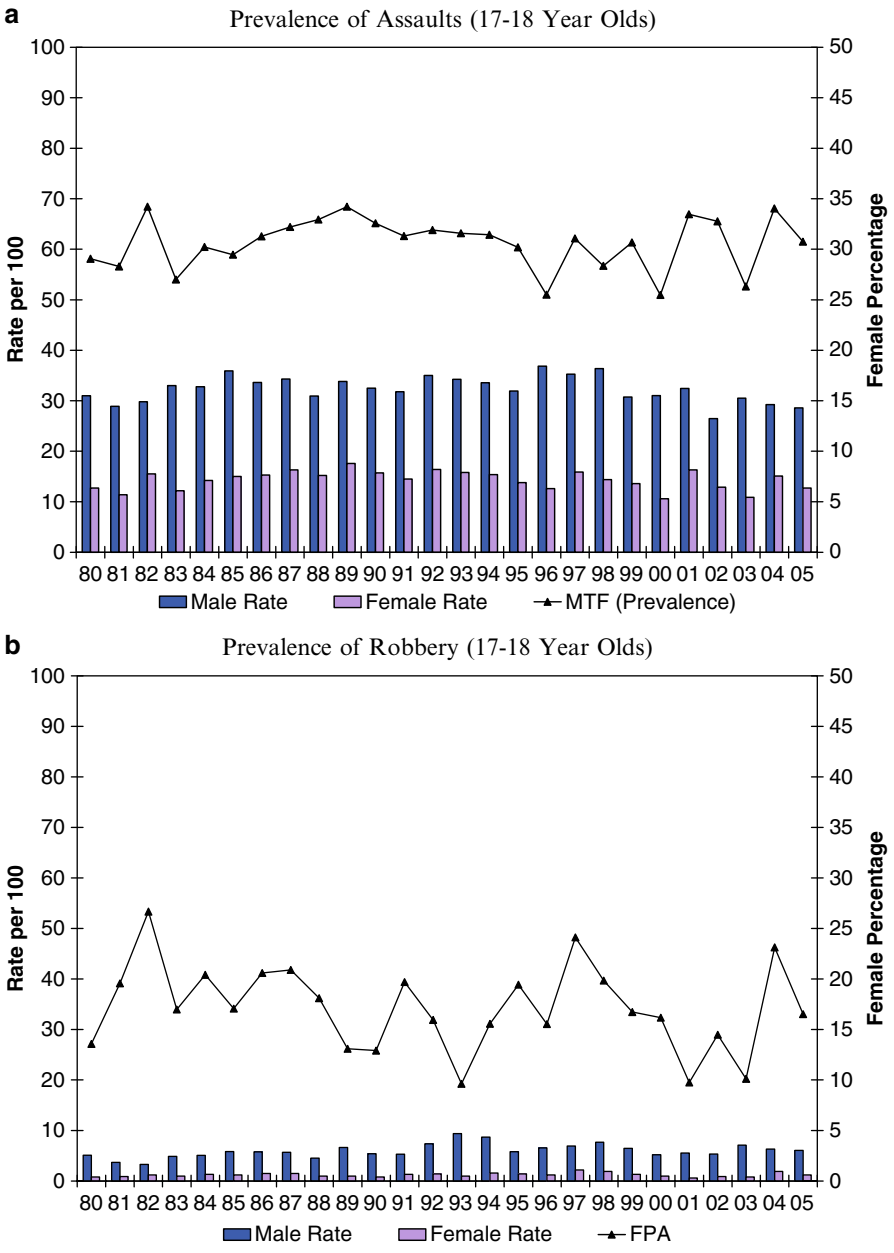

Fig. 1.2 Trends in adolescent female and male self-reported assault and robbery rates and female percentage: *Monitoring the Future*, 1980–2005 (17–18 year olds). (**a**) Prevalence of assaults (17–18 year olds). (**b**) Prevalence of robbery (17–18 year olds)

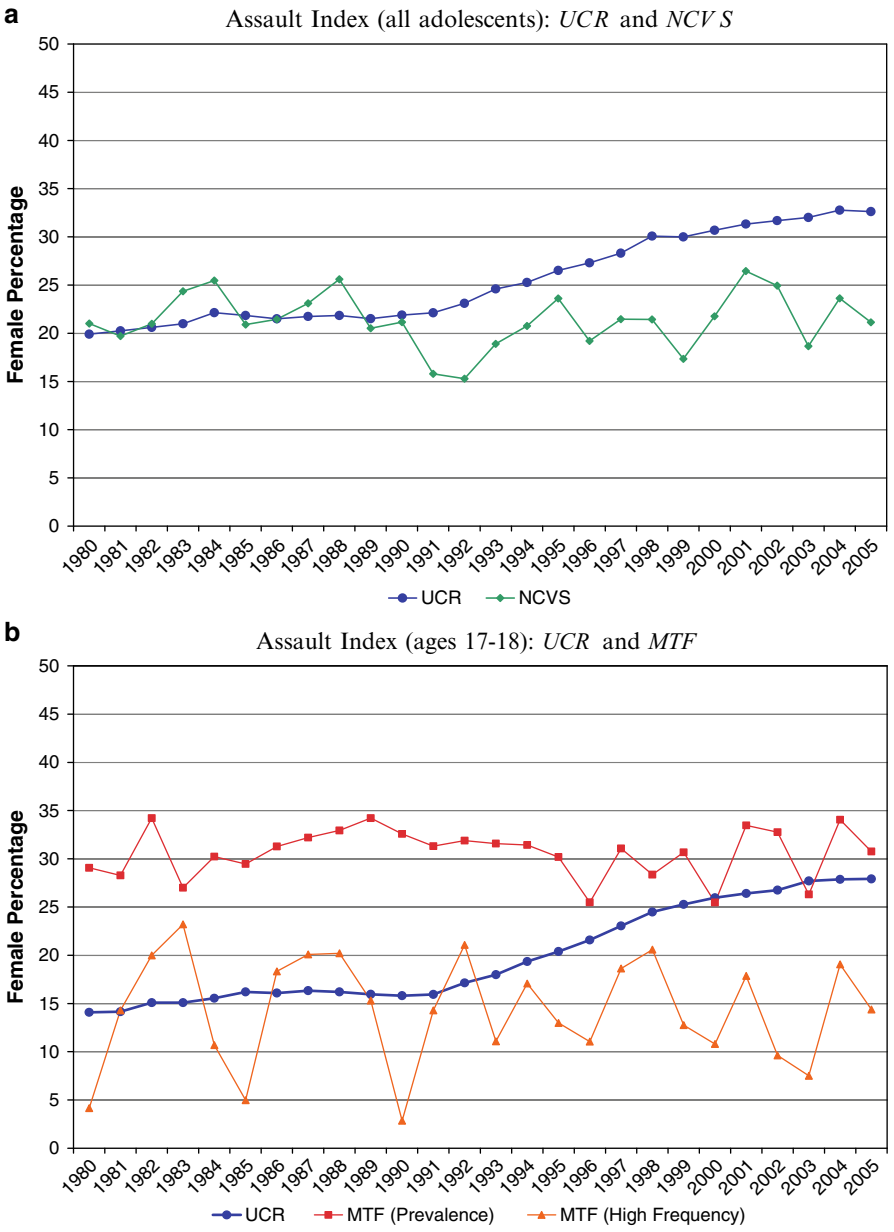

Fig. 1.3 Summary of trends in adolescent assault gender gap: arrest data (*Uniform Crime Reports, UCR)* compared to victimization (*National Crime Victimization Survey, NCVS*) and self-report sources (*Monitoring the Future, MTF*), 1980–2005. (**a**) Assault index (all adolescents): UCR and NCVS. (**b**) Assault index (ages 17–18): UCR and MTF

Girls' Arrest and Self-Report Trends for Alcohol Use and Abuse

As with violent crime, both popular and scientific writings often report rising levels of substance abuse among adolescent girls. Thus, we compared girls' arrest trends to self-reported alcohol-related delinquency. We briefly apply the policy change perspective and recount findings because the main conclusion for alcohol-related offenses parallels that for violence – *girls' share of arrest increases but self-reported involvement does not*. (For details on theory or methods, see Schwartz 2008; Schwartz and Rookey 2008; Zhong and Schwartz 2010).

Behavior Change Perspective: Girls' alcohol-involvement may increase because of more permissive gender roles related to alcohol consumption and drunkenness or because of increased strains in girls' lives – gender-role strain or family/community strains. Consequently, girls' drunken driving might increase because of increases in girls' problem drinking.

Policy Change Perspective: Increased enforcement and new laws are directed at underage drinking and social costs like drunk driving. Alcohol policies enable enforcement of underage drinking laws (e.g., increased patrol of known underage drinking spots; more officer training on false identification and party patrol techniques) (Zhong and Schwartz 2010). Aimed to curb drunk driving, between 1983 and 1998 all states adopted *Zero Tolerance* DUI standards to underage drinking drivers who consumed any measureable amount of alcohol, considerably broadening arrest criteria for those under 21 (i.e., from 0.08/0.10% blood alcohol content to 0.02%) (Schwartz and Rookey 2008). Net-widening law and enforcement will tend to expose more females, whose lawbreaking is more heavily concentrated at the lower end of the offending spectrum.

Findings: Arrest statistics show the liquor law[5] gender gap for 17–18 year olds narrowing, whereas a variety of self-report measures from MTF show very little change in the gender gap (Fig. 1.4). Although the female percent of liquor law arrests climbs from 16% in 1980 to 31% in 2005, the female share of 12th graders self-reporting having one or more drinks in the past year remains *even* – at about 50%. Similarly, the female percentage for problem drinking patterns – frequent and heavy drinking on several occasions – remained at or below 40% since 1980. This disparity in official vs. unofficial sources suggests that *girls' drinking patterns have not changed as much as social control policies increasingly that target female offending patterns*. Second, *more serious drinking remains male-dominated*, but for the last 25+ years, *adolescent girls' drinking is about as prevalent as boys' drinking*.

Drunken driving arrest statistics on female percent show a marked increase between 1980 and 2004 for 18–20 year olds – from about 12% to almost 20% (Fig. 1.5). In contrast, self-reported "driving after having too much drink" remained about 25% female since the mid-1980s, according to the Centers for Disease

[5] Liquor law violations include underage consumption, possession, and purchase; using a false id; transporting alcohol; drinking in public; and public intoxication (FBI 2004).

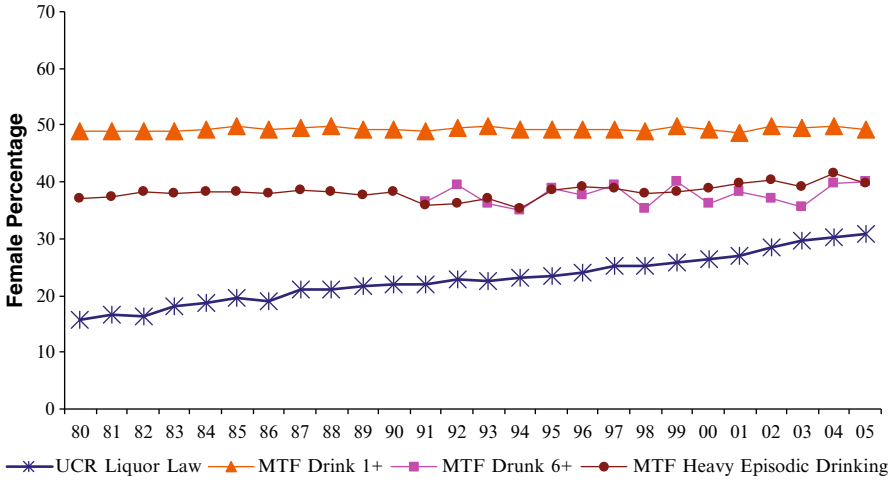

Fig. 1.4 Drinking, drunkenness, and liquor law violations: *Monitoring the Future* (ages 17–18/12th graders) and *Uniform Crime Reports Arrests* (ages 17–18), 1980–2005

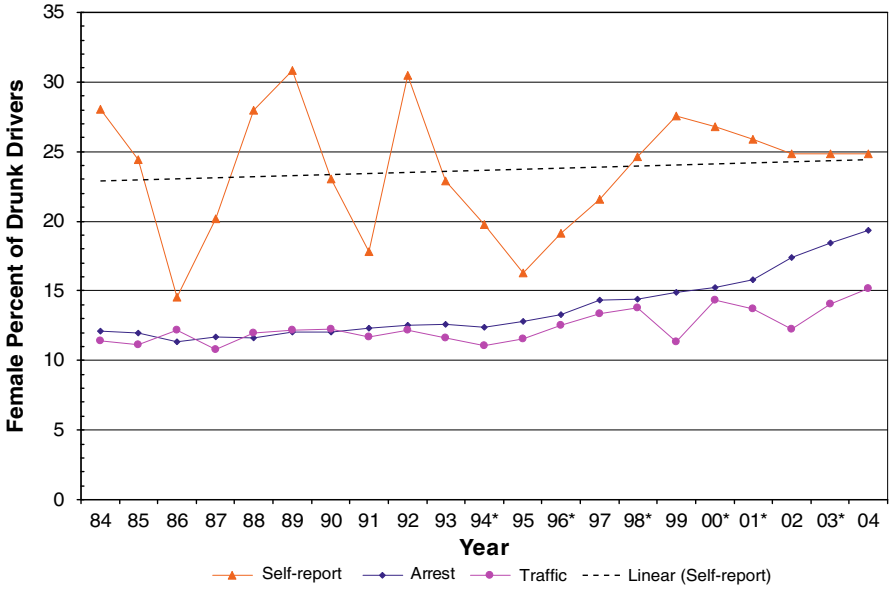

Fig. 1.5 Drunken driving arrests (*Uniform Crime Reports*), self-reports (*Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System*), and drunken driving traffic fatalities (*Fatality Analysis Reporting System*), 18–20 year olds, 1984–2004

Control's nationally representative Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Drunken driving estimates from the highly reliable *Fatality Analysis Reporting System*, which records blood alcohol test results for drivers in fatal traffic accidents,

shows the female percent was 11–12% across the 1980s and is presently 15%. The small increase is not significant according to time-series tests and is not as large as for arrests (Schwartz and Rookey 2008). Thus, as for drinking, drunken driving statistics based on sources independent of police decision making do not corroborate the relative female increases shown in arrest data.

Conclusions

In sum, the glaring differences between official and non-official sources in their portrayals of changes in girls' delinquency are at odds with the behavior change hypothesis but supportive of the policy change position. Strong evidence supporting the policy change explanation of girls' violence trends is that multiple measures from several unofficial sources of data – self-reports and victim accounts – all show little or no change in girls' violence and the gender gap. The lack of change is even more remarkable considering that changes in perceptions and expectations about girls' violence in society-at-large might itself instill "self-fulfilling" effects, leading to greater recognition and higher *reported* levels of girls' assaults in survey responses. Notably, patterns in alcohol-related offending also support the policy change position – the gender gap in liquor law and drunken driving arrests narrowed but self-report data show stability in the gender gap for many drinking patterns and for drunken driving.

Broader Context of Netwidening Policy Shifts

Taken as a whole, the rise in girls' arrests and the narrowing gender gap for assault (and alcohol offenses) has less to do with changes in girls' behavior and more to do with (1) netwidening shifts in law enforcement that result in prosecuting less serious forms of physical attack or threat, especially those in private settings and where there is less culpability, and (2) with "less biased" or more efficient responses to girls' physical or verbal aggression by law enforcement, parents, teachers, and social workers. Similarly, netwidening in alcohol policy also impacts girls' arrest trends for underage drinking and drunk driving. Generally, stretched delinquency definitions and increased formal social control that targets less serious offending will increase adolescent girls' arrest rates.

Several key movements play important roles in spawning and now embodying this new culture of crime control and juvenile justice policy, the collateral consequence of which is greater visibility of the delinquency female youths commit (for more detail, see Steffensmeier et al. 2005). First, policing shifts toward situational crime prevention and the *targeting of minor forms of crime* as a strategy for controlling serious criminality (Garland 2001:169) essentially lower the threshold of law enforcement and "charge up" low-level crime, and these shifts are especially marked

for youth "violence." Heightened citizen concern about personal safety also generate both more proactive reporting and pro-arrest policies by police. Likewise, citizen-advocacy groups, highlighting the nexus between early adolescent alcohol use and poor developmental outcomes (e.g., violence, early pregnancy), call greater attention to the social costs of underage drinking and demand formal intervention.

Second, the increased prominence in *academia and the prevention-security sector* of *developmental perspectives* that emphasize early and proactive intervention as a primary strategy to prevent escalation of minor conduct violations into more troublesome antisocial behavior (or of early alcohol experimentation into chronic heavy drinking) (Garland 2001) have shaped strategies that target less serious disruptive and delinquent behavior. These beliefs, now core elements of popular thinking and social control efforts, tend to (a) blur distinctions between delinquency and antisocial behavior; (b) lump together differing forms of aggression and verbal intimidation as manifesting interpersonal violence; and (c) elevate interpersonal violence (defined broadly) as a high-profile social problem, particularly among youth.

Third, these developments are influenced by "law and order" political themes dating back to the late 1960s, which endorsed policy changes toward greater punitiveness and social control as a get-elected strategy, and the arrest consequences are greatest for women and youth (Males 1996). Similarly, *stakeholders* or advocacy groups with interests in girls' delinquency and youth violence also emerged to aid, repress, punish, rehabilitate, safeguard, or in other ways deal with both victims and offenders of violence (Garland 2001). These private and public agencies and industries are prone to use official data as advocacy statistics to advance professional and economic interests (e.g., publications, grants, jobs, media share) and as proof of the correctness of their own action and group or agency agenda (Fuentes 1998; Males 1996). Last, playing an influential role in shaping public perceptions is the media's eagerness to report high-profile cases of girls' violence and alcohol-related transgressions. This eagerness creates and spreads conceptions of purported shifts in girls' violence and delinquency, and shapes responses in public policies and law enforcement practices.

Understanding the collateral consequences of these developments is important not only because of past effects, but also because a penal philosophy that emphasizes preventive punishment, along with its economic underpinnings, continues to be at the core of juvenile justice policies. Along with underage drinking, targeting youth violence as a serious social problem promotes policies and agency involvements that largely expanded the reach of the criminal justice system into the lives of youth. Should these risk management and preventive punishment trends continue, these trends will result in disproportionately larger numbers of girls being arrested than would be expected based on the typical sex ratio in violent offending. Future trends in girls' *arrests* for violence and delinquency are likely to depend less on what girls do, but rather on whether *netwidening*, the "cause" of the rise in girls' arrests for violence identified here, continues to define public policies. Further, to the extent that the current inclination to stretch violence definitions continues, we expect girls' violence levels to also rise in survey data – either because citizens more readily see girls as "violent" or because girls share that view and more freely self-report

minor acts of physical attack or threat. The immediate and long-term consequences of the emphasis on early intervention and enhanced formal control of problem individuals are unknown. However, costs like separation from family; interrupted education; exposure to deviant peers; changed self-definitions; and often lifelong stigma, are likely to be greater when end-stage strategies, such as arrest or residential placement, are used for minor behaviors that might be better addressed in other ways.

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Chapter 2
Crossing Over: Girls at the Intersection of Juvenile Justice, Criminal Justice, and Child Welfare

Jennifer L. Woolard

Both within and across service systems, a girl's pathway into a service system clearly affects the framing of her "problem" and what "type" of juvenile she is. Captured almost 25 years ago in a Florida report entitled "Mad, Bad, Sad, Can't Add?" (Friedman and Kutash 1986), the focus on systems of care for children's mental health has grown into a national movement with evidence-based practices and theories of change (e.g., Hodges et al. 2008; Stroul and Blau 2008). A coordinated approach across service systems is not yet widespread for youth engaged in juvenile justice and child welfare systems, although several templates for serving such youth do exist (see Cocozza et al. 2008; Kamradt et al. 2008; McCarthy et al. 2008). Weithorn (2005) eloquently describes how a single child could be viewed quite differently, both in terms of etiology and appropriate responses, depending whether she was first "identified" by the health care system, mental health system, child welfare system, juvenile justice system, or educational system.

That initial pathway sets the parameters for what system officials may expect of girls, and in turn, how the girls will be treated by the system. Nonetheless, these expectations may be ill-informed, unrealistic, and unexamined. In terms of system officials, incomplete knowledge about gender-sensitive causes and correlates of offending may take one of two forms – incorrectly downplaying the role of gender and treating girls as "one of the boys," or alternatively emphasizing stereotypes of girls and their families to the detriment of an individualized and contextually sensitive response. Either of these approaches can affect services that match girls' needs.

On the other hand, how girls are treated by the system affects their pathways and outcomes (Guevera et al. 2008). Evolving research into youths' understanding of the justice system indicates that although girls and boys may have comparable understanding of their rights, juvenile justice officials may react differently based on gender (Gaarder et al. 2004; Rosenbaum and Chesney-Lind 1994). For example,

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gender differences in attitudes toward authority, cooperation, and compliance may in turn elicit differential treatment from authorities unwilling or unaware of methods to engage youth constructively in the justice process.

Furthermore, a substantial number of girls find themselves at the intersection of two or more legal systems, facing the complexities of each system compounded by a broader incapacity or unwillingness of the multiple systems to share information, much less collaborate or coordinate. In this paper, I focus on specifically on girls involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, as well as in the adult criminal justice system. The child welfare system authorizes states to intervene on behalf of children in situations of physical, emotional, or sexual maltreatment or neglect. This intervention relies on the state's power of *parens patriae,* in which it may intervene to protect children when parents or guardians are unwilling or unable to do so (Woolard and Scott 2009). The juvenile justice system utilizes the state's police power to protect public safety to intervene in children's lives when they commit delinquent acts (which would be criminal acts if they were legal adults) or status offenses, which are only illegal because the juvenile is a minor (e.g., running away, truancy). The criminal justice system also utilizes police power to process some juveniles who have been placed under the criminal court's jurisdiction for the alleged commission of a crime. Approximately 200,000 juveniles are prosecuted as adults in state and federal courts annually, most of whom are 16- and 17-year-old African American and Hispanic males (Woolard et al. 2005).

This chapter examines how the different systems view girls differently, based on whether they are in the child welfare or the juvenile justice system, and how these systems have competing, and sometimes contradictory, expectations. Next is to understand this phenomenon from girls' perspectives, reviewing how they understand the legal system and anticipate how they will be treated. Last is a focus on girls who move from the juvenile to the criminal justice systems, and between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

System Expectations of Girls

Differential perceptions of girls, and the impact of those perceptions within and across systems, are well documented. Weithorn (2005) describes how various labels for "troubled or troublesome" youth can, on the positive side, organize and give meaning to the issues youth and systems face; essentially, they identify that problems are "real." On the negative side, labels can constrict views of girls and prevent officials from viewing their problems, and strengths, as part and parcel of the whole person. This bias, in turn, can create barriers to effective service delivery or launch a series of interactions with one system rather than another. For example, Weithorn (2005) describes a juvenile with mental health diagnoses who gets into a fight at school and threatens the life of another student. If the school calls an ambulance, he may be taken to a psychiatric facility in which the mental health system, upon discovering a history of abuse, engages the child welfare system. This system views children as victims of their parents' failures to care and protect them, placing them as dependents of the state. If instead school

officials called the police to resolve the fight, the juvenile would likely have been arrested and ultimately found delinquent, resulting in a different type of state intervention. Weithorn's example features a 9-year-old boy, but research with system officials suggests that girls might present even more complexities.

Perceptions of girls and their families may override the specific characteristics of individual cases and lead officials to emphasize certain characteristics over others. Rosenbaum and Chesney-Lind (1994) reviewed California Youth Authority files for girls referred in the 1960s, and found that appearance was mentioned regularly for girls but not for boys. Gaarder et al. (2004) continued this approach with a file review of 174 girls referred to probation and interviews with 14 probation officers, identifying three dominant narratives. First, officials' perceptions of girls as whiny and manipulative contrasted with the reality of girls' lives documented in the case files, which included sexual abuse, trauma, and parenthood. Girls were also described as being manipulative and difficult to work with. The authors conclude that descriptions of manipulative behavior often result in girls being labeled with similarly manipulative personality traits, rather than viewing their behavior as situationally or contextually driven.

Second, while seen as both a cause and a cure of delinquency, girls' families' experiences (e.g., poverty, abuse) contrasted with officers' perceptions of them as "trashy" and irresponsible. Echoing the Rosenbaum and Chesney-Lind (1994) findings, descriptions of mothers often included mention of marital status, physical appearance, and sexual activity; whereas fathers' descriptions did not. Social class was also raised as an issue, sometimes in contradictory ways. Some officers viewed low income families as more responsive to authority and easier to work with than higher income families; other officers viewed the lack of education and resources as a significant barrier to effective engagement.

Finally, although probation officers recognized the need for gender-sensitive treatment, they were unable to identify a single program designed specifically for girls. However, a minority of officers did not see the need for gender-specific programming, instead arguing that treatment should be tailored to the individual, rather than classes based on gender or other characteristics. One barrier to gender-sensitive services is the small number of girls relative to boys. Another contributing factor may be a lack of education and experience with gender-specific treatment programs and outcomes (Gaarder et al. 2004; Gaarder and Belknap 2004).

Stakeholder perceptions have the potential to affect the larger context in which treatment assessments and decisions are made. Although not addressing girls specifically, Mulvey and Reppucci (1988) asked personnel in high, medium, and low resource jurisdictions to evaluate the amenability to treatment of several juvenile offenders portrayed in video interviews. Personnel in high and low resource conditions rated the same youth as less amenable than those in medium resource conditions. Even so, the high and low-resource personnel produced positive correlations between treatment effectiveness and youth treatability. Those in medium resource conditions, however, produced negative correlations between effectiveness and treatability, consistent with a view that services were less effective. One could imagine a downward spiral in which views of ineffectiveness lead to less funding, which lead to less programming. Ironically then, a dearth of resources may correspond to

greater optimism about youths' amenability to treatment. These findings were correlational, not causal, but they demonstrate how assessments of youth are themselves an interaction of the youth, the assessor, and the larger policy and programming context in which those assessments take place.

This attention to social regularities helps us understand not only how problem framing (e.g., mad, sad, bad) determines problem solution (Seidman 1983), but also to identify iatrogenic effects of system policies that, while intended as solutions, may in and of themselves create harm. For example, (Birckhead 2011) identifies the inherent cross-system contradictions of state and federal responses to child prostitution. Most states allow prosecution of child prostitutes regardless of age, but set a minimum age of consent to sexual activity, below which a child is presumed incapable of consenting. Thus, a 14-year-old girl may be simultaneously prosecuted for prostitution and considered a victim of statutory rape in a separate criminal case brought against the person who paid for sexual activity with her. Moreover, some suggest that she may be at higher risk for detention in part because of fear for her safety on the street (Sherman 2005). Although contradictory legal schemas are neither unique to child prostitution nor necessarily unreasonable based on competing social goals (see Woolard and Scott 2009), they previously were considered in terms of separate decision making scenarios (e.g., the competence to consent to abortion versus the capacity to be held culpable for delinquent or criminal acts). With prostitution, the juvenile's capacities refer to the very same act – consent to sexual activity.

These examples of stakeholder perceptions and their impacts deserve greater research and policy attention. Conversely, they also highlight the need to understand girls' expectations, scripts, and schemas about the justice system process. The next section examines the ways in which girls anticipate and experience the justice system, highlighting their similarities to, and differences with, those of boys.

Differential Expectations of and Experiences with the Justice System

Infusing developmental perspectives into research, law and policy is spurring resurgence in research on youths' understanding of, and experiences with, the justice system. Although most studies do not focus on girls per se, I highlight here findings from studies that are relevant to girls' understanding of the legal process and interaction with key stakeholders, including their lawyers.

Understanding the Legal System

Girls and boys appear to have comparable understanding of their rights and the workings of the justice system, but may interact with justice system officials differently. Recent studies of abilities relevant to adjudicative competence (Grisso et al. 2003;

Viljoen et al. 2007), conceptual and practical knowledge of police interrogation and self-incrimination protections (Viljoen and Roesch 2005; Woolard et al. 2008) find few if any significant gender differences in knowledge.

Girls in the justice system do appear more willing than boys to work with their attorneys, but may be receiving less attention from them. Although Sherman (2009) reported that two-thirds of the girls in a focus group on juvenile justice and child welfare involvement had more than four attorneys before the age of 16, Viljoen and Roesch (2005) also found that females in detention reported significantly less contact with lawyers than males. Although some suggest that lower amounts of contact may be correlated with gender differences in seriousness of charges (see Poythress et al. 1994), the repercussions are still important. In Viljoen and Roesch's study (2005), time spent with attorneys significantly predicted greater legal capacities relevant to understanding interrogation rights and competence to stand trial. In two separate studies of legal capacities, females were also more likely than males to report that they would disclose what happened about the case to their attorney (Viljoen et al. 2005; Woolard et al. 2008). Interestingly, males were more likely than females to report they would use a dismissive approach when disagreeing with their attorney; females were more likely to report preferring an assertive approach (Viljoen et al. 2005).

These findings about contact and cooperation with lawyers may in part be explained by gender differences in expectations of fair treatment, or lack thereof. In a multisite study of adjudicative competence-relevant abilities among incarcerated and community participants aged 11–25, males reported higher expectations of injustice than females, controlling for demographic and justice experience variables (Woolard et al. 2008). More males than females anticipated unfair treatment, less help from lawyers, and a greater likelihood of a guilty verdict.

Gender differences in cooperation with authority extend to other decision points as well. The Woolard et al. (2008) study found that, in response to vignettes, females were more likely than males to confess to police rather than remain silent, accept rather than reject a plea agreement, and consult a private attorney or public defender, above and beyond expectations of injustice. When compliance was summed across the vignettes, participants who were female, younger, less experienced in the justice system, and less likely to anticipate injustice were more likely to comply with authority. Viljoen et al. (2005) also found that males were more likely to reject a plea agreement than females.

Although the evidence base is slim, males and females demonstrate comparable knowledge about the justice system process but report different experiences and intentions interacting with lawyers and making decisions about their cases. Girls anticipate fair treatment and report greater compliance with officials than boys. Even so, girls may be spending less time with their attorneys. It is unclear whether girls' less negative perceptions and different expectations are causally linked to quantitative or qualitative differences in their interactions with lawyers and other officials. Moreover, girls' perceptions and experiences have not been studied simultaneously with officials' perceptions and experiences. It would be interesting to examine the consonance and dissonance of their perspectives, and whether any gender-specific patterns of interaction could be discerned.

From Juvenile Justice to the Adult Criminal Justice System

In this section, I examine the relatively small but critical population of girls that are prosecuted as adults in the criminal justice system. I find evidence to indicate that girls are indeed processed as adults, although likely in smaller numbers than boys. Girls are more likely than boys to be housed with adult prisoners, and they have a complex view of responsibility and punishment as a result of their experiences.

Juvenile justice reform can be characterized as moving from the progressive reformers' characterization as wayward children through the contemporary reformers' characterization as superpredators. This most recent set of reforms in the 1980s and 1990s resulted in three significant classes of change, each of which has affected the number and type of juveniles processed in the adult criminal justice system. Although the capacity to transfer a youth out of the juvenile system into the adult system has been present since the system's inception, the latest reforms have lowered the age of transfer, expanded the list of transfer-eligible crimes, and narrowed the criteria for transfer to focus primarily on age and offense characteristics, and changed the mechanisms by which juveniles reach criminal court.

Historically, the most frequently used mechanism by which youth could be transferred to adult court, judicial waiver hearings, require a judge to consider evidence presented by both prosecution and defense before determining court jurisdiction. States vary in the criteria to be considered, but most include age, offense seriousness, amenability to treatment in the juvenile system, sophistication and maturity, among others. Since the reforms of the 1990s, however, adversarial hearings have given way to other less- or non-adversarial mechanisms lacking judicial review. Most states allow the prosecutor discretion whether to file charges against eligible juveniles in juvenile or criminal court. Statutory exclusion either permits or requires a juvenile, usually of a certain age and/or age/crime combination, to be tried in criminal court. Finally, several states have "once an adult, always an adult" provisions in which, once tried as an adult, the juvenile will remain an adult for any and all subsequent offenses, even those that would not otherwise be considered eligible for criminal adjudication.

Although girls comprise a small number of the transfer population, their small numbers exacerbate the difficulties in obtaining resources and conditions comparable to transferred boys. No national counts exist, but researchers estimate approximately 200,000 youth are tried annually as adults (Woolard et al. 2005). Some portion of those juveniles tried as adults are convicted and sentenced to a correctional facility. According to estimations of the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Prisons Statistics Program, approximately 2,700 males and 200 females (100 white, 100 black) under the age of 18 were classified as prisoners under state or federal jurisdiction with sentences of at least 1 year as of December 31, 2008 (author analyses of Sabol et al. 2009, Appendix Table 13). These numbers do not include individuals held either pre-trial or post-conviction in locally operated jails; such inmates usually include those convicted of misdemeanors and serving less than 1 year.

These numbers also represent a 1-day count of juveniles in adult facilities, rather than the total number of juveniles moving through the adult correctional system during a calendar year. For example, Austin et al. (2000) reported a 1-day census count of 167 female offenders, all aged between 16 and 17, in 1997. For the same year, however, 843 admissions and 612 discharges of juvenile females occurred, with an average length of stay of 106 days. By comparison, approximately 13,033 admissions and 7,274 discharges occurred for juvenile males with a 231 day average length of stay. 7,400 persons under 18 were admitted to adult prison in 1997, 3% of which were female. The average maximum sentence was 82 months.

Juvenile females are more likely than males to be housed with adult offenders. States such as Connecticut and Michigan have separate facilities for boys in the adult system, but girls are housed in women's prisons with adult offenders (OCA 2008; LaBelle 2004). From 2006 to 2008, 250 girls aged 15–18 spent time in Connecticut's York Correctional Institution, a women's prison (OCA 2008). Most of the girls are housed in the maximum security unit. The state has a separate facility, the Manson Youth Institution, for boys incarcerated in the adult system. The smaller number of female prisons generally also means that girls are likely to be incarcerated far away from home. The distance has implications for visitation from their own families, including their parents and their own children. The distance also creates difficulty for post-release planning and wraparound services.

Girls' experiences in the adult system are not well documented (for information about boys, see Bishop et al. 1998; Lane et al. 2002). One exception is the work of Gaarder and Belknap (2002, 2004) who interviewed 22 girls sentenced as adults in a Midwestern women's prison between July 1998 and August 1999. Interested both in the histories and profiles as well as lived experiences of these girls, the authors' qualitative data provide a rich information about girls' perceptions of the transfer process and their imprisonment. The girls, aged 16–19 years, included 11 white, 6 black, 3 white and Native American, one Hispanic, and one Mexican American and African American girl. Reflecting on their experiences, most girls did not minimize their own responsibility for their offenses; in fact, some girls described a version of the "adult crime, adult time" philosophy. However, many girls reported mixed feelings about their time in the adult women's prison, believing that other placements in the juvenile system may have benefited them more. These perceptions are consistent with interviews of boys in adult and juvenile facilities (see Lane et al. 2002) who describe juvenile facilities as more supportive and oriented toward rehabilitation than adult facilities.

Crossing Over Between Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare

A substantial number of youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system also bring contemporaneous or historical experience with the child welfare system. Youth could be simultaneously involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems through (1) unrelated incidents (e.g., the child welfare incident is not

directly related to the juvenile justice petition) or (2) a juvenile justice petition that stems from some aspect of the child welfare case (e.g., alleged assault on a group home worker). States vary in whether they prioritize the child welfare proceeding or the juvenile delinquency proceeding. As will be discussed more fully, whether sequential or simultaneous, child welfare system involvement increases risk both for delinquent behavior and involvement in the justice system. Once in the justice system, girls with child welfare involvement are at increased risk for being detained before trial, as well as being placed in a correctional facility after conviction. In addition, girls with child welfare involvement who are prosecuted as adults present with unique issues.

Clearly a history of child welfare involvement increases the risk for delinquency and juvenile justice system involvement. For both males and females, out-of-home placement substantially raises the risk of delinquency. For example, in a study of official records from more 10,405 youths referred to Texas juvenile court, Johansson and Kempf-Leonard (2009) found that foster care placements raised the risk of chronic offending for girls but not for boys.

Among youth who are placed in substitute care, however, placement instability increases the risk of delinquency for males but not females (Ryan and Testa 2005). The findings reveal that for girls with at least one out-of-home placement, having three or more placements predicts a higher likelihood of delinquency. However, neither age at placement, race/ethnicity, type of neither maltreatment, nor placement instability affect the risk of delinquency. In contrast, for boys, age at placement, race, type of maltreatment, and more than four placements increase delinquency risk.

Further, girls are often inappropriately detained: "(1) for minor offenses, warrants, and technical violations of probation and parole; (2) as a direct and indirect result of family violence; and (3) as a result of the failure of systems to work together." (Sherman 2005, p. 29). Girls represent the majority of status offenders and suffer from "bootstrapping," a process by which girls commit an initial status offense or minor delinquency that does not require detention or incarceration (Bishop and Frazier 1992; Hoyt and Scherer 1998). If a girl violates the court order (e.g., contempt, probation violation, court order violation) following on that minor offense, however, she may end up in detention for that violation. This process has been legally challenged and ended in some states but remains a problem in others (Feld 2009; Sherman 2005).

As another example of unintended consequences, Feld (2009) argues that decreased tolerance for family violence, while undoubtedly creating benefits for female victims, may also contribute to increased arrest and prosecution of girls. As discussed by Schwartz and Steffenmeier in Chap. 1, recent trends documenting an increase in girls' violence may be explained in part by a relabeling of status offenses as simple or aggravated assault. Although it is difficult to distinguish whether increased arrest rates result from actual increases in violence or in policy shifts to re-label status offenses and respond to domestic violence, the data certainly raise questions about the courts' capacity and willingness to exert differential social control by gender.

A consistent theme in cross-systems work is the importance of communication. When a system is built on the presumption of individual parents advocating for their

children, change in that presumption can create difficulties. For example, the juvenile justice system presumes that parents will be notified and will attend a hearing when their child is being placed in detention. As Conger and Ross (2006) note, however, there may not be a mechanism to identify and notify a social worker when a foster care youth on their caseload is arrested and/or placed in detention. If the social worker, as the youth's guardian representative, fails to attend the detention hearing, several consequences follow. First, it is less likely that the youth will be released from detention pending trial, resulting in potentially unnecessarily longer detention stays. Because foster care youth are more likely to be arrested at home (their foster care placement), they are less likely to have an alternate placement (e.g., extended relatives, community-based caretaker) available when detention alternatives are considered. Second, if a youth is absent from a foster care placement for a certain period of time (in some cases, 3 days), that foster care bed may be assigned to someone else. If and when the youth is released from detention, the social worker will have to find another, potentially different emergency placement for that youth. And, as described earlier, placement instability is a risk factor for negative outcomes.

Conger and Ross (2006) compared the effects of New York's strategies to reduce detention disparities between foster care and non-foster care youth (note that the two groups did not differ in the amount or severity of offenses, age, charge, or prior detention experience). First, the intervention ensured that the juvenile justice system had a youth's caseworker contact information and assisted in contacting the caseworker; second, intervention staff facilitated court conferencing by connecting child welfare workers to probation staff and guiding them through the court process. Conger and Ross examined the data for "police admits" – those youth who spend at least one night in detention because they are picked up by police when court is closed. Prior to program implementation, about 56% of foster care youth who were arrested were also detained, compared to 48% of the arrested non-foster care youth. This difference was significant among less serious cases, but not among the more serious cases. After the intervention strategy for foster care youth was implemented, the significant difference in detention rates disappeared. However, when the results were examined separately for youth with serious and non-serious charges, more complex outcomes were discovered. That is, the effect of case seriousness was not reversed; foster care youth with serious charges were detained at a much higher rate that similarly charged non-foster care youth. The previous bias among less serious charges was eliminated by the intervention.

The authors speculate about the varying effects of the project on detention outcomes. The reduction in foster care bias among youth with less serious charges was predicted, because a lack of alternative placement is one of the reasons why a juvenile with lesser charges might remain detained in the first place. In terms of the increased effect of foster care status on detention rates among those with more serious charges, they offer several ideas. First, they suggest that the project may have changed who appeared in court on behalf of foster care youth. Instead of a group home staffer, the youth's case worker may have been more likely to attend and was able to convey more information about the child's history, including attempts at running away from placement. Second, this project may have sensitized

prosecutors to inquire more often about the youths' attempts at running away, thus changing their recommendations for detention status.

These findings are relevant for girls for several reasons. Prior to the program, foster care girls experienced significantly higher detention rates than non-foster care girls; however, the intervention was unable to reduce that disparity. One explanation may be that foster care girls had higher runaway or AWOL rates (59%) than boys (41%). This hypothesis about the importance of prior runaway attempts is bolstered by additional analyses showing no significant differences in detention rates among foster care girls with no AWOL incidents and non-foster care girls.

The influence of foster care status on juvenile justice process is also found at other decision points. In a study of first time juvenile offenders in Los Angeles receiving a disposition between 2002 and 2005, Ryan et al. (2007) found that approximately 7% of the 69,000 youth who entered the justice system were also active in the child welfare system ("crossover" youth). Comparing the child welfare and non-child welfare samples, the child welfare sample was more likely to be female, younger, African American and Hispanic. Thirty seven percent of the crossover sample was female, compared to 24% of non-child welfare youth. Although child welfare status did not affect the likelihood of case dismissal, youth with active dependency status were more likely to receive a suitable placement (e.g., group home) or correctional placement (e.g., camp or secure facility) than non-child-welfare youth, controlling for demographic and offense variables.

Using longitudinal administrative data, Jonson-Reid and Barth (2000) examined whether receiving child welfare services, as compared to simply being investigated by child welfare but not receiving services, increased the likelihood of later incarceration as a juvenile offender. Although females comprised only 4% of the incarcerated youth, the rate of child welfare history was three times that of the comparably aged general population of girls. Moreover, as the degree of girls' child welfare system penetration increased, so did the risk of later incarceration; this relationship did not hold for boys. Thus, even though girls represent a small proportion of incarcerated youth, the strong interaction between incarceration and welfare involvement for girls merits further research.

Girls at the Crossroads of Child Welfare and Adult Criminal Justice Systems

The importance of foster care status to juvenile justice processing leads to the inevitable question – what about girls from the foster care system that are transferred to adult court? If two systems designed to serve youth, juvenile justice and child welfare, have difficulty coordinating their efforts on behalf of youth, these problems are likely exacerbated when a system designed to process adults must process a relatively small number of juvenile girls as adults.

As part of a wider investigation, the Connecticut Office of the Child Advocate completed a targeted case review of 49 girls incarcerated in the adult women's

maximum security prison during a 2-month period in 2008 (OCA 2008). At the time of the study, Connecticut automatically tried as adults any 16 or 17 year old charged with a crime. Automatic and discretionary transfers were allowed for 14 and 15 year olds, depending on the charges. About one-third of the 49 girls had the Department of Children and Families listed as legal guardian or statutory parent. Of those, 91% were pretrial at the time of the interview, meaning they were eligible to be bailed out before their trial. Of the pretrial girls, almost half had bond amounts less than $5000, of which 10 percent, or $500, would need to be posted. However, DCF policy prohibits the payment of bond, relying instead on inquiries to any third parties who might post bond. DCF is required to determine whether release would be appropriate, but the parameters for such a determination are unspecified.

Almost 91% of the girls had previous or current involvement with DCF. Moreover, DCF may close an open child welfare case if the girl is sentenced to more than 3 years in the Department of Corrections (DOC) and if the DOC is meeting their needs. The OCA report found that many open child protection investigations had cases closed after prison admission because the child was now out of home. As part of an agreement between the Department of Child and Family Services and the Department of Corrections, DCF placed part-time staff in the prison to coordinate services and facilitate communication. The report provides greater detail about the political and policy contexts of reform in Connecticut, but even examining the files of the 49 girls incarcerated as adults highlights the importance of system collaboration and communication among criminal justice, juvenile justice, and child welfare systems. Involvement in the child welfare system may mean that girls are less likely to post bond and to have an active advocate present on their behalf, and more likely to present with complex health and mental health needs to a correctional system designed for adults, not adolescents. Moreover, the relatively small number of girls in the adult system compared to boys results in fewer resources and greater constraints, such as longer hours in cell lockdown.

Directions for Research

Several themes emerge from this discussion of legal issues regarding girls at the intersection of justice and welfare systems. These themes include the importance of inductive, qualitative, and descriptive research; the framing of research questions; and the intersection of gender with other forms of status.

Importance of Descriptive, Qualitative, Inductive Research

We still lack basic fundamental information about the nature, extent, and quality of girls' experiences in the justice system. The difficulties inherent in such research cannot be underestimated, but neither can the importance of such data. Two contributions of empirical research to legal systems can be to evaluate the merit of explicitly

articulated assumptions about girls, and to identify those unacknowledged social regularities and investigate their empirical underpinnings. These approaches are already applied to the topic of gender-specific pathways to offending and, increasingly, to the efficacy of gender-specific treatment interventions. Indeed, some of the research reviewed here emerges from inductive research based on the lived experiences of incarcerated girls and the officials who work with them. However, when we lack even basic information about the number of girls transferred to adult court, or the number of girls simultaneously involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, our research, policy, and program initiatives are necessarily constrained by this lack and premised in part on what we "think" we know about these populations. The social regularities, or unwritten rules within and across systems, scaffold the context in which the girls, their families, and system stakeholders operate; they are consigned to the category of "unexplained variance" if they cannot be identified and incorporated into our research models.

Framing Questions and Identifying Social Regularities

A long line of commentators describe how larger policy agendas and frameworks can frame the types of causal explanations we investigate and the ways that we frame legally relevant social problems for empirical study (e.g., Humphreys and Rappaport 1993; Seidman 1983; Levine and Levine 1992).This chapter describes how stakeholders such as probation officers and judges, who belong to what Seidman (1983) describes as the "officialdom," frame the issues involved with girls (e.g., needy, promiscuous, hard to handle) and their families (e.g., irresponsible). This chapter also highlights the few studies that allow the "recipients" to speak – the girls themselves, who describe their experiences with the various systems.

Seidman (1983) describes how these different conceptualizations can affect not only the framing of the problem, but the subsequent research methodology. Adjusted here to reflect the interest in girls, a person-centered, individual perspective holds that delinquent girls are different from non-delinquent girls because of individual variables. Quite logically, this perspective would lead to samples of delinquent and non-delinquent girls matched on demographic and social variables, leaving person factors free to vary. A situation-centered focus would presume that differences between offenders and non-offenders vary according to social conditions; as such, sampling would hold individual variability constant and investigate the contributions of social class, neighborhood, or other social and cultural variables. A relational-centered perspective assumes that "reactions to certain behaviors largely determine their social meaning… and consequences" (p. 64). Thus research strategies would focus on the interactions between deviants (girls) and social control agents (system officials). Each of these approaches is used in research with girls in the legal system and each makes important contributions to the larger body of knowledge. However, it is important to recognize the underlying frame of each research study, so as to

place its findings in the larger context of presumptions about what is important and what is excluded. So, for example, research that examines the interaction of probation officers with girls may shed light on how justice system processes, and their resulting consequences, derive from that interaction per se, not just characteristics of girls or the officers themselves. Acknowledging the first theme, that basic descriptive and inductive research is desperately needed, does not undermine this argument that a variety of explicit perspectives can contribute to our understanding of justice system process and outcomes for girls.

A final point to underscore is the intersection of gender with race, ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation. Historically for juvenile justice generally and for girls specifically, a tension exists between tailoring services to specific aspects of youth (e.g., gender, sex orientation) and developing a systemic and systematic intervention strategy. Both practice and research embrace the importance of girls' issues. Without discarding the importance of the "main effect" of gender, we also must move to a more subtle and nuanced attention to the heterogeneity of risk, protection, and experiences of girls. A contextual, ecological approach recognizes and allows for the salience of interaction effects; that, understands the experiences of gender as conditioned by race, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation (Gaarder et al. 2004).

The organizing scheme of this chapter, examining different system decision points, and cross over between systems, is one way to examine what is known about gender differences or how gender affects each of those decision points. This approach allows an examination of not only how girls' experiences may differentiate their system processing but also how the various stakeholders, and the interactions of the systems themselves, may drive known gender disparities, and raise new issues for our understanding of research, policy, and practice.

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Chapter 3
Girls in the Juvenile Justice System: The Causes and Correlates of Girls' Involvement

Stephanie Hawkins Anderson

Justice-involved girls are an exclusive yet heterogeneous group of adolescent girls whose behaviors range from persistent power struggles with their mothers to more serious assaultive behaviors. These are the girls for whom society struggles to understand which protective factors can sufficiently buffer the impact of childhood risks, which intervention programs are most effective, and ultimately what the critical influences of a girls' involvement with the juvenile justice system are. There is not a single risk factor that can explain the development of delinquency; rather delinquent behaviors can be conceived as the nexus of personal experience, peer pressure, societal influence, biological proclivities, social support, and opportunity.

In 2008, law enforcement agencies in the USA made an estimated 2.11 million arrests of persons younger than age 18 and females accounted for 30% of these juvenile arrests (Puzzanchera, 2009). 22% of the juvenile arrests in 2008 involving youth were handled within law enforcement agencies and the youth were released, 66% were referred to juvenile court, and 10% were referred directly to criminal court. The others were referred to a welfare agency or to another police agency. In 2007, there were 16,261,780 juvenile females between the ages 10–17 in the USA (Puzzancher et al. 2008; see Chap. 1 for more detailed information on arrest trends over time). On a given day in 2006, there were 7,819 girls (approximately 1% of the total number of girls arrested for this year) under the age of 18 who were committed to a placement in a facility as part of a court-ordered disposition. Committed juveniles may be adjudicated and disposed in juvenile court or convicted and sentenced in criminal court (Sickmund et al. 2008). These girls represent those that are in the deep end of the juvenile justice (JJ) system.

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Study Group (GSG), a multidisciplinary group of experts convened to assess current knowledge about the patterns and causes of female delinquency. This group helped to lay the research foundation for understanding and responding to girls' delinquency. An important part of the GSG were focus group discussions conducted with girls involved in the JJ system and the front line staff that work with them. These real-life perspectives elucidated (and provided external validity to current research) on the causes and correlates of delinquency. Quotes from the justice-involved girls and the staff will be included in each of the sections of this chapter to highlight the congruence of research findings from research with the life experiences of girls involved in locked facilities of the JJ system.

Family Relationships

The quality of a girl's relationship with her parents is an important contextual factor for understanding a girl's involvement in the juvenile justice system (Ehrensaft 2005; Meeus et al. 2004). Because the developmental period of adolescence (~12–18 years) represents an attempt for the adolescent to establish their own identity and make independent decisions, it is not uncommon to see power struggles between the parent and the adolescent. Girls gain independence from their parents slower than boys and tend to be more closely monitored by their parents (Huston and Alvarez 1990). Thus, it is not surprising that conflict with parents is found to be higher among girls than boys (Laursen 1995). For girls, it is typically the mother who serves as the agent of control over their daughter's behaviors, as well as the object of the power struggles. Research identifies middle school as the time when girls begin their involvement with aggression and delinquency (Nichols et al., 2006; Blitstein et. al., 2005). For many of the girls in the GSG focus groups, it was during middle school that they began to challenge the rules and the control that their mothers established.

Some families exhaust their options for keeping their girls under control and lack the resources needed to continue navigating these conflicts. Thus, parents may initiate contact with the JJ system as a way to regain their authority over their daughters. As a result, it is often the agreement between the families and the juvenile justice system that places the girls in the category of delinquent (Davis 2007). For other families, poor relationships with girls and a lack of supervision may lead to an increased chance of persistent criminality (Patterson et al. 1998; Stouthhamer-Loeber et al. 2002). When asked about the main reasons girls are sent to a juvenile facility, detained delinquent girls said it was the result of family relations.

> It may be a cry for attention if they aren't getting something out of their family…
>
> Your family influences you – your family may not [care] and let you get away with [things]…

Family living arrangements may also be a factor in girl's delinquency. Among the 74 million children in the USA in 2009, approximately 2.1% are living with their grandparent with no parent present (U.S. Census Bureau 2009). Grandparents are becoming surrogate parents to their grandchildren at increasing numbers

often because of the drug abuse, HIV/AIDS infection, incarceration, divorce, and unemployment of the parents (Goodman et al. 2008). The issue of grandparents as caregivers is particularly important for understanding delinquency when one considers that parents are responsible for establishing the rules, boundaries, and consequences of youth behavior. Studies show that caregiving grandparents have increased health challenges as well as impaired functional abilities (Lee et al. 2003; Minkler and Fuller-Thomson 1999). These additional issues may make parenting of early adolescent girls, who seemingly have increased involvement in a range of delinquent behaviors, even more difficult. Caregiving grandparents may not be able to adequately monitor the activities of their grandchildren. A juvenile justice facility worker and a female juvenile offender shared that

> Grandparents are not prepared – the youth today are volatile and grandparents can't handle the issues kids are confronting.

Within the context of family relationships, arrest policies also play an important role in understanding a girl's involvement with the justice system. In many states, pro-arrest or mandatory arrest policies – policies that encourage or require the police to make arrests in domestic violence cases when there is probable cause to do so, regardless of the wishes of the victim –create the unintended consequence of initiating a girl's formal involvement with the juvenile justice system (Buzawa and Hotaling 2006; also see Chap. 1). Girls who at one time were considered "incorrigible" or "in need of supervision" may have their behaviors reclassified as assault. For example, police may be called to a home for parent–child conflict situations and subsequently removed from the home (Belknap et al. 2001; Chesney-Lind 2002).

The relevance of arrest policies is underscored in recent research conducted by the Girls Study Group that used the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) to analyze the influence of domestic violence arrest policies and the characteristics that impact the likelihood of arrest in parent–child incidents. Based on these data, mothers were the victim in about 83% of assault cases perpetrated by girls between 12–17 years old and over 90% of the incidents reported to the police occurred within the home). These findings underscore how violence that takes place in the home between a girl and her mother is a major contributor to the delinquency rate among girls. One staff member of a girl's program said

> Mothers and daughters [are] just having conflict issues… the mother may raise their hand to hit [the girl] and the girls will hit [the mother] back and subsequently be charged with assault

Trauma

One cannot ignore the import of trauma when discussing justice-involved girls. Juvenile female offenders have significant histories of trauma exposure (Ariga et al. 2007; Cauffman et al. 1998; Abram et al. 2007; also see Chap. 8). Research conducted by Dixon et al. (2004) found that witnessing a violent crime, being confronted with traumatic news, and sexual and physical abuse to be among the most frequently experienced traumas among female juvenile offenders.

In 2008, an estimated 772,000 children were victims of maltreatment with more than 3.7 million children receiving child protective services investigations or assessments (USDHHS 2010). According to national estimates by the Department of Health and Human Services (2010), approximately 71% of children in the USA experienced neglect; about 16% experience physical abuse; about 9% experience sexual abuse; about 7% experience psychological maltreatment; and about 2% experienced medical neglect.

Some interesting findings emerge in looking at comparisons of maltreatment rates between boys and girls. National prevalence estimates indicate that child maltreatment victimization is split almost evenly between boys and girls (DHHS 2010). However, when examining the national prevalence of sexual abuse specifically, girls experience sexual abuse at a rate more than five times the rate for boys (Sedlak et al. 2010). Notwithstanding these data, research suggests it may be the quality and the impact of the abuse experience and not just the prevalence that may differ for girls and boys (Ehrensaft 2005). For boys, two or more substantiated reports of maltreatment makes boys about one and a half times more likely to engage in delinquent acts and three or more incidents of maltreatment makes them about one and three-quarters more likely to engage in delinquent acts. The picture is slightly different for girls. The recurrence of maltreatment does not increase the risk for delinquency until it reaches a threshold of three or more substantiated incidents. When this threshold is met, girls are about two times more likely to engage in delinquent acts (Ryan and Testa 2005). Girls tend to endure more trauma internally (e.g., depression, suicidal ideation/behaviors, disordered eating) before they respond overtly (Bender 2010; Leadbeater et al. 1999; McClellan et al. 1997). The impact of trauma is correlated with involvement in serious delinquency more in girls than in boys (Dixon et al. 2004; Breslau et al. 1991; Cauffman et al. 1998; Hoyt and Scherer 1998; Rivera and Widon 1990). In fact, research conducted by Belknap and Holsinger (2006) found that female offenders are significantly more likely than males to report that victimization was a key factor leading to their offending.

One explanation offered for understanding the relationship between abuse and serious delinquency in girls is girls who have experienced trauma, including physical and sexual abuse, become primed to overreact when new stressors present themselves (Kendall-Tackett 2000). As a result, previously traumatized females may display violent reactions in situations that might not cause a similar reaction in non-traumatized persons (Brewer-Smyth 2004). Another explanation offered in the literature for understanding the relationship between abuse and serious delinquency in girls is girls are more likely to internalize their response to maltreatment and it may be the case that by the time child welfare agencies are aware of the maltreatment, it has already reached a state of chronic abuse (Jonson-Reid 2002). Children with severe and chronic maltreatment histories display increased levels of violence and delinquent behaviors (Manly, Cicchetti and Barnett 1994; Smith and Thornberry 1995; Williams and Herrera 2007; Feiring et al. 2007). In short, girls in the juvenile justice system are both victims and offenders (Odgers et al. 2007).

> Some early traumatic experiences that just kind of gets them started
>
> There's so much neglect at a very early age. 90–100% of our case loads are neglect and sexual abuse

Mental Health Status

Recent estimates suggest that 65–70% of adolescents who come in contact with the juvenile justice system have a diagnosable mental health disorder with approximately 27% of this population meeting criteria for a severe mental disorder (Shufelt & Cocozza, 2006). A systematic review of 25 psychiatric surveys examining mental health disorders among adolescence in juvenile detention and correctional facilities found significant differences between the functioning of detained adolescents and those in the general population, as well as between male and female detained adolescents (Fazel et al. 2008).

Psychiatric disorders are considerably more prevalent in adolescents in detention and correctional facilities than among their age-equivalent peers in the general community (see Chap. 7, for more detailed discussion of these issues). For girls, major depression is four to five times more common in detention and correctional facilities than in the general community, and twice as common in detained boys compared to boys in the general community (Costello et al. 2003, 2006). Given the nature of conduct disorder, differences in the prevalence between detained youth and youth in the community are not surprising. For detained girls, the prevalence of conduct disorder is 10–20 times higher than estimates for girls in the community and for boys' it is five to ten times higher (Loeber et al. 2000; Costello et al. 2006).

Within detention facilities, boys and girls show differences in rates of major depression (11% boys compared to 29% girls) and ADHD (10% for boys and 20% for girls). However, rates for conduct disorder were similarly prevalent for boys and girls (Fazel et al. 2008). While there is no question that boys are more represented in the JJ system than girls, the similarity in prevalence rates for conduct disorder make sense given that it was likely the expression of these problems that was responsible for their placement in a juvenile detention or correctional facility.

When focusing specifically on justice-involved girls, comorbid diagnoses, namely conduct disorder, polysubstance abuse, depression, and anxiety appear to characterize this population (Dixon et al. 2004; Kataoka et al. 2001; Kosky et al. 1990; Pliszka et al. 2000; Richards 1996; Teplin et al. 2002; Ulzen and Hamilton 1998; Wood et al. 2002; Abram et al. 2007) with comorbidity rates as high as 82% for incarcerated girls (Ulzen and Hamilton 1998). Like many risk factors for delinquency, it is unknown if this constellation of mental health disorders cause delinquent behaviors in girls, increases the likelihood of arrests and detention, or is a frequent trait among justice-involved girls (Teplin et al. 2002). Regardless of when mental health issues become a concern for girls, one staff member at a female juvenile justice facility appropriately concluded

> The mental health system is not meeting the needs of the young adolescent female

Education

In 2006, about 49.3 million students were enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools. Of this total, approximately 1.1 million girls (2.2%) were suspended and approximately 76,000 (.2%) were expelled from their schools (Planty et al. 2009).

Recent research paints an even bleaker picture for juvenile justice-involved girls. In a study conducted by Wilson et al. (2007), results indicated that more than 80% of justice-involved girls were suspended from school, 55% were retained in a grade and 44% were expelled from school prior to their incarceration. Over the past three decades, researchers consistently point to evidence indicating that youth with disabilities, primarily a learning disability or an emotional disturbance, are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system (Quinn et al. 2005; Bullock and McArthur 1994; Burell and Warboys 2000; Murphy 1986; Rutherford et al. 1985; Morgan 1979). These findings highlight the significant role that education plays in the lives of justice-involved youth.

In 2007, about 13% of the youth enrolled in public school (6.6 million youth), received special education services (Aud et al. 2010). The US government mandates free and appropriate public school education for all youth who have disabilities through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In order to receive these special education services, youth have to be identified by a team of professionals as having a disability that adversely affects academic performance and being in need of special education and related services. In Fall 2008, approximately 1.9 million girls between ages 6 and 21 years were served under the IDEA. Of this total, 1,774 girls (~.1%) received their services in a correctional facility (U.S. Department of Education 2010). According to a study conducted by Quinn et al. (2001), 46% of youth with a disability in corrections had a primary diagnosis of specific learning disability and 45% were identified with an emotional disturbance.

Among the youth receiving special education, 39% received services for a specific learning disability (Aud et al. 2010). Generally speaking, a learning disability presents as a discrepancy between a person's potential for learning and what she actually learns. When considering learning disabilities, three potential pathway into delinquency may exist, (1) a learning disability can lead to school dropout and subsequent delinquency; (2) a learning disability may interact with problems of attention and impulsivity and increase the risk for engaging in delinquent behaviors; and (3) a learning disability may compromise a youth's ability to avoid detection by the juvenile justice system (Brier 1989). While there is no consensus in the empirical literature on if there is an actual link between learning disabilities and delinquency, further exploration of this potential relationship is warranted.

While dropping out of school is not unique to girls, there may be situations for which girls are more sensitive that lead to dropping out of school. Some possibilities include that they dislike academic work, they feel too far behind academically, they have conflicts with teachers, they are pregnant, they must take care of a family member, they need to find a job (Bridegland et al. 2006). In 2007, approximately 672,000 (1.4%) girls between the ages of 16 and 18 were identified as school dropouts (U.S. Department of Commerce 2008). As Sweeten et al. (2009) affirm, dropouts are not a homogenous group in terms of the motivation for leaving school early. Research conducted by Kaplan et al. (1996) found that dropping out of school had a more negative impact on the functioning of girls compared to boys. They build this conclusion on the idea that girls are more motivated by social interactions and relationships than boys. Kaplan and colleagues assert when a girl drops out of school, there is a break in her established

social relationships and this will have a negative impact on her functioning. Although several studies found a positive relationship between dropping out of school and delinquency (Jarjoura 1993, 1996; Thornberry et al. 1985; Voelkl et al. 1999; Fagan and Pabon 1990), it is possible that a youth's history of difficulty with and disengagement from school, coupled with a history of antisocial behavior, may account for the observed differences in offending between dropouts and non-dropouts. Thus, the event of dropping out may not be as critical in understanding its relationship to delinquency, as much as the process leading up to dropping out of school is (Sweeten et al. 2009).

> educational system…kids are not going to school and people are not following up on them

> …that's [girls with disabilities] a pipeline to the juvenile justice system. A lot of these young people who have these behavioral disorders are the ones who are being sent to juvenile hall for misbehaving. If you talk to the parents, they do not know about the educational system and they do not have access to resources

Peers and Dating Partners

As girls increase the amount of time they spend with mixed-sex friendship groups, their likelihood of involvement with delinquency increases (Agnew and Brezina 1997; Giordano 1978). This social dynamic is not necessarily the case for boys (Warr 1996), which suggest that opposite sex peers have a differential impact on the behaviors of girls (Sarnecki 2001; Warr 2002; see Chap. 6, for more detailed discussion of the role of peers and partners). The role of opposite sex peers and girl's delinquency can be understood better when one examines the context of adolescent dating partners. When adolescent girls begin dating, it is often the dating partner that takes priority in the adolescent girl's life and subsequently has the greatest influence in their decision making (Meeus et al. 2004). According to Cauffman et al. (1998), the approach to dating is different among juvenile offenders than their pro-social counterparts. For delinquent youth, the opportunity to learn and practice prosocial dating behaviors is often compromised due to the proclivity of the juvenile offender to become involved with delinquent peers (Ehrensaft et al. 2003; Capaldi and Crosby 1997; Moffitt et al. 2001.

Another factor to consider in understanding delinquency among female juvenile offenders is the age of their dating partners. Adolescent females are more likely than adolescent males to date older partners (Carver et al. 2003). Older partners may provide unprecedented acquisition of drugs and alcohol, more opportunities to socialize away from adult supervision, access to a car, and increased exposure to delinquent activities (e.g., truancy) (Haynie 2003). Girls with older partners may also have a history of psychological vulnerabilities that make them more susceptible to the advances of older men (Young and D'Arcy 2005) and as a result they become involved in the activities of their dating partners with little to no regard for the consequences of their behaviors. As one justice-involved girls said

> the older boys are not in school and girls want to hang out with them – so they skip school

Child Welfare System

In 2008, more than 3.7 million children were the focus of a child protective services investigation or assessment and 22.3% of these investigations were substantiated cases of abuse or neglect (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2010). Slightly over half (51.3%) of the child victims of abuse or neglect were girls. Maltreated youth in general, and those involved with the child welfare system specifically, are at increased risk for engaging in delinquent behaviors and becoming involved with the juvenile justice system (Bender 2010; Ryan and Testa 2005). "Crossover youth" is a terms that is used to describe children who are simultaneously involved with both the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system (Ryan et al. 2007; see Chap. 2, for a detailed discussion of crossover girls).

Juvenile offenders coming from the child welfare system are more likely to be younger and more likely to be female (Ryan et al. 2007). This pattern suggests that female victims of maltreatment may begin their involvement with the juvenile justice system at an early age. Research conducted by Jonson-Reid and Barth (2000) examined the child welfare experiences of crossover youth. Their findings reveal that adolescent girls within the child welfare system are at particularly high risk for entry into the juvenile justice system when compared to their counterparts in the general population. In fact, girls who entered and exited foster care evidenced a rate of entry into a juvenile justice facility that was ten times higher than females in the general populations. By comparison, males who entered and exited foster care had rates that were only five times higher than males in the general population (Jonson-Reid and Barth 2000). Beyond an examination of the rate of entry into the juvenile justice system, gender differences also existed in the types of delinquent acts committed by crossover youth. Maltreated girls were arrested for violent delinquent acts more than their non-maltreated counterparts; however, no differences existed in the violent arrests between maltreated and non-maltreated boys (Rivera and Widon 1990).

Girls from the child welfare system will often move into the juvenile justice system as a result of the same types of control struggles that are faced by girls coming from families (Davis 2007). Studies find that entering foster care for reasons other than maltreatment (e.g., behavioral problems) is also associated with entry into the juvenile justice system (Jonson-Reid 2002; Coleman and Jenson 2000). Crossover youth, particularly girls from foster care settings, bring a unique set of challenges to the juvenile justice system. If these girls are eligible for a probation disposition, the courts may find that probation is not a viable option because many foster families are not willing to remain involved with a child who has a delinquency case (Ryan et al. 2007). As a result, the courts have limited options and may place girls in a more secure setting, such as a group home or detention facility. These secure environments increase opportunities for association with deviant peer groups and increase the likelihood of recidivism (Dodge et al. 2006; Ryan et al. 2007). For crossover girls with documented histories of maltreatment, being pushed deeper into secure facilities within the juvenile justice system will result in them not only in them experiencing the trauma of being detained or incarcerated, but also from receiving the treatment they need associated with their abuse or neglect.

Studies find that permanence plays a central role in determining the outcomes of youth in foster care. Specifically, youth who experience multiple placements have an increased likelihood of engaging in delinquency (Runyan and Gould 1985; Widom 1991; Jonson-Reid and Barth 2000). Although the literature suggests that placement instability contributes to delinquency, a closer examination of girls' risk of delinquency for girls, finds that it may be the placement itself that increases the risk for delinquency – regardless of the placement's stability (Ryan and Testa 2005). In this way, for girls, delinquency may be more associated with disruptions in interpersonal relationships (Ehrensaft 2005). Thus a girls' removal from her home environment, even if it means separation from abusive family members, may place her on a pathway to delinquency. Because the majority of crossover youth enter the juvenile justice system directly from a child welfare placement, the needs of crossover youth span not only their offending behavior but the family issues that initiated removal from their home. These dynamics highlight the critical need for collaborative efforts between child welfare and juvenile justice agencies in order to meet the needs of crossover girls, as well as the development of interventions that consider the context and life histories of girls (Hawkins et al. 2009).

[girls get sent to] different placements that they don't like and they run away

Conclusion

This chapter highlighted some of the key causes and correlates of girl's delinquency. It is important to note that researchers, practitioners, and policy makers should exert restraint in drawing the wholesale conclusion that the factors that lead girls to their involvement in delinquency are gender specific and only applicable to girls. Although many of the factors that lead to delinquency for boys and girls are similar (troubled family relationships, trauma, mental health problems, academic achievement, peers/partners, and involvement with the child welfare system), the response to these risks and the presentation of behavioral problems are likely the important differences. Justice-involved girls are diverse in their delinquent behaviors, their trauma histories, their family backgrounds, their mental health status, and a host of other characteristics. It is critically important that this diversity be acknowledged so that adequate attention can be focused on understanding the conduit that drives girls into the deep end of the juvenile justice system (Odgers et al. 2007) and more importantly the roadblocks that can be put in place to stop this trajectory. Once a girl enters the juvenile justice system, the control struggles first observed in her home environment and interpersonal relationships continue in the form of violations of probation. Acts that were previously described as disobedience are now described as delinquency (Davis 2007) and, for many, this initiation begins the travel down the road to the deep end of the juvenile justice system. As the literature base for understanding the causes and correlates of girls delinquency continues to develop – the empirical support for effective programs and interventions is also needed to fully meet the needs of girls involved in juvenile justice system.

There needs to be someone who is willing to advocate and take a stand for the girl – someone who can see what is going on; say something about it; and act on it

Girls become women and women become mothers and they are going to bring a whole new generation [into this world] so if you don't invest in them now you end up paying later.

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Part II
Context and Relationships

Chapter 4
Juvenile Assault Arrestees and Their Incidents: Same and Opposite Gender Relationships

Anne L. Stahl and Phyllis Coontz

Although boys still account for the lion's share of juvenile arrests, the increase in girls' arrests for assault is receiving considerable attention from policy makers and practitioners (see Chap. 11). At issue in this debate is whether the gender crime gap is changing, and particularly whether females are becoming more violent. Some attribute the trend of increases in female arrests to a combination of re-labeling family conflicts as violent offenses and changes in police practices when responding to domestic incidents (Chesney-Lind 2002; Chesney-Lind and Pasko 2004; Feld 2009). Others argue that economic marginalization and males' greater engagement in familiar roles have narrowed the gender crime gap for violent offenses (Heimer 2000; Messer and Rosenfeld 2007; Lauritsen et al. 2009). Others assert that the arrest trends actually reflect police behavior, a "widening of the net" and/or "charging up" of less serious offenses (Steffensmeier and Schwartz 2003; see Chap. 1 for a detailed discussion of all of these issues). Research consistently shows that since changes in domestic violence mandatory arrest laws were enacted, the female share of arrests for violent crime has increased (Buzawa and Hotaling 2006; Hirschel et al. 2007).

This chapter examines arrest data within the context of the timing of implementation of domestic violence arrest policies to provide additional insight into the debate on changes in the magnitude of arrest rates for males and females for violent offenses. Data from the FBI's 2005 National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) were used to examine gender affiliations among juvenile arrestees, specifically those who were arrested for simple assault, intimidation, and aggravated assault, and their victims in those incidents. These data were analyzed to determine the age and sex of the arrestee(s), the age and sex of the victim(s), victim–offender

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relationships, location of the incidents, whether or not a weapon was involved, injury to the victim(s), and the characteristics of any other suspects arrested in the incident.

Changes in Gendered Arrest Patterns Over Time

Statutory changes altering how law enforcement responds to domestic violence began in the l970s. However, by 1983, shortly after the findings of the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment were reported, the number of police departments encouraging arrests for domestic violence increased substantially (Buzawa and Buzawa 2003). As states began to pass new policies – including mandatory arrest – pro-arrest, and preferred arrest laws attempted to make arrest and prosecution of domestic abusers easier. In virtually all states, law enforcement officers are now authorized by statute to make warrantless misdemeanor arrests in domestic violence cases. The authority to make an arrest without a warrant for a misdemeanor incident that did not occur in the arresting officer's presence is reserved only for domestic assault, and does not apply to other misdemeanor assaults. This distinction is particularly important because domestic violence offenses are typically categorized as misdemeanors.

In addition to the increasing aggressiveness of domestic violence arrest policies, many states' legislative revisions also expanded the scope of relationships covered by their domestic violence statutes (Buzawa and Buzawa 2003). Virtually all states now have statutes that require an aggressive police response to incidents involving victims that are parents, children, siblings, other family members (such as cousins, grandparents), as well as intimate partners, including current and former spouses, current boy/girlfriends, and partners in homosexual relationships (Buzawa and Hotaling 2006).

Aggressive domestic violence arrest policies have been criticized for having unanticipated negative consequences for females (Binder and Meeker 1988; Buzawa 1982; Buzawa and Buzawa 1985). Particularly because females are more likely than males to instigate less serious assaults (Straus and Gelles 1990; Stets and Straus 1990; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000) it is argued that this trend toward increasing arrests is more likely to affect female offenders than male offenders (Steffensmeier and Allan 1996). The narrowing gender crime gap, therefore, may have less to do with underlying female behavior and more to do with net-widening and the dual arrest effects in law and policing (Steffensmeier et al. 2005).

The flurry of legislative changes since the early l980s, including more aggressive arrest mandates and increasing the types of relationships covered by domestic violence statutes, effectively changed police response to incidents of domestic violence. This change is evidenced in the increases in the number of assault arrests made by law enforcement since the early 1980s. Arrest rates for assault in the 1970s and 1980s were generally in the 7–15% range, but recent research finds them to be in the 30%+range (Simpson et al. 2006). Among youth (persons under age 18), the number of

arrests for simple assault rose steadily as increasing numbers of statutory changes were made mandating a law enforcement response to incidents of domestic violence.

In an attempt to make arrest and prosecution of abusers easier, states passed an array of aggressive arrest policies including mandatory arrest, "pro-arrest", and "preferred" arrest laws. While these laws vary from state to state, all states permit the police to make warrantless arrests in misdemeanor domestic violence cases subject to police determination that domestic violence may have occurred. Although some states have preserved police discretion, states with mandatory arrest laws require an arrest.

As stated above, it is since the passage of these new mandatory and pro-arrest laws that the number of arrests of females for assault has increased (Buzawa and Hotaling 2000).

Whether the increases in arrests are the result of actual changes in female behavior, the mandated legal changes, or changes in police behavior remains unclear. The analyses presented here are an attempt to increase our understanding of what is fueling these increases in arrests of females for violent offenses.

Data and Methods

This study is descriptive in nature. It provides demographic profiles of females arrested for aggravated assault, simple assault and intimidation and contrasts them with their male arrestee counterparts. Incident characteristics, number of other arrestees, whether or not the incident involved injury, weapons involved in the incident, incident location and the type of victim–offender relationships involved in the incidents are also discussed.

The Data

The data come from the 2005 NIBRS files that are compiled and distributed by the FBI and made available through the National Criminal Justice Data Archive at ICPSR. NIBRS is used by law enforcement agencies to report crime data. The master files contain a wide range of information on specific crime incidents that occurred in the reporting jurisdictions during 2005. Data on each crime incident are reported to the FBI in up to six types of records, including arrest records that capture information on all arrests associated with the incident.

ICPSR's NIBRS' arrestee extract file includes the age, gender, race, ethnicity and resident status of the arrestee, as well as the arrest date, arrest type, offense, location of the incident, and weapon information. Law enforcement agencies also record a set of characteristics for each incident. These elements include the age, sex, and race of the victim(s), the offense(s) involved, the date of the incident, the incident location, the age, sex, and race of the offender(s), the victim–offender relationship(s), the victim's level of injury, and what weapons, if any, were used.

Data from 31 states (Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin) and the District of Columbia were included in the 2005 file. This study examined those NIBRS arrestee records identified by law enforcement as persons who were arrested for aggravated assault, robbery, simple assault, and intimidation violations in incidents in calendar year 2005. These offenses are contained in the Group A category of offenses for which extensive data are collected in NIBRS.

Each of the ten offender fields on the arrestee record was associated with three fields that indicated a known victim's relationship to the offender in the incident. These fields were categorized as "family" (*spouse, common-law spouse, parent, sibling, child, grandparent, grandchild, in-law, step-parent, stepchild, stepsibling, other family member*), "intimate" *(boyfriend, girlfriend, child of boyfriend, child of girlfriend, homosexual relationship, ex-spouse*), "acquaintance" (*acquaintance, friend, neighbor, babysitee, employee, employer, otherwise known*), "stranger", and "victim was offender."

After identifying an incident using segment level, state code, incident number, and incident date, arrestee information (age, sex, race, ethnicity, residence status, and juvenile disposition) information for all additional arrestees involved in an incident with a specific arrestee were tagged onto each arrestee's record.

It is important to note that participation in NIBRS by all local jurisdictions does not occur in all states. While there is no way to assess the national representativeness of the sample, the number of arrestees in the 2005 NIBRS sample is very large and does represent a census for the reporting jurisdictions contained in the file. Therefore, accepting the inherent qualifications associated with any analysis of NIBRS data, the number of reports and the detailed information available on each incident provides a unique opportunity to study the arrestees for each type of incident.

NIBRS data are more comprehensive than other aggregate measures of crime, e.g., UCR, NCVS, because they contain information about the incident, the victim, and the offender from every jurisdiction that contributes to the NIBRS. Thus, these data allow us to examine the characteristics of the incident, those arrested in the incident, and whether one or more parties were arrested at the time of the incident. It is then possible to examine victim/offender relationship characteristics within the context of situational characteristics and identify who was arrested and the victim–offender relationship, e.g., intimate partner, family member, or stranger. Of the 2,715,659 arrestees contained in the NIBRS 2005 data, 363,050 (13.4%) were charged with assault; 72,771 (2.7%) with aggravated assault, 263,979 (9.7%) with simple assault, and 26,300 (1.0%) with intimidation.[1] Overall as well as within each assault category, juveniles comprised less than one-fifth of all assault arrestees (Table 4.1). More than three-quarters of juvenile assault arrestees were charged with simple assault. About two-thirds were male and, for the most part, were the only

[1]Intimidation is a form of domestic violence wherein a person controls their partner's actions, relationships, and activities through the use of gestures, looks, and actions.

Table 4.1 Juvenile assault arrestees

Arrestee characteristics	Values	All juvenile arrestees ($n=60,744$)	Girls ($n=19,664$)	Boys ($n=41,110$)
Arrestee sex	Female (%)	32.4		
	Male (%)	67.6		
Incident characteristics				
Type of assault	Aggravated (%)	16.9	12.7	18.9
	Simple (%)	75.3	81.4	72.4
	Intimidation (%)	7.8	5.8	8.7
Number of arrestees	One (%)	71.5	69.1	72.6
	More than one (%)	28.5	30.9	27.4
Weapon	Firearm (%)	2.4	0.3	3.4
	Other weapon (%)	16.4	14.1	17.5
	Hands/feet (%)	65.1	71.4	62.0
	None (%)	16.1	14.1	17.0
Injury	None (%)	50.8	48.6	51.9
	Minor(%)	44.6	48.5	42.8
	Major(%)	4.5	2.9	5.3
Location of incident	Street (%)	16.2	14.2	17.2
	Residence (%)	38.8	42.9	36.8
	School (%)	28.2	26.8	28.8
	Other (%)	16.9	16.1	17.2
Type of victim	Family (%)	31.2	36.6	28.6
	Intimate (%)	2.5	2.3	2.6
	Acquaintance (%)	58.6	55.8	60.0
	Stranger (%)	5.3	5.3	8.9

Source: Author's analysis of the FBI's 2005 *National Incident-Based Reporting System* data

suspects arrested in the incident. Results described here focus specifically on differences in characteristics between juvenile girls' and boys' arrests for assault. Demographic information for any additional suspects involved in the incidents and descriptions of incident characteristics was also examined.

The vast majority of all assault incidents for this sample of arrestees involved no weapon other than hands or feet and no major injury. Juvenile arrestees were more likely to be involved in incidents that took place in a residential or school setting than on the street. Overall, girls were more likely than boys to be arrested for incidents involving victims that were family members, and boys were somewhat more likely than girls to be arrested for incidents involving acquaintances.

Simple Assault

Most of the assault arrestees under the age of 18 were arrested for simple assault. The UCR defines simple assault as involving no injury or weapon and is typically characterized as a misdemeanor. In other words, simple assaults were limited to the

Table 4.2 Simple assault

Arrestee characteristics	Values	All Juvenile arrestees ($n=45,778$)	Girls ($n=16,015$)	Boys ($n=29,763$)
Arrestee sex	Female (%)	35.0		
	Male (%)	65.0		
Incident characteristics				
Number of arrestees	One (%)	71.1	67.8	72.8
	More than one (%)	28.9	32.2	27.2
Weapon	Firearm (%)	0.3	0.4	0.4
	Other weapon (%)	9.1	7.5	10.0
	Hands/feet (%)	79.3	81.9	77.9
	None (%)	11.3	10.6	11.7
Injury	None (%)	48.8	47.3	49.6
	Minor (%)	50.6	52.3	49.7
	Major (%)	0.6	0.4	0.8
Location of incident	Street (%)	14.3	13.6%	14.7
	Residence (%)	38.3	41.7	36.5
	School (%)	30.7	28.4	31.9
	Other (%)	16.7	16.3	16.9
Type of victim	Family (%)	32.9	37.1	30.6
	Intimate (%)	2.6	2.2	2.8
	Acquaintance (%)	58.3	55.9	59.7
	Stranger (%)	6.2	4.8	6.9

Source: Author's analysis of the FBI's 2005 *National Incident-Based Reporting System* data

use of physical force (no weapon) and that resulted in little or no injury to the victim. In this sample, about two-thirds of juvenile simple assault arrestees were male (Table 4.2). More than half of these arrestees' simple assault incidents involved acquaintances and another third involved family members. Girls were more likely to be arrested in incidents that involved family members and boys were more likely to be arrested in incidents that involved acquaintances. More than a third of the juvenile simple assault arrestees in the 2005 NIBRS data were apprehended for incidents that took place in a residence and almost a third more for incidents that occurred in a school setting. Girls arrested for simple assault were much more likely than boys to be involved in incidents that took place in a residence; boys were more likely to be involved in incidents that took place on school grounds.

Among girls charged with simple assault in this sample, nearly four in ten of their incidents involved a victim who was a family member; for boys about one in three of the incidents involved a family victim (Fig. 4.1). For both boys and girls arrested for simple assault, when the incident involved a family victim who was an authority figure in the household (parent, step-parent, or grandparent), that victim was female (Table 4.2). These findings are consistent with other research showing that the odds of arrest increase 2½ times when a female is labeled as suspect across all relationship types and daughters who assault a parent face "almost certain arrest" (Buzawa and Hotaling 2006).

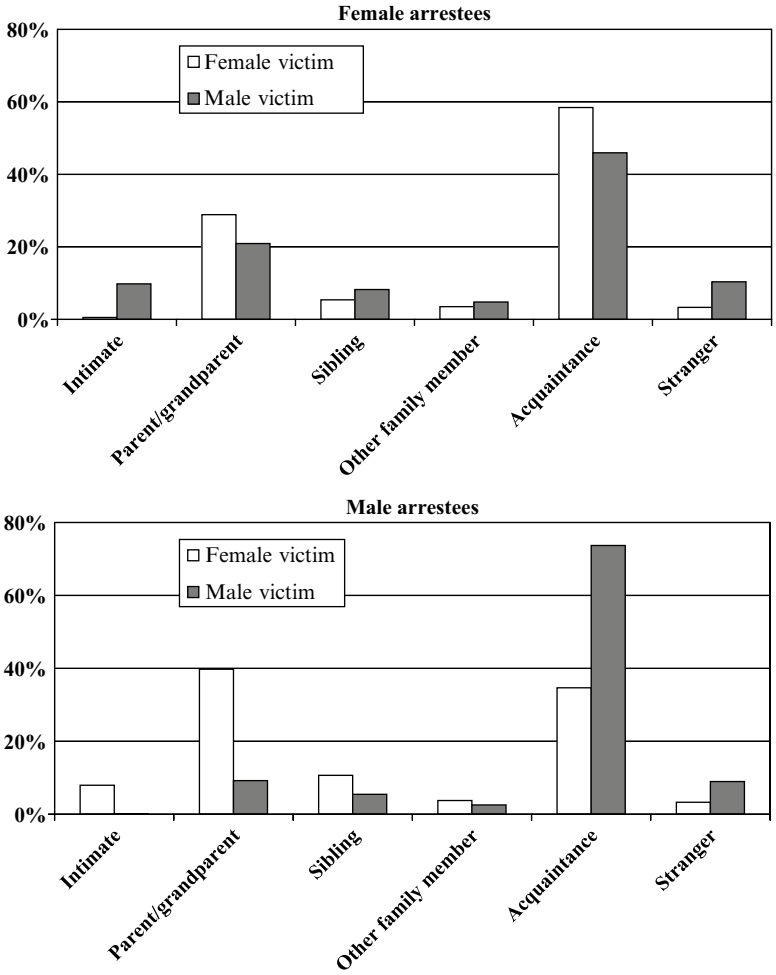

Fig. 4.1 Victim profiles of simple assault incidents involving juvenile arrestees. Source: Author's analysis of the FBI's 2005 *National Incident-Based Reporting System* data

Aggravated Assault

Fewer than one in five of the juvenile assault arrestees in this sample were arrested for aggravated assault. Aggravated assault is defined as an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury and is usually accompanied by the use or display of a weapon likely to produce death or great bodily harm. Among youths arrested for aggravated assault, the vast majority was male (Table 4.3). Most of these juveniles were the only suspects arrested in the incident, and more than half were involved in incidents where the

Table 4.3 Aggravated assault

Arrestee characteristics	Values	All Juvenile arrestees ($n=10,283$)	Girls ($n=2,499$)	Boys ($n=7,784$)
Arrestee sex	Female (%)	24.3		
	Male (%)	75.7		
Incident characteristics				
Number of arrestees	One (%)	69.4	73.9	67.9
	More than one (%)	30.6	26.1	32.1
Weapon	Firearm (%)	12.7	2.2	16.0
	Other weapon (%)	27.4	31.1	26.3
	Hands/feet (%)	55.1	62.5	52.8
	None (%)	4.8	4.3	4.9
Injury	None (%)	40.3	37.2	41.4
	Minor (%)	36.8	43.3	34.7
	Major (%)	22.9	19.6	23.9
Location of incident	Street (%)	26.5	19.1	28.9
	Residence (%)	41.6	50.0	38.9
	School (%)	14.9	15.5	14.7
	Other (%)	17.0	15.3	17.5
Type of victim	Family (%)	27.1	37.1	23.7
	Intimate (%)	2.4	3.1	2.2
	Acquaintance (%)	56.6	51.4	58.3
	Stranger (%)	13.9	8.4	15.8

Source: Author's analysis of the FBI's 2005 *National Incident-Based Reporting System* data

only weapon reported was hands, feet, or fist. Boys were more likely than girls to be arrested in incidents that involved a firearm. More than half of juvenile aggravated assault arrestees were involved in incidents in which the victim was an acquaintance; about one quarter involved a family member victim. Again, girls were more likely than boys to be charged with aggravated assault in incidents that involved family members. Boys arrested for aggravated assault were more likely than girls to be involved in incidents in which the victim was an acquaintance or a stranger.

Most of the juvenile aggravated assault arrestees in these data were apprehended for incidents that took place in a residence. However, more than a quarter were arrested for incidents that occurred on the street (in an alleyway, highway, or parking lot). Girls arrested for aggravated assault were much more likely to be involved in incidents that took place in a residence, whereas boys were more likely to be involved in incidents that took place on the street.

Although girls arrested for aggravated assault were more likely than boys to be involved in incidents that involved injury to the victim, the injury was likely to be characterized as minor. This is consistent with research showing females' acts of violence are less severe than males (Moffit et al. 2001; Steffensmeier 1993). Boys were more likely than girls to be involved in incidents in which the injury was

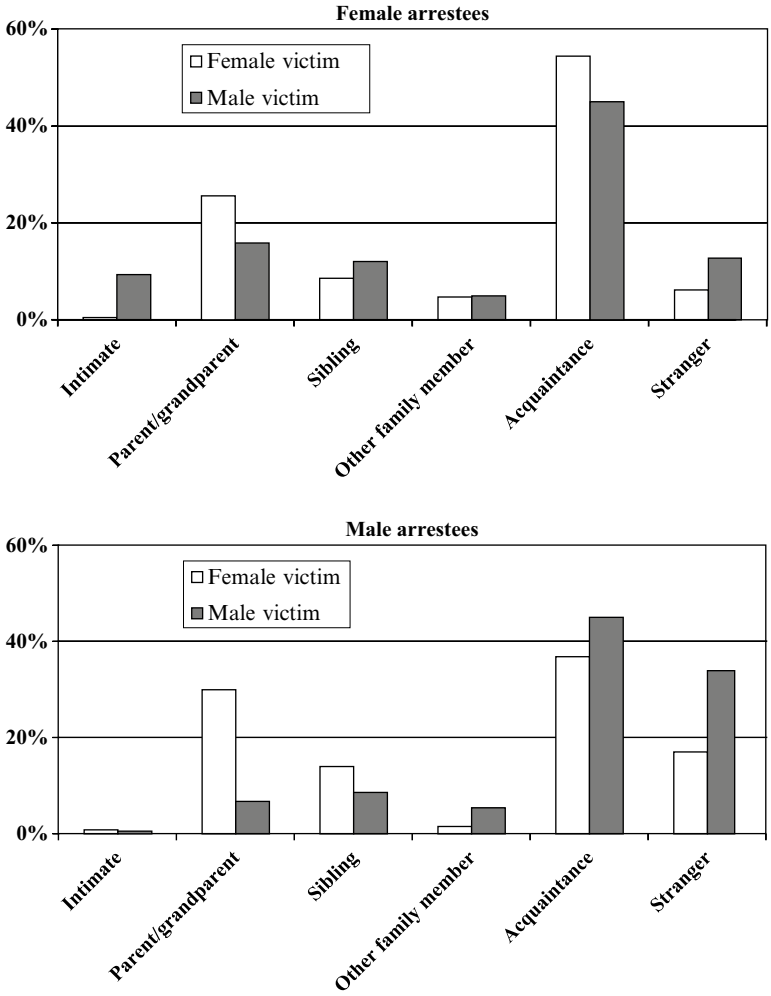

Fig. 4.2 Victim profiles of aggravated assault incidents involving juvenile arrestees. Source: Author's analysis of the FBI's 2005 *National Incident-Based Reporting System* data

characterized as major, such as apparent broken bones, possible internal injuries, loss of teeth, severe lacerations, or unconsciousness. Both boys and girls charged with aggravated assault were most likely to be arrested for incidents that would not be characterized as domestic assault as they involved a victim who was an acquaintance (Fig. 4.2). For girls the majority (72%) of these incidents involved a victim who was a female and for boys 75% involved another male.

Table 4.4 Intimidation

Arrestee characteristics	Values	All juvenile arrestees (n=3,891)	Girls (n=974)	Boys (n=2,917)
Arrestee sex	Female (%)	24.4		
	Male (%)	75.6		
Incident characteristics				
Number of arrestees	One (%)	80.2	76.4	81.5
	More than one (%)	19.8	23.6	18.5
Location of incident	Street (%)	12.4	11.5	12.7
	Residence (%)	37.1	44.7	34.6
	School (%)	32.3	29.2	33.2
	Other (%)	18.3	14.6	19.5
Type of victim	Family (%)	23.3	28.1	21.6
	Intimate (%)	2.1	2.0	2.2
	Acquaintance (%)	65.8	64.8	66.1
	Stranger (%)	8.9	5.1	10.1

Source: Author's analysis of the FBI's 2005 *National Incident-Based Reporting System* data

Intimidation

Broadly, intimidation refers to a form of domestic violence that involves using looks, actions, and gestures to control another. It is widely used in discussing the scope of power and control in the context of domestic violence. Fewer than 10% of the juvenile arrestees in this sample were charged with intimidation. Intimidation, also classified as a misdemeanor, involves placing another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm by using threatening words and/or other conduct without displaying a weapon or subjecting that person to physical attack. The majority of juvenile arrestees' intimidation incidents involved an acquaintance. Girls arrested for intimidation were more likely than boys to be involved in incidents with family members and boys were more likely than girls to be involved in incidents in which a victim was a stranger (Table 4.4). Most of the juveniles arrested for intimidation were male and the only suspects arrested in the incident.

Overall, more than a third of the juvenile intimidation arrestees in this sample were apprehended for incidents that took place in a residence, and another third for incidents that occurred in a school setting. Girls arrested for intimidation were much more likely than boys to be arrested in incidents that took place in a residence; boys were more likely to be arrested for intimidation in incidents that took place on the street or in a school setting. Both boys and girls charged with intimidation were most likely to be arrested for incidents involving a victim who was an acquaintance (Fig. 4.3). For girls the victim was most likely to be female (81%); for boys almost two-thirds of the victims (61%) were male. The location of the incident is important because female violence is typically less serious and perpetrated within the home

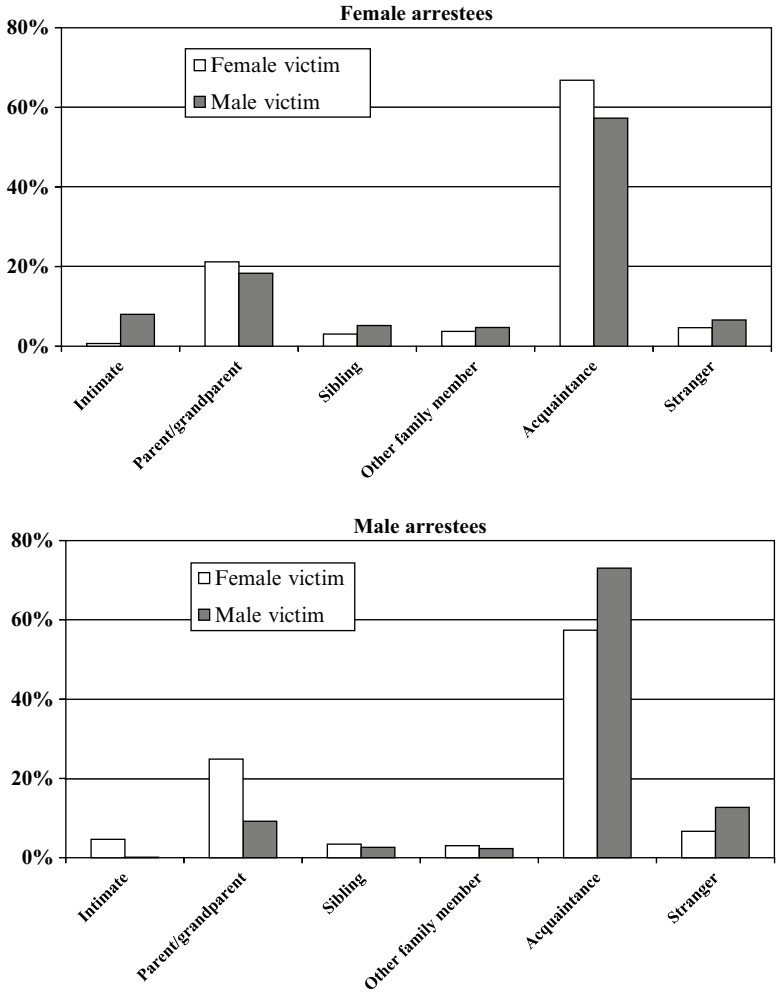

Fig. 4.3 Victim profiles of intimidation incidents involving juvenile arrestees. Source: Author's analysis of the FBI's 2005 *National Incident-Based Reporting System* data

and with family members, whereas male violence is typically more serious and public – on or near the street or commercial settings among acquaintances and strangers. Miller (2001) has argued that the female role is considered more passive and self-defensive. These analyses then lend support to research showing a double standard of behavior for females and males (Chesney-Lind 2001; Stanko 2001). One possible effect of mandatory and preferred arrest laws for domestic violence is that they have transformed domestic and relational violence from private matters into public criminal matters.

Summary and Implications

As indicated at the outset, the analyses presented here are intended to be descriptive in nature and contribute to our understanding of the gender–crime gap by focusing on domestic violence. Toward this aim, our analyses contextualize the victim–offender relationship. Although mandatory and pro-arrest policies were established to protect females against abusive partners, what is becoming clearer is that the reality of the application of these policies is more complicated. A large portion of the juvenile simple assault arrestees in this sample were involved in incidents that would fall under states' statutory revisions that increased the relationships covered by domestic violence statutes. A substantial portion, boys and girls alike, was involved in incidents in which the victim was a family member and very few of the juvenile assault arrestees in this sample were arrested in incidents that involved an intimate partner.

The "net widening" and/or "charging up" of less serious or minor forms of violence hypothesis argues that female violent offending is less serious and less chronic than male violent offending. Mandatory and pro-arrest policies that target minor forms of physical and or interpersonal aggression and convert offenses of marginal seriousness into arrest thresholds have "widened the net." Broadly these data provide some evidence that girls were more likely to be involved in less serious incidents of assault than boys. Girls were more likely than boys to be arrested in incidents involving simple assault, which was the largest assault category for juvenile arrestees in this sample. On the whole, girls were more likely than boys to be arrested in connection with assault incidents that took place in a residence and in incidents that involved a family victim. Among intimidation arrestees, both boys and girls were most likely to be involved in incidents that involved victims who were acquaintances.

In sum, our analyses lend support to prior claims that the increases we see in juveniles entering the justice system may be partially due to changes in laws and police protocol. Variations in gendered patterns of simple assault arrests may reflect changes in the way that police respond to behaviors that always existed, as well as changes in public tolerance toward those behaviors. In particular, domestic violence statutes were initiated primarily to address the needs of female victims of intimate partner violence. Subsequently, over the years, states revised legislation and expanded the relationships covered by their domestic violence statutes to include family members. Additionally, police in every state are now required by statute to respond to incidents of domestic violence, and are empowered to make misdemeanor arrests without a warrant when responding to these incidents. It appears that, over time, the combination of all of these factors has affected the number of juvenile arrests for misdemeanor assaults and may be related to increased simple assault arrest rates for juveniles.

The increased rate of assault arrest may be more noticeable for girls because, historically, the number of arrests of girls for assault reported in official arrest statistics has always been much smaller than that of boys. More research needs to be done at the local level, perhaps using local arrest data, to investigate whether domestic violence arrest policy is influencing the trend of increases in girls' arrests for assault.

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Chapter 5
Girlfriends, Gun-Holders, and Ghetto-Rats? Moving Beyond Narrow Views of Girls in Gangs

Dana Peterson

Introduction

What is the role of girls in gangs? Are girls "real" gang members? As with many questions, it depends upon whom you ask. The director of a multi-agency gang task force in southern New Mexico talked at length with me in 1996 about gangs and gang members in the area, but when I asked him about females' involvement, he replied, "Oh, there aren't any female gang members." His answer surprised me, as a recent survey that our Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program evaluation team conducted in Las Cruces middle schools showed that 40% of self-reported gang members in that sample were female (Esbensen and Peterson Lynskey 2001). Law enforcement data over time consistently report that females make up less than 10% of gang members (see, e.g., Curry et al. 1994; National Youth Gang Center 2007). Similarly, several (though certainly not all) male gang members interviewed in Miller and Brunson's (2000) study voiced their opinions that whereas girls hung around the gang, they were not to be considered gang members: "There ain't no girls in our gang. Like the girls we talk to, they'll try to say they from our 'hood, but…they ain't from our gang" (p. 431). Such beliefs evoke early research and journalistic accounts that type-cast young women as either "sex objects or tomboys" with roles limited to the service of gang males: "One important duty … is to act as weapons carriers to the boys … The girls also supply alibis …Principally, however, the young ladies…suppl(y) the lads with such sex as they require – and (fulfill) duties such as lures and spies" (Bernard 1999, p. 45). Contemporary research with broader foci, however, documents that young females are indeed gang members, and they are not just girlfriends, groupies, gun/drug-holders, ghetto-rats, "guy-like" (i.e., tomboys), or gays (i.e., lesbians). This chapter

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integrates knowledge from both quantitative and qualitative research, providing an overview of a number of issues regarding female gang involvement captured in these general assertions: first, girls are gang members, and their presence in and contribution to gangs is significant; second, we should be concerned about their gang involvement because of injury not just to society but also (and perhaps more importantly) to the girls themselves; and third, we can learn a good deal about how to minimize this harm and help girls avoid or desist from gangs by listening to their reasons and risk factors for gang involvement and their reasons and methods for leaving their gangs.

Girls' Presence in Gangs

We now know that girls in gangs are not a "new" phenomenon, but what is the scope of this phenomenon? Self-report surveys of youth provide a different picture than the law enforcement data mentioned above. To illustrate, using recent data from seven diverse cities across the USA in the current national evaluation (or "G.R.E.A.T. II") of the revised G.R.E.A.T. program, we find that about two-fifths (41.4%) of gang members are female. This proportion represents 4.3% of girls (6.2% of boys) in the sample who self-reported being gang members in 2007–2008, when most of the sample was in 7th grade. These numbers are slightly above the percentages from Fall 1995, when the six-city sample in the previous national evaluation (or "G.R.E.A.T. I") of the original G.R.E.A.T. curriculum was of comparable age: females made up 35% of gang members, representing 2% of girls in the total sample. Although these figures suggest that the proportion of females in gangs and proportion of gang members who are female increased over the past decade or so, two caveats are in order: first, different sites and schools were included in the two evaluations, and second, the G.R.E.A.T. II sample is slightly older than the G.R.E.A.T. I sample.

These numbers raise the question, however, of whether girls in gangs are "on the rise," as recent newspaper articles would suggest, for example, "The feral sex: The terrifying rise of violent girl gangs" (Bracchi 2008; see Chap. 6 for a historical perspective on this phenomenon). The answer is difficult to determine because for much of the last century, there has been inadequate *systematic* information about gangs and gang members in general and even less about gang girls. Although some surveys to estimate prevalence existed (Miller, W. B. 2001; Klein 1995; Curry et al. 1994), it was not until 1996 that the newly established National Youth Gang Center began annual surveys of a representative sample of law enforcement agencies. Despite a lack of consistent historical data, it is worth noting that Klein and Crawford reported in 1967 that 26% of gang members in their LA study were female. We thus have some evidence that not only is females' gang involvement not just a contemporary phenomenon, their presence in gangs is fairly high, 40 years ago as today.

Other self-report studies report estimates similar to the two G.R.E.A.T. evaluations findings, and greater than those reported in law enforcement-based data. In the Rochester Youth Development Study, for instance, females were just under half of

all gang members (Thornberry et al. 2003). These inconsistencies do not mean that one source of information is correct, and others are invalid; they simply offer different parts of the same picture, and there are several valid reasons for the differences in prevalence. First, law enforcement policies and strategies help shape their depiction of gang members as primarily male and older. In a report from their survey of law enforcement agencies that estimated females at just 3.65% of gang members, Curry et al. (1994) note that, "in a number of cities females, as a matter of policy, were never classified as gang members. In other jurisdictions, females were relegated statistically to the status of 'associate' members" (p. 8). Second, law enforcement agents focus upon certain behaviors (i.e., more serious delinquency) and locations (i.e., the streets) that are the purview of males more than females and of older more than younger youths; that is, their statistics reflect what they see (for further discussion, see Chap. 4 for results of NIBRS data outlining gender differences in arrest characteristics). Third, there is some evidence that females age in and out of gangs earlier than do males, due in part to differential rates of adolescent maturity and to their associations with older gang-involved males, either family members or boyfriends. In the Denver Youth Survey, for example, females made up 46% of gang members at ages 11–15, but just 20–25% at older ages (Esbensen and Huizinga 1993; see also Thornberry et al. 2003). The fact that many self-report samples are young means that the proportion of gang members who are female will be higher in these data than in law enforcement data.

The proportion of gang members that is female also varies by such aspects as location and race/ethnicity. We found in G.R.E.A.T. I, for example, that females made up just one-quarter of gang members in Philadelphia, but over 40% of gang members in Las Cruces, Orlando, Phoenix, Pocatello, ID, and Will County, IL, and nearly 50% of gang members in Torrance, CA (Esbensen and Peterson Lynskey 2001). Disaggregating by race/ethnicity showed that among white and African American youths who were gang members, about 35% were female; among Hispanic and Asian gang members, the proportion of females was higher, at 44% (Esbensen et al. 1999).

These female gang members are not just "associates"; in some research, the proportion of females and males who report being "core" members of their gang is approximately equal (Esbensen et al. 1999; Peterson et al. 2001). This proportion appears to differ, however, by the sex composition of the gang. In all- or majority-female gangs, 67% of females report being core gang members, compared to 57% of girls in sex-balanced gangs and just 39% of girls in majority-male gangs (Peterson et al. 2001). Race/ethnicity may also structure the role of girls in gangs. Although studies with samples that allow such comparisons are rare, the limited evidence suggests that African American females may be more likely than Hispanic/Latina and Asian Pacific American females to both form independent female gangs and to state that females played a role in decision-making aspects of the gang (e.g., Hagedorn and Devitt 1999; Joe-Laidler and Hunt 1997; Miller, J. 2001). There are finer distinctions to be made, though, when it comes to race/ethnic differences. For instance, among Latinas in Hagedorn and Devitt's study, Mexican-American females were more likely than Puerto Ricans to describe females as calling the

shots, making decisions about who could join the gang, and having meetings on their own. Such findings suggest that there may be important differences in the culture and experiences of different groups to be appreciated in understanding the presence and roles of girls in gangs. Unfortunately, most gang samples do not allow for such distinctions to be made, but a few important studies described in this chapter provide an excellent starting point and direction for future research.

Girls' Experiences Within and After the Gang

There are several interrelated reasons why we should be concerned with girls' involvement in gangs. First is that girls' involvement in gangs means greater involvement in the commission of delinquency and violence. But, it is not just the societal impact of girls' gang involvement that concerns us; it is also the deleterious effects that gang involvement has on girls themselves. Their experiences within the gang and potential long-term consequences even after leaving the gang highlight the fact that gang membership represents not just an opportunity for escaping or attempting to alleviate various social injuries, but also a mechanism for additional injury.

While comparatively little of gang members' time is spent in law-violating activity (Fleisher 1998; Klein 1995), they do commit more than their fair share of delinquent acts (Esbensen et al. 2010; Esbensen and Huizinga 1993; Thornberry et al. 2003), and girls' contributions are not absent. Although gang girls' levels of property and violent crime are lower than gang boys', they are greater than non-gang girls' and even non-gang boys' delinquency (Deschenes and Esbensen 1999; Esbensen et al. 1999; Esbensen and Huizinga 1993; Miller, J. 2001). For example, Esbensen and Winfree (1998) found that female gang members' property offenses outnumbered non-gang boys' offenses by 2.5 to 1, and for every one violent offense committed by a non-gang male, gang females committed 2.34. For drug use and drug sales, the ratios were even higher, at 3.23 and 5.24, respectively.

Females' criminal involvement differs slightly by the sex composition of their gangs. Girls in majority-male gangs had the highest frequencies of both personal and property offending, followed by girls in sex-balanced gangs, and, lastly, girls in majority- or all-female gangs (Peterson et al. 2001). Comparing girls and boys within gang type, more gender similarity in delinquency frequency was seen in majority-male gangs than in sex-balanced gangs, in which females' offending was significantly lower than males'.

Several explanations for these differences emerge from extant research. In sex-balanced gangs, females appear to be excluded by males from many serious forms of violence that represent status-enhancing activities within the gang (Miller, J. 2001; Miller and Brunson 2000; Peterson et al. 2001). Females' greater numbers may be seen by males as a threat to the perceived male-dominated world of gangs; thus, girls are kept from engaging in activities that confer status in these settings (Bowker et al. 1980; Miller, J. 2001; Miller and Brunson 2000; see Chap. 6 for qualitative data on court-involved girls' reports of boyfriends' gang involvement). Meanwhile,

females in majority-male gangs, because of their fewer numbers, are not seen as a threat to male power structure within the gang; rather, they are seen as "one of the guys" and allowed to more fully participate in criminal endeavors (Miller, J. 2001; Miller and Brunson 2000). Girls also may be excluded because they pose an additional "burden" for males during crime commission, as a young man in Miller and Brunson's (2000) study describes: "cause we didn't want nobody to blame us because something happen to them, if something would have happened to them" (p. 436). Finally, it is also the case that girls do not lack agency and sometimes actively use their gender to exclude themselves from certain activities (Miller, J. 2001).

These differences in delinquency between gang girls and boys illustrate a larger dynamic present in gangs that provides particular experiences for gang girls. That is, the gender oppression and sexual double standards present in society often are amplified in the gang context, where masculinities play out and intersect with the female gang experience (Brotherton and Salazar-Atias 2003; Messerschmidt 1999; Miller and Brunson 2000; Joe and Chesney-Lind 1995; Joe-Laidler and Hunt 1997; Portillos 1999). In their struggle to define and command their own identities as individuals and as women, girls find themselves constrained by cultural and societal expectations adhered to not only by males in the gang, but by themselves and other females. To gain and maintain respect, to demonstrate strength and independence, is to negotiate competing aspects of femininity and gang identity, a delicate balance that can lead to violence and victimization. Many girls want to explore feminine aspects of their identity, but must also not appear physically weak or too sexually available or they risk victimization, ridicule, or exclusion. Because their behavior is under scrutiny by both males and other females, girls may act aggressively to demonstrate "heart" and gain respect; at the same time, however, they are disrespected, viewed as sex objects, and constrained based on their gender (Miller, J. 2001; Miller and Brunson 2000). In addition, despite joining gangs for protection, many girls find themselves to be victims of exploitation or violence, often sexual, at the hands of fellow gang members (Fishman 1999; Fleisher 1998; Hagedorn 1998; Harris 1994; Joe-Laidler and Hunt 1997; Miller, J. 2001; Moore 1991).

Finally, girls' gang involvement has potential long-term consequences, even after they leave gang life. In one of few studies able to examine the issue, Thornberry et al. (2003) report that gang membership significantly increased girls' odds of early pregnancy, teen motherhood, unstable employment, and adult arrests, as well as their number of off-time transitions. Such consequences are also described in qualitative research (Hagedorn 1998; Moore 1991). In an unfortunate contrast to their lofty career and family aspirations, ex-gang females in Milwaukee were likely to have dropped out of school, to be on welfare, to be overwhelmed with the burdens of motherhood, and to have turned to drug use to cope (Hagedorn 1998). Further, Latinas' outcomes were worse than those of African American former gang members, perhaps due to cultural values about women's roles (Hagedorn and Devitt 1999; Moore and Hagedorn 1996). In contrast, former female gang members in Nurge's (2003) Boston study did not appear to suffer long-term consequences from their gang involvement. They were all either employed or in school, and overall they were "happy, healthy, and well-adjusted" (p. 177), although several spoke of

members who had died, were incarcerated, drug-addicted, or prostituting. Without non-gang comparison samples, however, it is unknown how well these former gang members were doing compared to non-gang females, a strength of Thornberry et al.'s (2003) study.

These findings highlight the paradox inherent in the "liberation" vs. "social injury" debate about girls' gang involvement. Rather than one or the other, girls find both in gangs, and there is a complex interplay, balance, and payoff between the two (Campbell 1987; Chesney-Lind et al. 1996; Curry 1998; Miller, J. 2001; Nurge 2003; Peterson et al. 2001). Given these potentially deleterious effects, in and after the gang, it is important to examine ways in which we can prevent or intervene with girls' gang involvement. Research on joining and leaving the gang provides us with insight into why girls "choose" gang life and why and how they exit, giving us guidance to better assist or support them.

Girls' Gang Joining and Leaving

Sex Differences in Risk Factors for Gang Joining

Although there is growing understanding of risk factors for gang membership, our knowledge is limited as to whether risk factors for girls' gang involvement differ from boys', as not much youth gang research has systematically compared females and males. Further, as Klein and Maxson (2006) point out, the studies that do exist do not examine the same factors or use the same methods, so we cannot adequately compare findings or identify risk factors for gang membership that are consistently supported across studies. In addition, much of the scant research relies on cross-sectional data, inhibiting our ability to draw confident conclusions about causation over correlation.

Across 20 studies, Klein and Maxson (2006) identified six factors that were consistently or mostly supported as risk factors for gang membership: lack of parental supervision, negative life events (e.g., serious illness, school suspension, and intimate relationship disruption), early problem behaviors (e.g., reactivity, aggression, and impulsivity), antisocial beliefs, delinquent peers, and commitment to deviant peers. Different findings emerge from the very few quantitative studies comparing girls and boys on some or all of these six factors. Evidence is mixed as to whether parental monitoring is a risk factor for both sexes; in one study, monitoring decreased odds of gang joining for boys but not girls (Thornberry et al. 2003); in another, lack of monitoring predicted gang membership for both sexes (Esbensen and Deschenes 1998), while in others, it was not associated with gang membership for either sex (Esbensen et al. 2010; Maxson and Whitlock 2002). Negative life events and delinquent peers were associated with males' but not females' gang joining (Maxson and Whitlock 2002; Esbensen, et al. 2010; Thornberry et al. 2003), and the other three factors have been found to predict both sexes' gang involvement (Esbensen and Deschenes 1998; Maxson and Whitlock 2002; Esbensen, et al. 2010; Thornberry et al. 2003).

Although these studies found some shared risk factors, most also found factors unique to females. Factors that predicted girls' but not boys' gang involvement included being Hispanic (Bell 2009; Esbensen et al. 2010), having risk-seeking tendencies and few pro-social friends (Esbensen and Deschenes 1998), low commitment to school (Esbensen and Deschenes 1998; Esbensen et al. 2010), and neighborhood disorganization (Thornberry et al. 2003). Reducing likelihood of gang involvement for girls but not boys were involvement in community sports, receiving an award at school, being attached to a teacher (Maxson and Whitlock 2002), and college aspirations and expectations (Thornberry et al. 2003). These few studies do not include the same measures, so we cannot determine whether these patterns are consistently supported in the research. In addition, some of them report bivariate results (e.g., the increase in odds of gang membership associated with the presence of a risk factor; Maxson and Whitlock 2002; Thornberry et al. 2003), while others report multivariate results (i.e., odds of gang joining associated with a risk factor while holding other factors constant; Bell 2009; Esbensen and Deschenes 1998; Esbensen et al. 2010; Maxson and Whitlock 2002). Further complicating our ability to draw solid conclusions is that some studies are longitudinal (Thornberry et al. 2003), whereas others are cross-sectional (Bell 2009; Esbensen and Deschenes 1998; Esbensen et al. 2010; Maxson and Whitlock 2002). Keeping these limitations in mind, three tentative conclusions can be drawn from the research to date comparing females and males: (1) many risk factors appear to be shared by girls and boys, (2) we have as yet identified fewer factors associated with gang involvement for females than for males, and (3) there are factors unique to each gender, with a potential pattern of school factors being more influential for girls than for boys.

Admittedly, however, we are probably omitting in these quantitative studies important factors that may be specific to girls. Qualitative research, for example, identifies abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, and parental criminality, substance use, and mental health issues as important influences in lives of girls who join gangs (e.g., Fleisher 1998; Miller, J. 2001). Because such factors are not often tapped in self-report surveys conducted in school settings and because much qualitative research lacks comparative samples, it is unclear whether these factors are unique to girls or are influential for boys' gang involvement as well.

What Reasons Do Girls Give?

How do the girls themselves explain their reasons for gang joining, and what can we draw from their descriptions of the contexts in which they live? Both quantitative and qualitative research demonstrate that there is no one reason why girls join gangs – not all girls join for the same reasons, and there is generally not just one reason an individual girl becomes gang-involved. No matter how varied the experiences that bring girls to the gang, however, there are patterns that can be ascertained.

Data from three separate samples from the two G.R.E.A.T. evaluations reveal that the top four reasons for gang joining consistently mentioned by both girls and

boys are as follows: for fun, for protection, because a friend was in the gang, and to get respect (Esbensen and Peterson Lynskey 2001; Freng and Winfree 2004; Peterson et al. 2004; Peterson 2009). These reasons suggest a promise of benefits youth expect to gain from their gang involvement, and they are supported in other quantitative studies of youth. Some studies show that certain reasons may be more important for girls than for boys and vice versa. For example, Maxson and Whitlock's (2002) study of a high-risk sample in San Diego indicated that girls joined because of family (73%) or friend (62%) involvement and/or to get a reputation (58%), whereas boys joined for excitement (78%), territory or protection (71%), and belonging (61%).

Qualitative studies provide additional insight into girls' reasons for joining a gang, illuminating what might lie behind their responses to quantitative measures such as joining "for fun" or "for protection." Gang members in Joe and Chesney-Lind's (1995) study, for instance, described their neighborhoods as devoid of resources and activities, and thus the gang provided an important "social outlet," combating boredom and frustration. Miller, J. (2001) and Fleisher (1998) relayed experiences of girls whose family life of violence and discord left them to fend for themselves; in those situations, girls found the gang environment to be preferable, providing a safe haven, a mechanism for coping, an opportunity for empowerment, and a means of economic survival, both licit and illicit (Brotherton and Salazar-Atias 2003). In numerous studies, a large proportion of gang girls had histories of physical and/or sexual abuse or assault and running away from home (Fleisher 1998; Harris 1994; Joe and Chesney-Lind 1995; Miller, J. 2001; Moore 1991; Nurge 2003; Portillos 1999). The gang also provided a surrogate or alternate family; many girls describe both having family members who were gang members and/or feeling as though the gang were a substitute family for the biological families that were failing them (see Chap. 6; Brotherton and Salazar-Atias 2003; Joe and Chesney-Lind 1995; Miller, J. 2001; Nurge 2003).

Girls also describe their gang joining in terms of finding respect and identity during an already-tumultuous adolescent period and pushing back against societally prescribed roles and stereotypes. For many girls, it is their own culture's roles against which they are rebelling. Girls of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Dominican heritage, for example, describe their gang membership as a means of casting off or distancing themselves from various aspects of their culture while simultaneously creating new identities that may incorporate some but not other aspects of their culture (Brotherton and Salazar-Atias; 2003; Campbell 1987; Harris 1994; Moore; 1991; Portillos 1999). Through their gang membership, they may reject such values as passivity and subordinance to males, even extolling the pleasures of fighting, but maintain acceptance of the ideals of being a good mother (Campbell 1987).

Jody Miller's (2001) qualitative research provides an important contrast between gang and non-gang girls, demonstrating that the life experiences of girls who join gangs are consistently more negative than those of girls who avoid gang life. Gang girls were more likely to be exposed to gangs in their neighborhoods and families and to have more problem-prone families with parental substance use, domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse. Although gender comparisons are rare, there is

also some evidence that gang girls come from more troubled backgrounds and families than do gang boys. Joan Moore's (1991) research on two LA Chicano gangs, for example, reveals that females are more likely than males to have experienced familial unemployment, addiction, arrests, gang member siblings, abuse, physical handicap, chronic illness, and/or death.

The body of qualitative work paints a complex picture of limited opportunity for young women as a function of gender, race/ethnicity, class, and culture, coupled with oppression and abuse, all of which push and pull them into gangs. This research also helps to elaborate on the reasons girls give in quantitative studies for joining gangs. Chesney-Lind et al. (1996) write that "their choice of gang membership is heavily shaped by the array of economic, educational, familial, and social conditions and constraints that exist in their families and communities" (p. 204). But it is also true that girls' "choices" to become gang-involved and the perceived "benefits" of gang membership must be viewed in terms of the structural constraints that make the gang appear to girls a "viable option" (see Brotherton and Salazar-Atias 2003).

Leaving the Gang

Whereas the gang serves a variety of functions for girls at particular points in their lives, for most girls, this involvement is a temporary "way station" of sorts (Brotherton and Salazar-Atias 2003, p. 195; see too Campbell 1984; Hagedorn 1998; Nurge 2003). Many girls have mixed thoughts and feelings about their gang membership, appreciating the benefits they received, but also lamenting the costs (Campbell 1984; Miller, J. 2001; Nurge 2003). Nurge (2003) writes that "the gang was able to meet these young women's immediate needs, but was not a long-term solution to their problems" (p. 172). We know from extant research that gang membership is not necessarily "forever." Although there are individuals, especially males, who maintain their involvement for extended periods or for life (see e.g., Decker and Van Winkle 1996; Hagedorn 1998; Moore 1991), there are also many for whom gang membership is a transitory status. In G.R.E.A.T. I, for example, we found that 69% of adolescent gang members (77% of girls and 67% of boys) were members for 1 year or less; 22% (18% of girls and 25% of boys) were members for two consecutive years; only 7% (all boys) were gang-involved for more than 2 years; and, just one respondent, a female, reported membership in all 5 years of the study (Peterson et al. 2003; 2004). Similar figures are reported by Thornberry et al. (2003).

A few studies provide insight into the why and how of leaving gangs, although the research here is more limited than that on gang joining. According to ex-gang members in St. Louis, for example, violence was an important push to leave the gang, with two-thirds stating that threats of or actual violence to themselves or family were the key reason to make the move out of the gang (Decker and Lauritsen 1996). Others left their gangs because they had moved or due to family reasons. Importantly, all of the gang members in Decker and Lauritsen's study were males; females may have different reasons for exiting the gang. One reason commonly espoused is

motherhood (Fleisher and Krienert 2004); it is thought that many young women do not want their children involved in the gang lifestyle, and that having a child can provide a "pass" out of the gang. The extent to which this reason is common, however, is in question (e.g., Campbell 1987; Fishman 1999; Hagedorn and Devitt 1999; Varriale 2008). Research by Hagedorn and Devitt (1999) indicates that just 16% of females in their Milwaukee study left their gangs due to motherhood. More often (44%), they "just stopped," and a third indicated that their families had moved to get them away from the gang.

Quicker (1999) classifies Chicana gang members' exits as either "active" or "passive." Active departures, initiated either by the gang or the individual member, include violent beat-outs, while passive departures, the more frequent occurrence, are non-ceremonial and are developmental or result from status changes. That is, departures may occur over time as girls age and desist from interaction with the gang; or, when a change such as marriage, the arrival of a child, or job perpetuates lessened interaction. Researchers such as Harris (1994) also document these processes, describing how some gang girls undergo specific exit rituals, such as being beaten or "jumped" out (i.e., fighting other members of the gang, just as in initiation), while others just back out of the gang, distancing themselves from gang activities.

In G.R.E.A.T. II, three questions allowed us add to the scant literature on youths' desistance from the gang. First, former gang members were asked to identify, from a list of reasons, why they left their gangs. The most common reason given by both females (37%) and males (33%) was that they "just felt like it." The role of violence found in prior research is also evident: nearly one-third (30%) left because a friend was hurt or killed. Almost a quarter of girls said they had made new friends, and a similar proportion (22%) left because being in a gang "wasn't what I thought it was going to be." For one in five girls, an adult encouraged them to get out of the gang. Importantly, there were no statistically significant gender differences in reasons for leaving the gang. A second question allowed us to explore common myths about how youths leave gangs. Consistent with some prior research and in contrast to commonly held notions of "blood in, blood out," most (45% of girls and 44% boys) responded they "just left." Being "jumped/beaten out" was not absent in their responses, but it was a distant second (18% of girls and 21% of boys). No girls (and just 5% of boys) reported having to commit a crime to get out of their gangs. Again, no differences were found between girls and boys in the ways in which they left their gangs. Finally, respondents were asked if there were any consequences that resulted from leaving the gang. Interestingly, most former gang members of both sexes (56% of girls and 54% of boys) reported no consequences from leaving their gangs. Of those girls who did report consequences, the most common was that they had lost their gang friends (35%), a salient finding given the social reasons many girls have for joining their gangs. One-quarter also indicated they had been beaten up by members of their former gangs, that a friend was hurt or killed, and/or that their family or friends were threatened, highlighting the potential for violent experiences even after they have left the gang to avoid them.

There are at least three key points to be taken from these collective findings. First, girls do leave gangs. Second, many just leave, without fanfare or consequences.

They decide they do not want to be involved, they drift away, they make new friends. This departure does not mean, though, that we should just let nature take its course because, third, we know that gang life can pose additional risk for young women, and if we can use knowledge about desistance to encourage youths to choose alternatives, we can hope to avert or alleviate some of these risks.

Gang Girls Provide Guidance for the Future

Interest in females' gang involvement is intensifying, but research is not keeping pace. We now know much about the scope and nature of girls' gang involvement, enough to combat the images of girls as appendages of gang males, as girlfriends, gun-holders, and ghetto-rats (and other "g"-words mentioned previously). There is, however, the need to better understand whether girls' risk factors and reasons for gang joining are similar or different than boys'; how gender dynamics in the gang structure girls' experiences; what longer-term effects the gang experience has; why and how they leave their gangs; how all of these differ by race/ethnicity; and how we can use this information to prevent and intervene effectively. For the latter, we can take some guidance from extant research and what girls have told us about why they join and leave.

Quantitative research consistently identifies several overlapping reasons by both genders for their gang joining: for fun, for protection, because a friend or family member was in the gang, and to get respect – needs and desires sought by many, if not most, people in our lives. Qualitative data allow us to further understand these findings by providing rich and detailed illustrations of girls' experiences not tapped in surveys or structured interviews. From all of this is demonstrated what we already know, or should know, as it has been argued by scholars many times over: To prevent girls from joining gangs, we need, at the very least, to protect girls from physical and sexual abuse, sexual double standards, exploitation, and assault; break the cycle of familial gang involvement; provide affordable, available pro-social activities that are structured and supervised; encourage and support girls to make healthy choices about peers and activities; support girls in school and make available meaningful work; and provide opportunities for empowerment, growth, and explorations of identity. There are obvious structural conditions (sexism, racism, classism; educational, economic, social, and political barriers or constraints) that produce environments for young women that make the gang an "attractive option." Short of changing these conditions, the least we can do is better equip girls to negotiate these conditions and barriers in order to achieve healthier results. And, when we fail to protect girls from negative life events, we should work to ameliorate the effects of those events. In terms of prevention programming, given the apparent similarities in girls' and boys' reasons and risk factors for gang joining (though more research on this is needed), general programs targeted at both sexes may suffice. But, there is also cause to recommend gender-specific elements to address issues that may be more influential for females, such as sexual abuse, troubled families, and school-related factors.

We can take hope from the fact that girls do leave gangs. In large part, this may be due to natural processes of development and change, but this does not mean we should not do anything to try to speed the desistance process. Anything we can do to assist girls to leave their gangs can help reduce the gang's harmful consequences, such as crime commission, victimization, and long-term effects of membership on girls' lives, disadvantages that may accumulate the longer their membership. Girls' responses reveal possible intervention points, as they do not always find the benefits they hoped to gain. We can facilitate association with alternative peer groups and activities; some girls join gangs to find friendship, belonging, and fun, and they leave by making other friends or finding other activities to fill their time. We can ensure that girls have supportive adults engaged in their lives who will encourage them to choose these other options and ensure those options are available. We can continue to combat the "gang lore" perpetuating the ideas that the gang is a safe haven and that one cannot leave without serious consequences to self, family, or friends. Despite joining for protection, girls are victimized in gangs, and violence is a key motivating factor out of the gang. If we can intervene when violent incidents occur, we can reduce potential for retaliatory violence, as well as seize an opportunity to provide exit from the gang (Decker and Lauritsen 1996). Ceasefire Chicago (2009), for example, utilizes a Hospital Response team that visits hospital emergency rooms to speak with victims of violence and to refer them to services (education and job placement, in addition to support services).

We need also to remember, though, that leaving (as well as joining) the gang is a process (Vigil 1988), just like the process of change in any peer group. That is, gang members may not just suddenly quit (or join) their gangs; rather, their decision to leave is solidified over time and experiences, both within and outside of the gang. Further, clear distinctions cannot always be made between "gang members" and "ex-gang members" (Decker and Lauritsen 1996). Even after relinquishing their gang member status, girls may still associate with members of the gang; these are their neighbors, friends, and family members, after all.

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Chapter 6
Girls' Relational Orientation and Interpersonal Dynamics of Delinquency

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As noted in a previous chapter, the last decade has witnessed an increase in arrest rates for girls (Chap. 1). Notwithstanding the important issue of whether girls are actually getting more violent, a consequence of these rising rates is long overdue attention to delinquency committed by girls. Unfortunately, many of the theoretical frameworks and intervention models on delinquency (e.g., Patterson et al. 1991; Loeber and Farrington 2001) were based on research of males. Thus, little is known about risk mechanisms specific to girls' delinquency. Such information is necessary in order to guide prevention and intervention efforts that are responsive to girls' needs.

One domain that has received some empirical attention in the study of girls' delinquency is the role of interpersonal relationships. The goals of this chapter are to review the literature on girls' strong relational orientation and what is currently known about relationships and delinquency among girls. We then use qualitative data to provide an in-depth analysis of relationships for girls involved in the court system. We begin by integrating theoretical literature on girls' relational orientation with literature on delinquency among girls. Next, we provide a brief overview of our data sources, analytic strategies, and results. Finally, we discuss the implication of our results for future research and clinical practice.

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Theories Outlining Girls' Relational Orientation

Developmental studies consistently outline gendered socialization processes that foster the development of a relational orientation among girls (Gore et al. 1993; Maccoby 1998; Zahn-Waxler et al. 2005). Girls are socialized to be more interpersonally aware and sensitive than boys and to value communion and connections (Brody 1985; McClure 2000). Parents also have higher expectations for daughters than sons regarding interpersonal skills and prosocial behavior (Keenan and Shaw 1997). For example, parents promote closeness in relationships through talking more with girls than boys, including conversing about emotional experiences (Leaper 2002). When girls misbehave, parents are more likely to emphasize the interpersonal consequences of their behavior by engaging them in conversations about how they impact others, encouraging empathy and perspective taking. Girls are also encouraged by parents to attempt to fix problems in relationships (Fivush 1991). Parents further emphasize gendered roles for girls that are consistent with an interpersonal orientation by encouraging relational activities in daughters more so than in sons (Nicolopoulou 1997). For example, activities for girls commonly center on relationally oriented play (e.g., playing house).

These early socialization experiences impact girls' peer relationships in regard to their behavioral functioning, social-cognitive processes, and how girls cope with and respond to stress (Rose and Rudolph 2006; Rubin et al. 1998). Similar to interactions in the context of parent–child relationships, girls tend to disclose more with their friends than do boys. Girls' friendships are marked by closeness and emotional connectedness, with girls frequently engaging in long, dyadic interactions. Girls often define their personal identity in terms of their close ties. They are more concerned than boys with the quality of their relationships and how their social connections are viewed in the larger peer world (Gore et al. 1993). Girls also are highly sensitive to others' evaluations of their affiliations and concerned about the status of their relationships (Storch et al. 2002). In these ways, they are more likely to experience and be affected by the stress of others (Rudolph 2002).

Themes of interpersonal connectedness also are underscored in theories about girls' biobehavioral responses to stress (Fishbein et al. 2009; Taylor et al. 2000). Females may react to stress with gendered coping strategies that evolved over time in connection with women's role as caregiver. Stress in females can elicit a "tend and befriend" response, or a tendency to care for young offspring and to seek out and befriend others (Klein and Corwin 2002). A social group better enables females to protect offspring and makes them less vulnerable to an outside threat by mobilizing support, especially from other females (Insel 1997). This gendered response to stress is presumed to have biological underpinnings that build on attachment–caregiving processes. These processes also may involve hypothalmic–pituitary–adrenocortical (HPA) responses to stress that are mediated by the female reproductive hormone oxytocin. For example, in both animal and human studies, oxytocin promotes caregiving behavior and plays a role in the mother–child attachment (Nelson and Panksepp 1998). Overall then, the "tend and befriend" response can be viewed as a biobehavioral system that promotes females' relational orientation.

Additional support for girls' strong relational orientation is provided by self-construal theories from social psychology (Cross and Madsen 1997; Maddux and Brewer 2005) that emerge from a burgeoning literature on models of the self-system (Higgins 1996; Markus and Kitayama 1991). The self-system regulates and directs human behavior, and in this way, serves as a lens through which we view others, regulate and direct behavior, and shape our emotions, motivations, and social behavior. Cross and Madsen (1997), postulate gendered self-construals that differentially impact how males and females view the world. Girls and women are presumed to have interdependent self-construals. As such, they perceive themselves through their relationships with others and emphasize the interrelatedness of their identity with close relationships and social groups (Stewart and Lykes 1985). These interdependent self-construals then shape moral decisions and interpersonal responsiveness, leading females to readily take the perspective of others and understand their thoughts and feelings in relation to close others (Jordan and Surrey 1986). By comparison, makes are presumed to have independent self-construals. In this way, makes see themselves as unique, independent entities, and their self-construals are differentiated from perceptions of others or social groupings. A number of studies offer support to females' higher interdependence in self-construals (Cross et al. 2000; Gardner et al. 2002). For example, Foels and Tomcho (2004) found gendered cognitive representations of groups, with females viewing groups in terms of dyadic bonds, whereas males viewed groups as categorical affiliations.

Relationships and Girls' Delinquency

It is within this relational framework that we consider girls' delinquency. Historically, girls' delinquency was defined in a sexual context; namely "crimes of immorality" in which girls' arrests centered on sexual, "immoral" behavior (Alexander 1995; Tice 1998). This practice began in the period of social, political, and moral reform known as the "Progressive Era" (roughly the 1890s) and continued into the last century. "Sex delinquent" females were seen as possessing excessive sexual urges and moral weaknesses, and were considered a threat to the societal ideal of the "good woman." The Progressive Era also included ideas about eugenics which discouraged the "unfit" from having children (Kennedy 2008), which catalyzed the practice of forced sterilization of "degenerate" girls in reform schools. To illustrate, between 1929 and 1974, the North Carolina Eugenics Board supported forced sterilization, including girls in reform schools (Barkin 2009). These girls were disproportionately immigrant and working class, and were often sent to reformatories in order to be "trained" for proper roles of wives and mothers. Case reports from the early 1900s reveal that even if a girl was arrested for something other than sexual behavior, she could be subjected to a gynecological exam to determine if she was "deflowered;" if so, she was treated more harshly than a virginal girl (Myers 2006).

Girls' sexual behavior was also seen in part as a reaction to their inability to form healthy connections with peers. In-depth case analyses of incarcerated girls discussed these girls' "incapacity for friendships with contemporaries," and how delinquent girls may use sex as a way to cope with this social isolation (Konopka 1966). Similarly, Wattenberg (1956) contended that delinquent girls were incapable of forming friendships and portrayed these girls as "lone wolves." Building on this theme, Reckless (1957) discussed how delinquent females were less likely to offend in small groups, and instead were likely to commit crimes as a "lone wolf."

By and large, these earlier views of girls as "sexual delinquents" or "lone wolves" with deficient social skills were based on case study reports. More recent literature challenges these early notions, and provides evidence that highly aggressive girls indeed participate in peer groups. Based on reports from 942 youth, Giordano et al. (1986) found that friendship quality did not differ as a function of delinquency level. However, delinquent youths (both boys and girls) did report higher levels of conflict in their friendships. A more recent study found no difference between delinquent and non-delinquent girls' reports of companionship, conflict, security, and closeness (Pleydon and Schner 2001). However, this study found that delinquent girls were more likely to report pressure from peers. Cairns et al. (1988; Cairns and Cairns 1994) measured students' self-nominations of peer affiliations, and found that highly aggressive girls were members of established peer networks, with no differences in the number of reciprocated friends between aggressive and non-aggressive girls. Thus, antisocial girls do have social affiliations, although there may be greater peer pressure and conflict within these ties. Additional findings (Cairns et al. 1988) show that highly aggressive girls (and boys) are most likely to affiliate with other aggressive same-gender affiliates, underscoring homophily processes such that "birds of a feather flock together." These data also confirm one of the most robust findings about delinquency – namely, that antisocial youth tend to congregate together, and that delinquency usually occurs in concert with peers (Elliott and Menard 1996; Warr 2002). In contrast, youth with few friends are rarely delinquent (Demuth 2004; Tolone and Tierman 1990).

One very interesting phenomenon described in the literature is the gendered nature of who males and females offend with. In an early study using a convenience sample, Giordano (1978) found that the most common context for girls' reports of delinquency was a mixed-gender peer group. Similarly, using data from a nationally representative sample (the National Youth Survey), Warr (1996) found that males tended to offend with other males. By contrast, females tended to offend with males. This, girls' offending took placed in a mixed-gender context. Warr's (1996) results also indicate that males often were the instigators of girls' offending.

This gendered social dynamic raises questions of how males are implicated in females' offending. Literature on adult women offenders places criminal behavior in the broader societal context of patriarchy and men's power and control over women (Brown 2003; Chesney-Lind and Pasko 2003). Women's experiences of victimization, such as sexual abuse and domestic violence, are presumed to result in part from the societal inequality and power differential between the genders. For females involved with male offenders, a dynamic interplay between male–female

relationships and females' offending may exist, especially when females are dependent on males economically. For example, women may assume subservient roles to men in offending situations, such as holding drugs or driving a getaway car. This work highlights the complex interrelationship between women's victimization and offending by emphasizing how females involved in criminal acts with males may also experience victimization in the form of sexual abuse and domestic violence.

It remains unclear whether these power and control dynamics extend to adolescent girls. A longitudinal study by Giordano et al. (2006) involving over 1,100 adolescents underscores the importance of maintaining a developmental perspective. Boys reported more influence attempts by their girlfriends and higher scores on perceived influence by partners than did girls. Qualitative interviews supported these quantitative findings, with boys reporting more awkwardness and less confidence than girls in navigating the social dynamics of boyfriend/girlfriend relationships.

Delinquent girls may also view same-gender affiliations as problematic. Data from a youth detention sample and a matched control group showed that delinquent girls were more likely than non-delinquent girls to report having a male as a best friend (Solomon 2006). The delinquent girls also reported having older friends and more friends involved in offending behavior. However, the quality of these relationships did not vary across delinquent and non-delinquent groups. Qualitative reports from this study revealed that detained girls had very clear reasons for preferring males as friends. The girls cited concerns about rampant social exclusion, competition, and distrust among same-gender friendships. Furthermore, these girls viewed their male friends as providing safety and protection. These data emphasize the need to distinguish between male affiliates who are friends (i.e., non-romantically involved), as opposed to those who are boyfriends (romantically involved), and the different roles that these two types of male affiliates play in the lives of delinquent girls. Solomon's (2006) results also underscore the strained nature of same-gender affiliations and delinquent girls' challenges in establishing and maintaining friendships with other girls.

Some empirical attention has been given to the role of romantic relationships in girls' delinquent behavior. Using concurrent data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health), Haynie et al. (2005) found that for both genders, peer delinquency contributed to youths' reports of their own delinquency. Even after controlling for peer delinquency, romantic partner delinquency made an independent (albeit smaller) contribution to youth delinquency levels. However, the association between partner delinquency and youth delinquency was qualified by a significant interaction between gender and partner delinquency. Although having a delinquent partner predicted higher levels of minor delinquency for all youth, the relationship was stronger for girls. Similarly, using data on 1,354 seriously violence-adjudicated girls and a matched sample of boys from the Pathways to Desistance Study, Cauffman et al. (2008) found that girls' reports of delinquent behavior, but not boys, was linked with higher levels of antisocial encouragement from current partners.

A small number of longitudinal studies also reveal gendered dynamics in the role of romantic partners in delinquent activity. The Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study followed adolescents into young adulthood, and collected

data from partners at age 21 (Moffitt et al. 2001). Not surprisingly, adolescents who reported delinquency in adolescence were also most likely to report similar behavior as young adults. In addition, having an antisocial partner incrementally contributed to young adults' reports of antisocial activity. However, gender moderated these associations. Specifically, teenage boys who were delinquent in adolescence were more likely to remain delinquent as young adults, regardless of their partner's behavior at age 21. However, persistent delinquent patterns for girls from adolescence to young adulthood were observed only if the girls' partners were delinquent. Similarly, Simons et al. (2002) tested how peer and partner relationships impacted stability in antisocial behavior from adolescence into young adulthood. For both genders, delinquency and delinquent peers affiliations in adolescence predicted having an antisocial partner as a young adult, which then contributed to antisocial activity in young adulthood. However, the impact of partner behavior on offending was twice as strong for females as it was for males. In addition, for females only, the quality of the partner relationship predicted crime levels. Thus, romantic relationships appear to have a stronger impact on offending for females.

Peer and partner affiliations also appear to play an important mediating and moderating role in associations between pubertal timing and delinquency. Stattin and Magnusson (1990) found that early maturing girls are more likely to affiliate with older males. Girls who enter puberty early are more likely to date at younger ages, as well as to report "being in love" (Richards and Larson 1993). An additional study by Haynie (2003) on over 5,000 girls in the Add Health study further underscores the important role played by both peers and partners. As expected, early maturing girls reported higher levels of delinquent activity. Furthermore, involvement in romantic relationships and having problem-prone peers mediated the association between pubertal timing and delinquency. In the Dunedin study, Caspi et al. (1993) highlight how exposure to male role models may amplify the timing of pubertal onset. In comparison with early maturing girls who attended same-sex schools, girls who were both early maturing and attended a mixed-gender school reported the highest delinquency levels.

In summary, literature across multiple disciplines underscores girls' strong relational orientation. In addition, although limited, studies indicate that relationships play a key role in girls' delinquent activity, particularly in terms of boyfriends. However, issues of power and influence within these boyfriend relationships are unclear. The limited research suggests that same-gender affiliations may be problematic for delinquent girls. However, much remains to be learned about delinquent girls and their social affiliations, and little is known about processes underlying the role of relationships in girls' delinquency.

Qualitative Analysis: Relationships of Court-Involved Girls

In this section, we use qualitative data from court-involved girls to focus on girls' social affiliations, including same-gender peers, opposite-gender friends, and boyfriends. Increasingly, social science researchers emphasize the importance of

qualitative work to obtain a deeper understanding of the meaning and context of behaviors, particularly when the participants are part of an understudied population or phenomenon (Burton 1997). Such data allow for the emergence of the unexpected and can be used to build up new abstractions and theories (Burton 1997); Gibson-Davis and Duncan 2005).

Sample and Procedures

The participants were eight adolescent girls who were adjudicated, but not incarcerated, in the juvenile court system in a medium-sized Southeastern city. Adjudication status indicates that the girls were arrested, and subsequently seen in court and placed on probation. The girls were randomly selected from adjudication records. The sample was stratified by ethnicity to match the demographics of the adjudicated population at that time (88% African American, 12% white). Accordingly, our sample consisted of seven African American girls and one Caucasian girl. Girls ranged in age from 14 to 17. Five of the girls lived at home, four of these in single mother households. Two of the girls resided in group homes, and one was placed in an emergency placement. Two of the girls who resided at home were adolescent mothers.

To recruit participants, probation officers provided each randomly selected participant and her parent/guardian with a brief description of the study and asked the parent/guardian if the interviewer could be given contact information. If permission was received, the study team received contact information and the parent/guardian and youth were contacted by the interviewer, who described the study in greater detail and obtained parent/guardian consent and youth assent. Youth were compensated with gift cards totaling $50; $25 for each of two 60–90-min interviews. Interviewers met with the youth in a private setting, usually in the girls' bedrooms. Interviews were audio taped. One-hundred percent of the families that the probation officers initially solicited agreed to participate. However, three of the girls were replaced (i.e., a new girl was randomly selected) due to specific circumstances that rendered them ineligible to participate (one was incarcerated; one ran away and could not be located; one was no longer adjudicated by the time contact was made with the parent).

Coding and Analysis

To analyze the data, we used standard procedures for analyzing qualitative data to coordinate systematic input from interviewers, qualitative data analysts, and research scientists. Taped interviews were transcribed. Field notes were written after each interview and were used as additional data source. In addition, we consulted notes from group and individual discussions among the research scientists and interviewers. During the data collection process, we held regular meetings to discuss emergent themes in the interviews and coding.

To analyze the data, we conducted two phases of coding (Glaser and Strauss 1967; LaRossa 2005). The first phase included an iterative process of open coding interview transcripts and field notes, beginning with the general coding scheme developed by the research team to clarify the contextual and situational dimensions of the girls' romantic relationships and non-romantic relationships with cross-gender and same-gender peers. Initial codes included trust/distrust, influence/agency, and negativity toward boyfriends. We used these codes in concert with the open coding to discover general themes and concepts about girls' relationships. Our analysis was an ongoing process that began during the initial data collection and continued with increasingly in-depth levels of analysis resulting in formal coding of each interview. After the first interviews with two participants were completed, the research team and interviewers reviewed the transcripts, field notes, and observations. Substantial material emerged on self-efficacy and the salience of non-romantic male ties; hence, we added questions to the second interview in order to systematically explore these themes further.

Following completion of the interviews, we then conducted a detailed content analysis in order to develop a coding manual.[1] Matrices of verbatim text were created and reviewed across interview questions for each of the girls' responses, and major themes were identified. Throughout this process, the coding manual was refined and finalized, a true iterative approach. Coding was then conducted using NVivo software (NVivo 2006). After achieving 75% agreement with an independent coder, one data analyst coded the remaining interviews. We then proceeded with the second step – selective coding – or what LaRossa (2005) describes as a process to decide on the main story underlying the analysis. In reporting the results, we use representative exemplar cases to illustrate the parameters of girls' social affiliations that emerged in the data. Where specific case examples are used, girls' names are replaced with pseudonyms.

Results

Taken as a whole, the most significant stories to emerge from our data mapped onto the three categories of girls' social affiliations, in addition to one broader theme that linked across all affiliations. The first social affiliation theme concerned girls' deep distrust of same-gender friendships. Next was a theme of the positive role of non-romantic, opposite-gender friendships. The third theme was the strong distrust and negativity toward boyfriends. Overarching all of these relationships was a theme of overt denial of the girls' being influenced to engage in delinquent activity. Yet, at the same time, girls described situations that inferred influence processes. We report our findings within the three categories of social affiliations: (1) same-gender peers; (2) opposite-gender, non-boyfriends; and (3) boyfriends.

[1] The detailed coding manual is available from the first author.

Same-Gender Friendships

All of the girls except one reported having at least one female friend. The participants reported that these friendships were devoid of major conflict, and they identified positive traits. Jade described her female friend: "Um, we have like the same personality sometimes. I like to stick up for people, I don't like to see people get in trouble. Like, the teacher might be 'LaSandra are you talking?' And I'll be like 'no that was not her talking' and stuff like that. She do the same thing…And um, yeah secrets, I trust her not to tell people stuff, she haven't."

However, none of the girls reported having a circle of close female friends. Rather, without exception, they expressed strong and negative views of girls centering on the theme of distrust. Sometimes the participants listed a number of pejorative characteristics describing girls, such as "blabbermouth," "backstabbing," "untrustworthy," and "drama queens." "Latrice" describes her distrust: "I mean just one of those gossiping type of girls that talks about their boyfriend or what they think somebody didn't mess with their boyfriend, that's the type of girls they were or, yeah that's exactly, I done got in fights because of things like that." At other times, the girls' reasons for not trusting other girls were very generalized and pervasive. As an example, Aaryn stated: "I don't know who they are, I can't trust them, you know you can be my friend, you can smile in my face all day but really deep down you out to get me, that's what they always say, keep your enemies and your close friends very, very close."

All but one of the girls acknowledged that their same-gender friendships were a conduit for their minor delinquent activity, the most common being shoplifting. Typically, these behaviors served a recreational purpose, such as to alleviate boredom, or provide excitement. "Iyanna" talks about shoplifting with other girls in a prankish, gamesome spirit: "So we could have stuff, they used to call us the candy crew. We used to go to Wal-Mart and take these little bags that you might see people wearing and we'll take candy and just open up the candy and empty it into your mouth and just we'll go to Logan Park and we'll sell our candy and make money."

Almost inevitably while discussing these low-level delinquent activities with same-gender peers, the participants described whether they were influenced by other females in a curious, and sometimes roundabout way. Specifically, all of the girls described a strong sense of personal agency and efficacy in making their own decisions and emphatically denied being overtly influenced by their same-gender friends. However, a more thorough analysis provided evidence that personal agency and influence were often intertwined. In Serriah's example, she first admits to her friend influencing her, then admits mutual influence, and then takes total responsibility: "We was smoking some weed in front of a police station. (Interviewer: Why did you do it?). 'Cause she said she wanted to. It was retarded though. It was really retarded. But that was on both of us cuz I said yeah. If I would have said no, it wouldn't have been, but I said yes so it was my decision. If I would have said no we wouldn't have done it. I was like 'sure why not.'"

Opposite-Gender Non-Romantic Friendships

An emergent theme pertained to the important functions (i.e., provision of excitement, social contact, and protection) provided by males who were not romantic boyfriends. Most of the participants described their opposite-gender non-romantic friendships in overwhelmingly positive terms. These male affiliations typically took place in a mixed-gender context that consisted primarily of older males with a few females. The participants did not describe being lured or forced into these groups. Rather, the girls reported being attracted to the mystique, allure, and excitement of the group. "Angelique" stated: "… it was not a group that you would hang out with, it was like, they be in gangs and stuff, well, the boys they would be in gangs and I used to hang out with my friends named Jessie, Olivia, ShaDana, and Gabrielle, and this girl named, other girl named Carmen and this girl named, we call her Lil'bit (slang name) and all the gang, we used to sit out there and smoke and stuff and that's all we would do. And we would stay out late. And they stayed at Johnson Holmes (housing development) and I used to be at their house all the time."

The participants also described the important protective role that their non-romantic male friends played. For girls who had run away, sometimes the protection was physical, such as money or food. For other girls, the protection was social, in terms of not being bothered by others, as described by Angelique: "And we would stay out late. Cuz they was like cool, it was like cool if you hung up there and [they] don't let nobody mess with you. It was just like we chilled; we was just like all on the porch and we just talked and just chilled."

Participant reported that these non-romantic, male affiliates were engaged in delinquent acts (i.e., gangs, stealing, using/selling drugs). However, the girls were emphatic and consistent about not being involved in, nor influenced by their non-romantic male friends' delinquency. Rather, the girls often referred to these males as fictive kin, like an "older brother" or "cousin." "Aaryn" stated "I be more of a little sister to them. Talk to them about their girlfriend you know, give them ideas of what to give them on holidays or help them understand where they coming from… or something. Just there to talk to them and be there for them."

Opposite-Gender Romantic Relationships

In sharp contrast to their warm, positive non-romantic male friendships, the participants described their boyfriends, even their current ones, in almost exclusively negative terms. Iyanna describes her 16-year-old ex-boyfriend as "um, inconsiderate, lazy, um, doesn't want to go to school, didn't want to go to school, lied about going to school, um, didn't want anything in life, he just wanted me to sit around and do everything for him, which was not going to happen." Girls' descriptions were most negative when they described their boyfriends' lack of trustworthiness; boyfriends were basically liars and cheaters, such as reported by Jade: "I don't trust none of

them. Cuz some boy might say 'I never cheated on you but I have slept with other girls.' But we think they still cheating'."

The girls were very aware of their boyfriends' criminal activity. Many of the boyfriends were reported to be gang involved in drug selling and other serious offenses (robbery, serious assault, etc.). However, the girls' awareness was not a deterrent to dating these boys. Latrice describes an ex-boyfriend, "I mean cuz he was a good person, he was respectful, very honest, but he did bad things, like all the time. He's locked up for breaking in cars, stealing cars all the time, so he's locked up now."

In addition, as with the non-boyfriends, the girls adamantly denied being involved in the offending behavior of their boyfriends, or being influenced by their partner to engage in delinquent acts. However, much like the complex descriptions of influence with their same-gender friendships, some girls described instances of both personal choice and being influenced by their boyfriends. Angelique states, "Sometimes I choose not to go to school and sometimes people tell me to skip school and let's go here or go there, like my baby's father always used to tell me to come over to his house and don't go to school." Thus, the girls' desires to be with their boyfriends promoted status offending, such as truancy and running away.

Summary and Conclusions

The results of this qualitative study add to the very limited literature on the role of relationships in girls' delinquency. Consistent with other research, the court-involved girls in this study reported having female friends, particularly one good female friend. However, the picture of their same-gender social world was considerably more complex. Despite having one friend, girls' reports of other girls were fraught with high levels of generalized distrust. We speculate that as a result of this distrust, delinquent girls may not be able to take advantage of the benefits typically derived from same-gender female friendships. For example, female friends provide emotional support, enhance self-esteem, buffer against social anxiety, and serve as trusted confidants (LaGreca et al. 2005). Having a circle of friends that is dominated by females can also have a deterrent effect by providing fewer opportunities and less motivation for delinquent activity (McCarthy et al. 2004). Girls engaged in delinquency may not possess the social competencies to maneuver the increasingly complex interpersonal dynamics among girls. They may also be rejected in the larger peer context, further impeding the likelihood of developing social ties (van Lier et al. 2005). For the delinquent girls in our study, their reports zabout same-gender affiliations were fraught with high levels of social aggression, including backbiting, social exclusion, and other covert expressions of meanness (Underwood 2003). Although girls engaged in delinquency may themselves exhibit high levels of social aggression (Chesney-Lind et al. 2007), their ability to navigate the social landscape may require subtle and sophisticated social skills in order to maintain friendships.

In comparison with perceptions of same-gender affiliations, the girls seemed drawn to the mixed-gender context. Their reports of affiliations with large groups of

primarily older males who were clearly distinguished from boyfriends is a new finding. Existing studies on male affiliations among delinquent girls focus almost exclusively on boyfriends (e.g., Haynie et al. 2005). Affiliations with opposite-gender, non-romantic males appeared to provide delinquent girls with a sense of safety (both physical and social) and a highly thrilling, unsupervised, and unstructured socializing experience. The quality of these affiliations was difficult to ascertain, although some of the girls spoke of the males as fictive kin. In addition, the girls clearly stated not being drawn into these males' delinquent activities.

It may be that affiliations with these large groups of primarily males have easier, more straightforward social demands as compared to the complex social demands within same-gender affiliations. Studies highlight how girls' friendships are characterized by emotional closeness and intimacy and rely on an emotional "give and take" that is based on a shared trust, which may be very difficult for delinquent girls. By comparison, males' connections are based less on shared affective experiences, but instead on shared activities in a larger group context (Lansford and Parker 1999; Rose and Rudolph 2006). Males do show caring, but rather than through emotional connectedness, such affection may be expressed through "hanging out" (Fehr 1996). This interactional style may be less threatening to delinquent girls, particularly if the males are also providing emotional and physical support.

In sharp contrast with depictions of non-romantic male affiliates, the girls in this sample viewed boyfriends in harsh, negative terms. Not surprisingly, the girls reporting having boyfriends who were considerably older than them, and they were well aware of their boyfriends' offending behavior, including serious behaviors such as gang involvement, drug selling, stealing cars, and assault. The girls spoke in particularly negative terms about past boyfriends, spewing vitriol about cheating and lying behavior. They were very distrustful of their boyfriends, almost as if anticipating infidelity. These perceptions, however, did not deter them from continued partnering.

Themes of influence and personal agency were manifested in very complex ways. The girls very adamantly denied being influenced to engage in delinquency, whether by other females or males (be they boyfriends or not). Moreover, in their denials was a strong sense of personal pride and agency. The girls were highly invested in appearing strong and making their own decisions to engage in delinquent behavior. In this way, they appeared highly self-efficacious, goal-directed, and deliberate. This self-presentation is consistent with literature outlining how personal agency takes on high salience as adolescents are given increasing amounts of independence and are less constrained by adult supervision (Zimmerman and Clearly 2006).

The self-efficacy evidenced by these girls, however, is not consistent with how self-efficacy is traditionally discussed within the delinquency literature (Ludwig and Pittman 1999). Specifically, youth reporting high levels of self-efficacy are less delinquent. This perspective may be limited, however, if delinquent behavior and affiliations are desired assets. The girls spoke about delinquent behavior and affiliations as having many redeeming qualities. For example, shoplifting was discussed as a fun, thrill-seeking escapade to do with peers. Similarly, smoking weed with friends provided a sense of camaraderie. Affiliations with delinquent, non-romantic males provided girls with protection, both physical and emotional. Girls felt needed

in their role as fictive kin, talking to male peers as if they were younger sisters. In addition, they were highly motivated to seek out non-romantic male affiliations. To this end, girls skipped school, snuck out of windows at night, and ran away to seek out these family-like connections.

Clearly, we would not advocate that girls become truant and run away in order to maintain positive relationships with non-romantic males. Jeopardizing one's education and safety seems an unacceptably high price to pay for friendships. However, we would be naive to ignore the very real and reinforcing qualities of delinquency (thrills, excitement, access to material wealth, etc.) and affiliations (safety, protection, caring, etc.), particularly with non-romantic males. To be clear, the girls did *not* portray themselves as being victims of older males, nor preyed upon in any way whatsoever. Rather, the girls were highly motivated, persistent, and goal-directed, and actively sought out connections with males, and they reveled in the associated allure, comfort, and appeal of this social context. These stories call for a more complex understanding of girls' personal sense of agency, and the positive features attributed to delinquent activity.

At the same time, the girls also shared stories indicating that they were influenced, both by same- and opposite-gender affiliations. This influence was sometimes subtle and not apparent to the girls "in the moment" but only on subsequent reflection. At other times, the influence of others seemed to be fairly obvious initially (e.g., smoking weed in front of a police station because a friend asked her to), but the external influence was overshadowed by personal agency to acquire or experience something desirable. For these girls, there were immediate short-term social gains to be garnered from affiliating with delinquent peers.

It is important to note that our sample consists of adjudicated girls. Thus, we do not know whether these results and differentiations across relationship categories are similar in non-adjudicated girls. Our findings may be specific to delinquent girls or generalizable to non-delinquent girls. Hence, it would be inappropriate to conclude based on our findings that the depictions of delinquent girls' affiliations are exotic or pathological or out of the norm. Nonetheless, our results do provide important information about the very different social affiliations of adjudicated girls and add to the very limited empirical base.

The results have important implications for programming for delinquent girls. Forming high quality relationships among groups of girls will likely prove to be a challenge given their generalized distrust. Girls in the court system may benefit from a specialized mentoring relationship where the adult provides a safe relationship to learn social skills and develop and maintain a trusting tie. Mentors can also serve as a conduit to link girls with structured recreational activities with non-delinquent girls, and generalize skills developed within the mentor–mentee relationship to other girls in their lives. In addition, any intervention targeting reduction of delinquency needs to not only acknowledge the reinforcing nature of delinquent behavior and affiliations, but provide alternatives and opportunities that meet youths' needs for a sense of belonging and personal safety. The allure of older, delinquent male groups (for protection and excitement) may not lead to girls' delinquency, as is commonly thought. Thus, interventions that seek to prohibit these relationships

might have little face validity for girls that rely on these groups for positive affiliation and protection. At the same time, delinquent girls would benefit from relationship skills to learn how best to select partners and pace the sexual and emotional intimacy in their romantic relationships so as to minimize the likelihood that they will be influenced to engage in delinquency and experience further betrayals.

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Part III
Psychological Functioning

Chapter 7
Dealing with Double Jeopardy: Mental Health Disorders Among Girls in the Juvenile Justice System

Emily G. Marston, Mike A. Russell, Ingrid Obsuth, and Gillian K. Watson

Youth within the juvenile justice system consistently show higher rates of mental health disorders when compared to normative populations (Otto et al. 1992; Vermeiren 2003). According to one of the most comprehensive epidemiological studies of detained adolescents (Males = 1,172; Females = 657), as many as two-thirds of males and three-quarters of females meet criteria for one or more psychiatric disorders (Teplin et al. 2002). Although prevalence rates of mental health disorders tend to vary across samples, they remain consistently high in juvenile justice populations, ranging from 50–100% (Dixon et al. 2004; Lederman et al. 2004; Teplin et al. 2002), and stand in stark contrast to the significantly lower prevalence rates of psychopathology among normative populations of adolescents (15%: Roberts et al. 1998).

Females appear to be a unique population within juvenile justice settings, with evidence indicating that female juvenile offenders suffer from a more complex set of mental health problems when compared to boys (Cauffman et al. 1998; Steffensmeier and Allan 1996; Teplin et al. 2002; Timmons-Mitchell et al. 1997). If mental health problems are left untreated, female juvenile offenders are at increased risk for a range of detrimental outcomes including suicidal behaviors, substance addiction, becoming enmeshed in violent relationships and being unable to care for their children (Chamberlain and Moore 2002; Lewis et al. 1991; Underwood et al. 2004). Thus, the presence of psychiatric disorders places these already high-risk adolescent girls in double jeopardy for poor outcomes as they enter adulthood.

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Despite a general decrease in juvenile crime rates (NMHA 2003; Snyder and Sickmund 2006), the rate of young women entering the juvenile justice system has grown rapidly in recent years (see Chap. 1, for more detailed trend data on arrests). Increasing numbers of adolescent females sentenced to custody, combined with their high rates of mental health disorders, leaves researchers, clinicians, and policymakers struggling to understand and meet female juvenile offenders' mental health needs (Acoca 1999; Vermeiren et al. 2006). Mental health professionals believe that providing psychiatric services to juvenile offenders could help reduce recidivism and improve their quality of life (Dembo et al. 1997; Leve et al. 2005; McCord et al. 2001). Unfortunately, treatment within the juvenile justice system is often lacking, especially for females (Acoca 1999; Vermeiren et al. 2006). For example, research shows that only one-fifth of female detainees who needed services reported receiving them (Domalanta et al. 2003; Teplin et al. 1997).

In this chapter, we provide estimates of mental health disorders from the Gender and Aggression Project (GAP) (described briefly below), a uniquely comprehensive study of females sentenced to custody in a large southeastern state. This sample included 93% of all females sentenced to custody over a 14-month period. Because we captured virtually the entire population of incarcerated girls, prevalence rates can be generalized to incarcerated females within this large southeastern state. In addition, we review research detailing the presentation and consequences of common externalizing [e.g., conduct disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and substance use disorders (SUDs)] and internalizing disorders (e.g., depressive and anxiety disorders) in both normative and incarcerated female populations (Chap. 8 provides an in-depth look at the role of trauma and PTSD in female delinquency). We then provide an in-depth analysis of comorbidity in this all-female sample. Together, the rates of single and comorbid disorders provide a comprehensive picture of the scope and severity of mental health problems among female juvenile offenders. Finally, directions for future research are suggested, followed by implications for policymakers and mental health professionals working in the juvenile justice setting.

The Gender and Aggression Project

GAP participants included 141 adolescent females who were initially interviewed while incarcerated at a correctional facility in the southeastern USA (Age: $M = 16.73$, $SD = 1.28$). Each participant underwent approximately 6–8 h of individual assessments, including both semi-structured clinical interviews and a battery of self-report measures. Mental health diagnoses were made according to DSM-IV criteria using the Diagnostic Interview for Children and Adolescents (DICA-R) (Reich 2000), a clinician-assisted computerized interview used to assess psychiatric disorders that are common in childhood and adolescence. Prevalence rates and diagnoses of SUDs were obtained from the Department of Juvenile Justice's (DJJ) official records following an intake screening performed by DJJ clinicians.

The sample was racially/ethnically diverse, with 50.0% self-identifying as African American, 2.2% as Native American, 1.4% as Hispanic, and 8.0% as "Other";

the remaining 38.4% identified as Caucasian. The sample fell within the low average-to-borderline range of intellectual functioning, with an average full scale IQ of 86.75 (SD = 13.56). Based on official Department of Justice reports, participants had committed an average of 13 offenses before they entered the correctional facility (total offenses: $M = 13.32$, SD = 7.19) and 81% had committed at least one violent offense (total violent offenses: $M = 3.19$, SD = 4.17).

Overall, 93.6% of the girls in this sample of juvenile offenders met criteria for at least one mental health disorder. In addition, 71.6% met criteria for at least one mental health disorder other than conduct disorder. Nearly all (92.9%) met criteria for an externalizing disorder (e.g., Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and/or Conduct Disorder and/or Substance Abuse/Dependence) and one-third (33.3%) met criteria for an internalizing disorder [e.g., Major Depressive Episode (MDE), and/or Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) and/or Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)].

Conduct Disorder

Conduct Disorder (CD) is described as a persistent pattern of behavior in which the rights of others or age-appropriate societal norms are consistently violated (APA 2000), and is characterized by involvement in a range of antisocial behaviors. Overall, findings suggest more males than females meet criteria for the disorder; however, gender ratios vary according to developmental stage. The male–female CD ratio begins at 4:1 in childhood and preadolescence, narrows considerably in mid-adolescence (1.7:1), and then widens again to nearly 5:1 in late adolescence (Moffitt et al. 2001; Zoccolillo 1993). Recent research has shown the lifetime population prevalence of CD among females in the USA to be 7.1% (Nock et al. 2006).

Given the characterization of CD as a disorder of antisocial behavior, it is perhaps unsurprising that rates of CD are significantly higher among adolescent females in incarcerated settings vs. the general population. Studies of CD among female juvenile offenders indicate rates ranging from 17–96%, despite incarcerated adolescents' potential reluctance to report antisocial activities in order to avoid the possibility of further punishment (Dixon et al. 2004; Karnik et al. 2009; Lederman et al. 2004; McCabe et al. 2002; Teplin et al. 2002; Timmons-Mitchell et al. 1997; Ulzen and Hamilton 1998). Recent research also shows that adolescent females with conduct disorder are more likely to experience a number of detrimental outcomes than those without, such as persistent psychopathology, antisocial behavior, and physical health problems (Copeland et al. 2007; Moffitt et al. 2001; Pajer et al. 2007; Zoccolillo 1992).

In our sample, we found that 86.9% of the female juvenile offenders met *DSM-IV* criteria for CD.[1] Among those with CD, an average of 6.5 (SD = 2.6) symptoms

[1] CD Symptoms were assessed in adolescence by scoring the 15 symptoms of CD listed in DSM-IV as present or absent during the past 6 months based on self-reported items from the following measures: the DICA, the Self-Report of Offending Scale (Elliott and Huizinga 1989) ($\alpha = .83$), the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus 1979) ($\alpha = .85$ across all perpetration subscales), Little's Aggression Inventory (Little et al. 2003) ($\alpha = .93$), and the Youth Self-Report (Achenbach 1991) ($\alpha = .93$ for externalizing scale).

were reported, indicating that CD within this sample was, on average, of moderate severity. This prevalence rate is in line with previous estimates of CD among adolescent female offenders, where rates above 90% have been documented (Dixon et al. 2004; Karnik et al. 2009; Timmons-Mitchell et al. 1997).

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is characterized by the presence of developmentally inappropriate levels of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity beginning in early childhood (APA 2000). The disorder is further categorized into subtypes according to symptom presentation. Those who display above-threshold levels of inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity receive a diagnosis of *ADHD-combined type* (ADHD-C); while those displaying above-threshold levels of inattention or hyperactivity-impulsivity *only* are diagnosed as *ADHD-predominantly inattentive type* (ADHD-I) and *ADHD-predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type* (ADHD-HI), respectively.

Compared to males, the developmental impact of ADHD among females is understudied, perhaps due to the fact that males with ADHD typically outnumber females, at least in childhood, by a ratio of 3:1 in community samples and 9:1 in clinical samples (Gaub and Carlson 1997). Among adolescent females, prevalence rates range from 1.1–6.7% (Cohen et al. 1993; Costello et al. 2003). Females diagnosed with ADHD are more likely to show symptoms of inattention and experience higher levels of comorbid internalizing psychopathology than males (Gaub and Carlson 1997; Gershon 2002). Community samples of adolescent females with ADHD find that the most frequent subtype is ADHD-C, followed in order by ADHD-I and ADHD-HI (Faraone et al. 2000; Hinshaw 2002). Females in incarcerated samples are reported to have higher rates of ADHD, which range from 13–68% (Dixon et al. 2004; Karnik et al. 2009; Lederman et al. 2004; McCabe et al. 2002; Robertson et al. 2004; Teplin et al. 2002; Timmons-Mitchell et al. 1997; Ulzen and Hamilton 1998).

Although ADHD was previously conceptualized as a disorder limited to childhood (Barkley et al. 2008), research shows that ADHD symptom-related impairments persist into adolescence and even adulthood in the majority of cases (Barkley 2002). Persistent ADHD among females leads to multiple adverse outcomes in adolescence and young adulthood, including internalizing and externalizing psychopathology, decreased academic performance, SUDs, and physical health problems (Barkley et al. 2002; Biederman et al. 2006; Hinshaw et al. 2006).

In our sample, we found that 40.2% of the female juvenile offenders met DSM-IV criteria for ADHD. Similar to findings from non-incarcerated samples, ADHD-C was the most frequently displayed subtype (55.6% of the ADHD group), followed in order by the ADHD-I (33.3% of the ADHD group) and ADHD-HI subtypes (11.1% of the ADHD group). DSM criteria require the presence of symptom-related impairment in two out of three life areas (i.e., at work/school, home, and with peers) for

a diagnosis of ADHD. Given that adolescents tend to underreport levels of functional impairment (Ko et al. 2004), we did not include reports of impairment in our ADHD diagnoses as these reports were likely to be unreliable and would likely result in an underestimate of the prevalence. When we included these reports in the ADHD diagnoses, the rate of disorder in our sample decreased from 40.2–30.4% but maintained a similar distribution across subtypes (47.1% ADHD-C; 38.2% ADHD-I; 14.7% ADHD-HI). Regardless of the diagnostic threshold used, the rate of ADHD in our sample corresponds with previously reported rates of ADHD in incarcerated adolescent female samples.

Substance Use Disorders

SUDs are characterized by a pattern of continued pathological use of a substance that results in repeated adverse social and/or physiological consequences (APA 2000). In the general population, substance use steadily increases throughout adolescence (Boyer 2006; Johnston et al. 2002). Although details on rates of SUDs among normative adolescents are limited, large epidemiological studies estimate that approximately 10% meet criteria for alcohol abuse/dependence and 5% meet criteria for substance abuse/dependence (Warner et al. 2001; Young et al. 2002). In contrast, studies consistently report higher rates of substance abuse/dependence among incarcerated youth, with estimates ranging from 34–85% (Dixon et al. 2004; Domalanta et al. 2003; Lederman et al. 2004; Pliszka et al. 2000; Teplin et al. 2002; Ulzen and Hamilton 1998). SUDs among juvenile offenders are often comorbid with other psychological disorders (Abram et al. 2003; Milin et al. 1991) and, in general, are associated with future health problems (e.g., obesity and high blood pressure), as well as neurobehavioral and cognitive deficits (Brook et al. 2002; Flory et al. 2004; Oesterle et al. 2004).

Overall, most studies did not find significant gender differences regarding prevalence rates of SUDs in normative or incarcerated populations (Pliszka et al. 2000; Teplin et al. 2002; Ulzen and Hamilton 1998; Young et al. 2002). However, one study found that incarcerated males were more likely to meet criteria for marijuana abuse/dependence than incarcerated females (Karnik et al. 2009); whereas another study found that incarcerated females were more likely to meet criteria for hard drug dependence (e.g., cocaine and hallucinogens) than their male counterparts (Teplin et al. 2002).

In our sample, the DJJ clinician ratings indicated that 53.9% of the female juvenile offenders met criteria for substance abuse or dependence. Specifically, 15.6% of female detainees exclusively met criteria for substance abuse (e.g., high levels of use combined with social impairment) and 38.3% met criteria for substance dependence (e.g., high levels of use combined with social and physiological impairment). Although DJJ records did not specify for which substance female detainees met diagnostic criteria, 47.0% reported heavy marijuana use, 41.8% reported heavy alcohol use, and 23.9% reported heavy use of at least one hard drug (e.g., cocaine, crack, or hallucinogens). On average, female juvenile detainees reported heavy use of multiple substances ($M = 1.37$, SD = 1.68; Range: 0–7). Our prevalence rates of

substance abuse/dependence are comparable with prior research and further document the striking prevalence of substance abuse/dependence among female juvenile offenders.

Depression

MDD is characterized by the persistent presence of one or more MDEs which significantly impair daily functioning (APA 2000). Estimates from large epidemiological studies suggest that 15.4–27% of youth report experiencing major depression by the end of adolescence (Kessler et al. 2005a, b; Richardson et al. 2003). Studies also show that females are twice as likely as males to experience MDEs with a lifetime prevalence rate of 5–9% (APA 2000; Kessler et al. 2003).

Female juvenile offenders evidence exceptionally high rates of depression, with prevalence rates ranging from 21.6–88.0% (Dixon et al. 2004; Domalanta et al. 2003; Teplin et al. 2002; Timmons-Mitchell et al. 1997). For example, when compared to a community sample of adolescent girls, female juvenile offenders were three times more likely to have clinical symptoms of depression or anxiety (Kataoka et al. 2001). In addition, female offenders remain twice as likely as male offenders to experience depression. Epidemiological research indicates that 21.6% of female vs. 13.0% of male juvenile offenders met criteria for a MDE (Teplin et al. 2002).

Depression is associated with a number of detrimental outcomes including psychosocial dysfunction, SUDs, and physical health problems (Hammen 1992; Lewinsohn et al. 2000; Swendsen and Merikangas 2000). Importantly, depression is associated with increased risk of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts (Kandel et al. 1991). Whereas suicidal thoughts and attempts are more common among females than males (Andrews and Lewinsohn 1992), rates of suicide attempts are strikingly higher in female juvenile offender populations. For example, studies indicate that over 50% of adolescent female offenders reported more than one attempted suicide (Crawford 1988; Goldstein et al. 2003).

In our sample, we found that 24.5% of the female juvenile offenders met criteria for a current MDE and 43.6% had experienced an MDE in the past. In addition, 14.4% of the female juvenile offenders met criteria for a current MDD and 20.7% met criteria for a past MDD. Among those who experienced an MDE, levels of functional impairment were on average moderately severe (Current Level of Impairment: $M = 4.30$, SD = 2.52; Past Level of Impairment: $M = 4.64$, SD = 2.96). Most strikingly, 61.7% of the incarcerated adolescent girls reported suicidal ideation and 29.5% had a history of serious self-harm or suicide attempts.

Anxiety

Anxiety disorders are characterized by excessive worry and apprehension that interferes with daily functioning (APA 2000). A recent nationwide study estimates that 18.1% of adults met criteria for at least one anxiety disorder in the past 12 months

(Kessler et al. 2005a, b). Estimates for children and adolescents are lower, with prevalence rates ranging from 10–15% (Costello et al. 2003). More specifically, two nationally representative samples estimate the 12-month prevalence of GAD to be 1.5–3.1% (Carter et al. 2001; Kessler et al. 2005a, b). Markedly higher rates of anxiety disorders are documented among incarcerated women, with estimates ranging from 12–59% (Domalanta et al. 2003; Lederman et al. 2004; Teplin et al. 2006). When looking at GAD, rates among incarcerated female populations appear to be slightly lower than other anxiety disorders, ranging from 2–7% (Dixon et al. 2004; Karnik et al. 2009).

In our sample, we found that 13.9% of the female juvenile offenders met DSM-IV criteria for a lifetime occurrence of GAD. Specifically, 13.0% met criteria for GAD within the past 6 months, with less than 1% previously meeting criteria for GAD. In addition, the girls reported high numbers of anxiety symptoms, even if they did not meet DSM-IV criteria for GAD (Anxiety Symptoms: $M = 7.46$, SD = 5.69). Our prevalence rate of GAD is significantly higher than previous estimates that assessed GAD either currently (Dixon et al. 2004; Karnik et al. 2009) or within the past 6 months (Teplin et al. 2002).

Comorbidity

Ample evidence shows that a significant percentage (e.g., 20–83%) of incarcerated youth meets criteria for two or more disorders (Abram et al. 2003; Domalanta et al. 2003; Otto et al. 1992; Ulzen and Hamilton 1998), a phenomenon known as comorbidity (Angold et al. 1999). People with comorbid disorders tend to have high rates of impairment and respond poorly to treatment (Bijl and Ravelli 2000). Female juvenile offenders are more likely to present with comorbid disorders than their male counterparts, highlighting the complexity of female mental health problems in the justice system (Abram et al. 2003; Moffitt et al. 2001; Zoccolillo 1992).

In the current sample, 66.0% of the female juvenile offenders met diagnostic criteria for two or more disorders. Even when excluding CD (the most prevalent disorder) in our sample, 34.8% of the adolescent girls met criteria for two or more disorders, suggesting that comorbidity within our sample is not merely an artifact of the high rates of CD. Table 7.1 delineates comorbidity rates among ADHD, CD, MDD, and GAD.

ADHD among adolescent offenders with CD may be an indicator of especially poor long-term prognosis. ADHD and CD frequently co-occur among adolescents in non-incarcerated samples (Angold et al. 1999; Jensen et al. 1997). In addition, ADHD in the presence of CD is associated with an earlier onset, longer duration, and higher severity of CD symptoms (Lahey et al. 2000). Moreover, follow-up studies show that the co-occurrence of ADHD and CD is linked to an especially poor prognosis in adolescence and adulthood (Dalsgaard et al. 2002; Moffitt et al. 2002; Monuteaux et al. 2007). Despite these findings, rates of ADHD and CD comorbidity among adolescent female offenders have not been well documented.

Table 7.1 Prevalence and specific comorbidity rates in the GAP sample ($N = 141$)

	ADHD	CD	MDD	GAD
ADHD	40.2%	–	–	–
CD	34.7%	86.9%	–	–
MDD	12.5%	22.6%	24.5%	–
GAD	8%	12.4%	8.2%	13.9%

Note: Prevalence rates of each disorder are listed along the main diagonal. Specific comorbidities are listed on the off-diagonals. *ADHD* Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; *CD* conduct disorder; *MDD* major depressive disorder, includes those criteria for a current major depressive episode or major depressive disorder; *GAD* generalized anxiety disorder, includes those who met *DSM-IV* criteria for lifetime occurrence of GAD

In our sample, 34.7% of female juvenile offenders met criteria for both ADHD and CD. Currently, longitudinal research with this sample of adolescent female offenders is investigating whether ADHD serves as a marker of poor prognosis with CD as they enter into young adulthood.

Epidemiological studies suggest high rates of comorbidity between externalizing and internalizing disorders throughout the lifespan for females in the general population (Angold and Costello 1993; Moffitt et al. 2001; Zoccolillo 1992). Female juvenile offenders evidence higher rates of internalizing disorders when compared to males (Kataoka et al. 2001; Pliszka et al. 2000; Teplin et al. 2002; Ulzen and Hamilton 1998). It is important to understand the co-occurrence of internalizing disorders and externalizing disorders for two main reasons: (1) because of the strong association between depression and suicidal behavior, particularly among incarcerated young females (Goldstein et al. 2003); and (2) to target best treatment approaches for incarcerated females by better understanding the specific etiology of comorbid disorders compared to single disorders (Aalsma and Lapsley 2001; Odgers et al. 2005).

In our sample, depression (e.g., MDD and/or an MDE) was comorbid with multiple externalizing disorders including CD (22.6%), ADHD (12.5%), and SUD (12.9%). Although these rates are cause for concern, they are lower than those reported in previous studies using MDD (Abram et al. 2003; Pliszka et al. 2000). Further, our sample evidenced lower rates of comorbidity between depression and anxiety (8.2%), as compared with estimates in normative (Angold et al. 1999) and incarcerated samples (Abram et al. 2003). This lower rate is surprising given the strong association typically found between depression and anxiety (Angold et al. 1999; Kessler et al. 1999). However, our study only measured GAD, whereas the previously mentioned studies of incarcerated populations examined comorbidity between depression and multiple anxiety disorders. Further, our MDD and GAD diagnoses were based upon meeting strict impairment criteria, which may have produced artificially low estimates.

Research is mixed regarding whether antisocial behavior and anxiety go hand in hand. Some researchers suggest that incarcerated populations experience higher rates of anxiety as a result of their incarceration (Ulzen and Hamilton 1998), implying that anxiety is a byproduct of the incarceration experience vs. an independent

mental health disorder. Further support for this supposition are findings showing no relationship (Vermeiren et al. 2002) or even a negative relationship (Angold and Costello 1993) between CD and anxiety. In contrast, a significant positive relationship between anxiety and antisocial disorder was found in two large community samples (Sareen et al. 2004), indicating that anxiety and antisocial disorders may share underlying mechanisms.

Interestingly, most girls (81.0%) in our sample who met criteria for GAD reported anxiety symptoms before the age of 13, suggesting that anxiety may not be a direct consequence of incarceration. Further, a relationship between the age of incarceration and the number of anxiety symptoms was not evident. GAD was found to be comorbid with CD (12.4%), ADHD (8%), and SUD (6.5%). Taken together, our findings indicate that GAD may be a unique but important vulnerability in the development of female juvenile problem behaviors rather than a byproduct of incarceration and as such warrants further study.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the current chapter suggests three major take-home messages. First, mental health problems among adolescent female offenders are both complex and pervasive. Nearly all (92.9%) of the girls in the GAP sample met criteria for at least one externalizing disorder, and 33.3% met criteria for at least one internalizing disorder. Second, comorbidity within our sample was very high, and was not an artifact of the high rates of CD. One-third of female juvenile offenders met criteria for two or more mental health disorders even when excluding CD, suggesting severe mental health impairment. Future research should investigate whether various types of comorbidity predict poor outcomes for juvenile female offenders as they enter young adulthood. Third, further research aimed at identifying and treating markers of poor mental health prognosis among female juvenile offenders is needed. Our research team is currently working to identify the factors in adolescence that places these young women at high risk for mental health problems during the transition to adulthood. Current work from our group includes investigations into the risk effects of a wide range of variables, including background experiences such as attachment quality, childhood adversity, and neighborhood instability; interpersonal characteristics such as rejection sensitivity and callous-unemotionality; and adolescent behavior disorders such as ADHD and CD.

In the meantime, how can the juvenile justice system best address the mental health needs of adolescent females in its care? Experts in mental health and juvenile justice have made the following recommendations (see Grisso 2004). First, systematic screening for mental disorders is essential, as the research outlined above suggests that adolescent females are perhaps the most psychiatrically impaired population in the juvenile justice system. Screening should be done continually throughout the adolescent's stay, not just upon entry into the juvenile facility, as adolescents are known to be "moving targets" whose symptom profiles rapidly

change in accordance with developmental transitions (Grisso 2004). Second, trained clinical staff are needed in order to (1) accurately identify both immediate and long-term treatment needs, and (2) appropriately address the complex and diverse treatment issues presented by this group. However, many juvenile justice facilities simply do not have the staff and/or resources necessary to address the treatment needs identified among incarcerated females in their care (Vermeiren et al. 2006). Thus, many of those needing treatment for mental health problems do not receive it (Teplin et al. 2002). Collaboration between juvenile justice and community mental health systems may be a necessity, in order to supply sufficient numbers of clinical professionals who can effectively address the treatment needs of incarcerated adolescent female populations. Third, treatment provision should continue after release. In order to maintain treatment gains made in the juvenile justice facility, empirically supported aftercare programs are necessary to facilitate these high-risk adolescent females' successful reentry into the community.

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Chapter 8
Trauma and Girls' Delinquency

Patricia K. Kerig and Stephen P. Becker

With US arrest rates for violent crime rising among adolescent girls, there is an increased sense of urgency about the need to better understand girls' delinquency (Tracy et al. 2009; Wolf and Kempf-Leonard 2009). Recent thinking about girls involved in the juvenile justice system has focused on the role of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as precipitants of delinquency that are particularly salient for girls (e.g., Acoca 1998; Bloom et al. 2002; Chamberlain and Moore 2002; Graziano and Wagner 2011; Kerig 2011, in press). In this chapter, we set out to evaluate the state of the science in regard to the relations between trauma and delinquency. Along the way, we encountered many challenges – definitional, methodological, and conceptual – some expected findings, and some unexpected ones. To organize our review, we set for ourselves the task of addressing three questions: *Why* might PTSD be implicated specifically in girls' delinquency; What is the *evidence* for a differential role of PTSD in girls' delinquency; and What *mechanisms* might account for the association between PTSD and delinquency among girls? In keeping with the theme of this volume, we defined delinquency as involvement in the legal system, and thus focused our literature review on those "deep end" (Cauffman 2008) youth found in detention settings and juvenile justice samples.

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Why Might PTSD Be Particularly Important for Understanding Girls' Delinquency?

One reason to hypothesize that PTSD is differentially related to girls' delinquency is that PTSD, in general, is a gender-linked disorder. Across samples and ages, a well-replicated finding is that women and girls are more likely to be diagnosed with PTSD than men and boys, even in the context of exposure to the same traumatic event (Tolin and Foa 2006). However, it is difficult to determine whether this gender difference reflects an underlying vulnerability to the development of PTSD among females, or whether this result is attributable to a gender-related response bias; for example, males may be less willing than females to endorse symptoms of distress and anxiety due to their incompatibility with the masculine gender role (Saxe and Wolfe 1999). Further research will be needed to resolve the question of whether gender disparities in PTSD are a result of true differences in symptoms levels versus under-reporting by males.

Another reason PTSD may be of particular concern in the study of girls' delinquency is that girls may be exposed to more, or to different kinds of, trauma than boys. For example, delinquent girls may be more likely than boys to experience interpersonal traumas, which are those involving direct victimization in the context of a personal relationship (e.g., Cauffman et al. 1998; Herrera and McCloskey 2003; Kerig et al. 2009, 2010). Interpersonal traumas are differentially associated with the development of PTSD (Ozer et al. 2003), perhaps because of the element of betrayal involved when a relationship that should be a source of safety instead becomes a source of threat (Freyd 1996). In addition, some research suggests that girls are more strongly affected by interpersonal stressors, especially those that occur in the context of the family (Lewis et al. 1991). The family lives of juvenile justice-involved girls have been described as even more rife with conflict, instability, and parent psychopathology than those of boys (Bloom et al. 2002; Chesney-Lind and Sheldon 1998; Dixon et al. 2004; Lederman et al. 2004). For example, delinquent girls in Chamberlain and Moore's (2002) sample were four times more likely than boys to have been removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Troubled mother–daughter relationships, in particular, have been implicated in girls' delinquency (Belknap and Holsinger 2006; Henggeler et al. 1987; Kerpelman and Smith-Adcock 2005; Lawrence-Wills 2004). Indeed, some have speculated that the rise in female delinquency is an artifact of harsh, rejecting parents involving an all-too willing legal system in increasing the punishments for girls who engage in even the mildest infractions (Acoca 1999; Feld 2009; Chesney-Lind and Belknap 2004).

A third reason to suspect a differential link between trauma and delinquency for girls relates to gender roles. For example, Zahn-Waxler (1993) has argued that girls who engage in aggressive behavior are demonstrating more significant violations of gender stereotyping than boys, for whom risk-taking and anti-authoritarian behavior are merely exaggerations of the socially accepted masculine role. Therefore, girls who act out in overt and violent ways might be more disturbed than their male counterparts and their behavior may be driven more by emotional distress – such as that

borne of trauma. The idea that girls' delinquency is an enactment of psychological distress is suggested by others in the literature, who point to the fact that girls' arrests often are a matter of status offenses – such as running away, substance abuse, and risky sexual activity – or of "mutually combative" exchanges between themselves and their parents (Chesney-Lind and Belknap 2004), behaviors which arise as a function of the very abuse they experience at home (Acoca 1998; Anda et al. 2006; Hoyt and Scherer 1998; Widom and Kuhns 1996; Wright et al. 2004). As Dembo and colleagues (1995) suggest, "girls' problem behavior commonly relates to an abusive and traumatizing home life, whereas boys' law violating behavior reflects their involvement in a delinquent life style" (p. 21).

Is PTSD More Prevalent Among Juvenile Justice-Involved Girls?

Our review of the literature yielded 14 studies that have assessed prevalence rates of PTSD among youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Although we searched specifically for studies of detained youth, we also included two studies of large, representative community samples that provided measures of both PTSD and delinquency. As shown in the summary provided in Table 8.1, prevalence rates for a diagnosis of Full PTSD range from a low of 5% to a high of 52% for girls and from a low of 2.2% to a high of 32% for boys. Among studies of girls, two found prevalence rates lower than 10%, five found prevalence rates between 10 and 20%, and five found prevalence rates between 30 and 52%.

Among the 11 studies we located that included both genders, three found no differences in the prevalence rates for boys and girls. Abram and colleagues (2004) administered a structured diagnostic interview to a sample of 898 detainees in a large, short-term juvenile detention center and found that a slightly higher percentage of girls met criteria for PTSD than boys (approximately 15 and 11%, respectively), a difference that was not statistically significant. Similarly, McCabe and colleagues (2002) utilized the same diagnostic interview with a sample of 625 adjudicated adolescents. Although girls met criteria for a diagnosis of PTSD at rates three times as high as for boys (7.1 and 2.2%, respectively), this difference also failed to reach statistical significance. Finally, Ford et al. (2008) administered a self-report questionnaire to a sample of 264 youth in a pretrial detention center. Only 5% met criteria for a PTSD diagnosis and, although exact percentages were not provided, the authors report that the prevalence rates did not differ by gender.

In contrast, gender differences were found in eight studies: six that examined prevalence rates for the PTSD diagnosis and two that focused on symptoms rather than diagnostic status. In each of these studies, girls were more likely to demonstrate symptoms than were boys. For example, Cauffman and colleagues (1998) found that, among 189 detained youth, almost two-thirds of detained girls met criteria for a lifetime diagnosis of PTSD on a structured diagnostic interview, when compared with one-third of the boys; a further 50% of girls and 32% of boys met criteria for current PTSD. These rates are very similar to those found by Kerig and colleagues (2009, 2010) and Wood and colleagues (2002) who found in their samples that

Table 8.1 Studies of PTSD and delinquency in juvenile justice-involved samples

	Sample			Measures used		Findings		
Authors	*N*	Age range	Setting	PTSD	Delinquency	Exposure to trauma	PTSD	Links to delinquency
Girls only								
Dixon et al. (2004)	100 girls (48% Aboriginal; 33% White; 12% Polynesian/ Maori; 6% Asian; 1% African)	13.5–19	Detained youth (length unspecified), matched comparison	Semistructured interview: K-SADS-PL	Juvenile justice records	Offenders had significantly more exposure to adverse life experiences than nonoffenders	Offenders: Overall 37% (20% current, 17% lifetime) Nonoffenders: Overall 4% (1% Current, 3% Lifetime)	Exposure to three or more adverse life experiences significantly increased likelihood of offending
Dixon et al. (2005)	100 girls (48% Aboriginal; 33% White; 12% Polynesian/ Maori; 6% Asian; 1% African)	13.5–19	Detained youth in Australia (length unspecified)	Semistructured interview: K-SADS-PL	Juvenile justice records	Witnessed violence (70%), traumatic news (66%), personal victimization (50%), physical abuse (49%)	Overall 37% (20% current, 17% lifetime) Sexual abuse "over-whelming precipitant" (70%).	–
Smith et al. (2006)	88 girls (74% White; 12% Native; 9% Latina; 2% Black; 2% Multiracial; 1% Asian)	13–17	Court mandated to out-of-home placement	Structured interview: DISC	Court records	76% self-reported sexual abuse, 93% had documented physical or sexual abuse	16% Full, 46% partial	Strongest predictors of delinquency were measures of traumatic experiences, not PTSD

Ariga et al. (2008)	64 girls (100% Japanese)	16–19	Juvenile detention center in Japan (length unspecified)	Structured interview: CAPS; MINI-kid	Structured interview: diagnosis of conduct disorder	Sexual abuse most frequently reported (54.7%), followed by being a victim of violence (45.3%)	32.8%	Girls with PTSD had significantly higher comorbidity with other disorders, including conduct disorder
Chu et al. (2009)	79 girls (51% Chinese; 38% Malay)	11–19	Female residential facility in Singapore	Self-report: TSCC	Self-report: YSR	66% reported either physical or sexual abuse. 24% reported both physical and sexual abuse	Girls who reported both physical and sexual abuse had highest levels of posttraumatic symptomatology	Girls who reported both physical and sexual abuse had the highest scores on delinquency scale
Boys and Girls								
Cauffman et al. (1998)	96 girls (29% Latina; 23% White; 21% Black; 12% Biracial; 4% Asian); 93 boys (27% Latino; 30% White; 38% Black)	13–22	Long-term detention facility	Semistructured interview: RPDI	–	Boys more often observers of violence; girls more often direct victims	Girls: 65.3% Lifetime, 48.9% full, 1.7% partial Boys: 32.3% full, 19.4% partial	–

(continued)

Table 8.1 (continued)

	Sample			Measures used		Findings		
Authors	*N*	Age range	Setting	PTSD	Delinquency	Exposure to trauma	PTSD	Links to delinquency
McCabe et al. (2002)	112 girls 513 boys (30.4% Latino; 29.0% White; 19.2% Black; 12.3% Asian; 9.1% Biracial/ other)	*M* = 16.2	Adjudicated youth	Structured interview: DISC-IV anxiety disorders module	–	Girls experienced more emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and physical neglect	7.1% of girls and 2.2% of boys met criteria for PTSD diagnosis (difference not statistically significant)	Girls more likely than boys to meet criteria for a *DSM-IV* diagnosis, including disruptive behavior disorders
Wood et al. (2002)	100 girls 100 boys (50% Black; 50% Latino)	*M* = 16	Youth in detention and probation camps (length unspecified)	Self-report: LASC PTS symptoma-tology scale	Juvenile court records Self-report: gang affiliation, Gun Possession Scale	Boys reported higher levels of community violence exposure; girls reported higher levels of physical punishment and sexual abuse	Girls: 52% Boys: 28% Physical abuse, sexual abuse, community violence most predictive of PTSD for girls, community violence for boys	For girls, exposure to physical punishment associated with gun possession and use. For both genders, community violence related to gang-involvement and gun use

Abram et al. (2004)	366 girls 532 boys (54.6% Black; 28.1% Latino; 17.1% White)	10–18	Short-term detention facility	Structured interview: DISC-IV	–	93.2% boys and 84% girls reported traumatic experience; Boys reported more accidents and girls more sexual abuse	11.2% of total sample Girls: 14.7%; Boys: 10.9% (not a significant gender difference) For girls, PTSD predicted by fearing harm to another; for boys, by witnessing violence	–
Yoshinaga et al. (2004)	8 girls 40 boys (predominantly Japanese, with 22 "foreigners")	14–19	Youth in short-term detention center in Japan	Structured interview: CAPS	–	36% of boys and 36% of girls had experienced a trauma that met DSM-IV Criterion A Boys reported more physical assaults, girls reported more unwanted sexual experiences	Girls: 75% lifetime (50% full, 25% partial); 0% current Boys: 25% lifetime (8% full, 15% partial); 10% current (8% full, 2% partial)	–

(continued)

Table 8.1 (continued)

	Sample			Measures used		Findings		
Authors	*N*	Age range	Setting	PTSD	Delinquency	Exposure to trauma	PTSD	Links to delinquency
Lawyer et al. (2006)	1,904 girls 2,002 boys (72% White; 15% Black; 8% Latino; 4% Native American; 1% Asian)	12–17	Nationally representative sample	Structured telephone interview: Modified NWS PTSD Module	Structured telephone interview: 7 items	Girls reported more sexual assaults than boys (13.2% vs. 3.5% of boys); boys reported more physical assaults than girls (21.6% vs. 13.4%)	20.3% of sexually assaulted and 15.1% of physically assaulted youth met criteria for PTSD diagnosis (gender differences not examined) Girls at higher risk than boys for PTSD in past 6 months	Sexually assaulted youth at higher risk for delinquency; Male gender, witnessing violence, and experiencing physical assault associated with higher likelihood of committing delinquent act

Broman-Fulks et al. (2007)	251 girls 70 boys (national household probability sample, not specified as to race)	*M* = 15.2	Stratified national sample with an oversampling of inner-city youth	Structured telephone interview: Modified NWS PTSD Module	Structured telephone interview: SRD	65.8% reported sexual assault, with a mean age of onset of 11.2 years; 31.7% had not disclosed the assault prior to the interview	Lower prevalence of PTSD among youth who disclosed to mother than those who disclosed to someone else or did not disclose (gender differences not examined)	Nondisclosing youth twice as likely to commit offenses than disclosing youth; Male gender, experiencing multiple events, and non-familial perpetrator associated with increased delinquency
Martin et al. (2008)	143 girls 220 boys (58% Black; 34% White; 4% Latino)	10–16	Detention center (varying lengths of stay)	Interview: TSCC	Official records of charges	Girls reported more physical abuse (45%) and sexual abuse (27%) than boys (15% and 6%, respectively)	30% of girls and 20% of boys had clinically elevated scores on posttraumatic stress symptom scale	More girls than boys charged with violent crimes s, including domestic violence; girls had fewer repeat arrests than boys

(continued)

Table 8.1 (continued)

	Sample			Measures used		Findings		
Authors	*N*	Age range	Setting	PTSD	Delinquency	Exposure to trauma	PTSD	Links to delinquency
Ford et al. (2008)	71 girls 193 boys (43% Black; 30% Latino/ Latino; 27% White)	10–17	Pre-trial detention center	Self-report: UCLA PTSD-RI	–	61% met DSM-IV Criterion A for exposure to psychological trauma; girls more likely than boys to report sexual abuse and neglect	Overall: 5% full and 14% partial No gender difference in prevalence of PTSD, although girls reported higher levels of posttraumatic symptoms	–
Kerig et al. (2009)	90 girls 199 boys (69% White; 22% Black; 4% Latino; 4% Multiracial; 2% Native/ Pacific Islander)	10–17	Short-term detention center	Structured interview: UCLA PTSD-RI	–	Boys exposed more to community violence or harm to loved one; girls experienced more sexual abuse and domestic violence	Girls: 45% full, 21% partial Boys: 26% full, 21% partial Girls scored higher than boys on both simple and complex PTSD	–
Ford et al. (2010)	1,625 girls, 1,725 boys; 70% White, 15% African American, 8% Latino, 7% other	12–17	Nationally representative sample	Structured interview; Diagnostic Interview Schedule	Computer-assisted telephone interview questions	Girls more likely than boys to be poly-victimized	Rates not reported	Male gender and poly-victimization associated with delinquency

Kerig et al. (in press)	185 girls 462 boys (68% White; 24% Black; 3% Latino; 3% Multiracial; 2% American Indian)	10–17	Short-term detention center	Structured interview: UCLA PTSD-RI	–	Girls higher than boys on total and interpersonal, trauma exposure	Girls: 27.6% full, 18.4% partial Boys: 13.63% full, 14.1% partial Girls scored higher than boys on all PTSD symptom scales	–
Kerig et al. (2010)	161 girls, 337 boys	12–17	Short-term detention center	Structured interview: UCLA PTSD-RI	–	85.1% of girls and 72% of boys reported event that met DSM-IV Criterion A	Girls: 60.6% full, 24.8% partial Boys: 44.9% full; 27.6% partial	–
Becker et al. (in press)	170 girls, 417 boys	10–17	Short-term detention center	Structured interview: UCLA PTSD-RI; MAYSI-2	Recidivism: Readmissions to detention center over 2 years	–	–	Young, female, African-American youth with PTSD most likely to recidivate

Note. *CAPS* Clinician Administered PTSD Scale, *DISC-IV* Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children, Version IV; *LASC* Los Angeles Symptom Checklist, *MAYSI-2* Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument, *MINI-kid* Mini-International Neuropsychiatric Interview for Children and Adolescents, *NWS* National Women's Study, *PTSD-RI* Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Reaction Index, *RPDI* Revised Psychiatric Diagnostic Interview, *SRD* Self-Report of Delinquency Scale, *TSCC* Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children, *YSR* Youth Self-Report

approximately half of the girls and one-third of the boys met criteria for current PTSD. In turn, Yoshinaga and colleagues (2004) found that, in a sample of Japanese detained youth, 50% of the girls and 8% of the boys also met criteria for lifetime PTSD. Finally, although Ford and colleagues (2008) did not find differential rates for the PTSD diagnosis, girls in their sample evidenced higher levels of posttraumatic symptomatology than boys, and almost twice as many girls than boys demonstrated elevated levels of PTSD symptoms. These proportions are similar to those of Martin and colleagues (2008) who reported that significantly more girls (30%) than boys (20%) reported elevated rates of posttraumatic symptoms.

Taken together, the bulk of the literature provides evidence in support of the proposition that girls in the juvenile justice system are more likely than males to exhibit symptoms of PTSD. Although the results are not entirely consistent, in no study did boys' rates exceed those of girls. But what is most striking about these results are the extremely large discrepancies in prevalence rates of PTSD across studies. Why do the rates vary so widely? There are several methodological reasons why this might be so:

Inconsistencies in the samples used. What comprises a "delinquent" sample varies significantly across studies. Delinquency in some studies is defined by legal involvement or incarceration, whereas in other studies, it is operationalized by high scores on a measure of antisocial behavior or by a diagnosis of conduct disorder. Although the terms delinquency, antisocial behavior, and conduct disorder often are used synonymously, they have distinct correlates and likely have different causes (Tremblay 2003). Community youth who engage in misbehavior may differ in important ways from youth in the "deep end" of the juvenile justice system (Cauffman 2008). By a similar token, among detained youth, samples also differ in ways that are not clearly explicated. For example, youth in short-term detention awaiting adjudication may comprise a quite different population from those who have been sentenced to incarceration in longer-term facilities. Whereas the former group may include youth who are first-time, minor offenders, the latter group may include youth who are more entrenched in an antisocial lifestyle, perhaps because of the very fact that they have experienced more adversity in their lives. Samples also vary widely in the number of girls included; whereas older studies include a relatively low population of girls in detention settings, rises in rates of girls' arrests will contribute, unfortunately, to an increasing proportion of girls in more recently gathered samples. Samples also vary in their representation of specific ethnic groups, although there were no discernable consistent patterns that would seem to provide an explanation for the discrepant findings regarding the prevalence of PTSD.

Inconsistent definitions of PTSD. How PTSD and trauma are defined and operationalized vary widely across studies. Some studies utilize measures that assess the DSM-IV criteria for a diagnosis of PTSD; however, among these, reporting is inconsistent regarding current versus lifetime presence of the disorder or Full versus Partial PTSD. Other investigators obtain ratings of posttraumatic symptoms that may or may not be representative of the disorder. Yet another group of studies use a more loosely defined concept of "trauma" by assessing youth's exposure to adverse life events such as sexual abuse or exposure to community violence. However, aversive

events do not necessarily meet the formal definition of trauma, and exposure to such events does not inevitably result in a traumatized reaction. In fact, meta-analyses show that on average only 36% of children exposed to a traumatic event will go on to display symptoms of posttraumatic stress (Fletcher 2003). In studies of detained youth, from 36 to 81.5% report exposure to a traumatic event, whereas only between 5 and 50% report symptoms consistent with a diagnosis of PTSD (Ford et al. 2008; Kerig et al. 2009; Yoshinaga et al. 2004).

Whether these statistics represent a true low prevalence rate of PTSD among youth who have experienced traumatic events, or whether this finding is an artifact of problems in the definition of PTSD and detection of it sequelae, is the subject of several debates in the literature. First, regarding the definition of trauma in the DSM-IV (American Psychiatric Association 2000), Criterion A1 calls for the event to be one that involves "actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others" (p. 467); thus, emotionally distressing experiences that may be termed "traumatic," such as psychological abuse, do not necessarily meet the DSM definition of trauma. In addition, Criterion A2 requires a subjective response of "intense fear, helplessness, or horror" (p. 467); thus, a youth who was maltreated but did not perceive the event to be terrifying would not meet this criterion for a diagnosis of PTSD. However, chronic, pervasive, insidious stressors not associated with outright terror, such as emotional abuse, are known to affect children's development in significant ways (van der Kolk 2005). Thus, the wisdom of limiting the view of PTSD only to events that meet Criterion A has been called into question (Bovin and Marx 2010), particularly for the diagnosis of children and adolescents (Nader 2008). Lastly, the diagnosis of PTSD requires not only the experiencing of a traumatic event, but also the development of symptoms in each of three clusters: avoidance, arousal, and reexperiencing (Criteria B, C, and D); consequently, a youth who did not subsequently experience all three types of PTSD symptoms also would not meet the criteria for a PTSD diagnosis. However, traumatized youth frequently have reactions that only partially reflect these diagnostic criteria and yet are significant enough to interfere with functioning (Cohen and Scheeringa 2009). Recent debates in the field reflect concerns with these definitions and criteria for the PTSD diagnosis, and the call has been made for DSM-V to revisit these issues (Brewin et al. 2009).

It also will be important to continue examining data from detained samples to determine whether the gender differences found are a result of response styles that reflect an underreporting of PTSD symptoms by males. In this regard, it is noteworthy that Yoshinaga et al. (2004) reported that 36% of both boys and girls reported experiencing an event that met the formal DSM criteria but, among those youth, only 25% of the boys reported symptoms of PTSD in comparison to 75% of the girls. For this chapter, we also looked for these patterns in our current dataset of over 600 detained youth: in our sample, over 70% of both boys and girls reported a Criterion A trauma. Of those, only 44.9% of boys reported symptoms of PTSD as compared with 61% of girls, a statistically significant difference, χ^2 (3) = 1.121, $p < 0.05$. Another strategy for investigating this question would be to attend more carefully to the two facets of Criterion A: the experiencing of a horrible event (A1) and a

subjective response of horror (A2). If males are less likely than females to acknowledge terror in the face of an event that commonly would be perceived as terrifying – that is, if males are less likely to endorse Criterion A2 after experiencing an event that meets the DSM-IV definition of trauma as per Criterion A1 – this may lend credibility to the idea that males underreport PTSD due to the adoption of stoic response style that downplays the impact of significant events and minimizes the presence of symptoms. Should it turn out to be the case that response style explains the gender difference in the prevalence of PTSD, an important implication for researchers to consider would be that the use of self-report of symptoms alone might provide an insensitive and inaccurate method for detecting PTSD in males.

Inconsistency of measures and methods. Even when the formal DSM-IV criteria are used, the methods and measures used to assess PTSD vary widely, ranging from self-reports, caregiver-reports, social worker ratings, and diagnostic interviews. Measures such as the PTSD-RI provide different cut-off scores depending on whether the measure is used liberally as a screening tool (e.g., Kerig et al. 2010) or more restrictively as an instrument to determine eligibility for a mental health referral (e.g., Kerig et al. in press). It is striking that even studies using the same measure and cut-off score obtain quite discrepant results depending on whether the measure was administered as a clinical interview (e.g., Kerig et al. in press) or as a self-report questionnaire (e.g., Ford et al. 2008). Although more time-consuming to administer than questionnaires, clinician-administered structured interviews generally are considered to be the "gold standard" for the diagnosis of PTSD (Weathers 2004), given that they provide opportunities for the interviewer to clarify questions, follow up with greater specificity when needed, and ensure that diagnostic criteria are confirmed as met or not according to the formal definitions rather than through idiosyncratic interpretations of the questions asked. For example, several of the youth in our detained samples would have failed to meet Criterion A had they been given a self-report measure of traumatic experiences that inquired about experiences of "rape" (e.g., Grisso and Barnum 2003) simply because they did not label with this term unwanted experiences involving alcohol-facilitated assaults, molestations at the hand of relatives, or gang-related initiations. Similarly, we have encountered many youth who put on a "tough front" and initially deny having been affected by a traumatic event only to go on to endorse significant numbers of symptoms as the interview progresses. In addition, given low rates of literacy among detained youth, interviews have another decided advantage over paper-and-pencil measures which could be misread or misinterpreted by youth with poor reading skills. Clinical interviews also provide for an additional level of protection of participants' psychological wellbeing, allowing a trained interviewer to gauge a youth's affect so as to sensitively and appropriately provide a break from the task, debriefing, or intervention when needed. Nonetheless, despite the relative strengths of interview methods, it needs to be acknowledged that even studies using structured diagnostic interviews obtain widely discrepant prevalence rates of PTSD. Clearly, future research will benefit from the use of multiple measures from multiple perspectives, something that we have not yet seen in any of the published studies on PTSD among delinquent youth.

Summary. Studies that have examined PTSD among delinquent youth have differed in their samples, their methodology, and, not surprisingly, their findings. Due to the use of different samples, measurement tools, and inconsistencies in the reporting of full, partial, current, or lifetime diagnostic status, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the prevalence of PTSD among delinquent youth. Although detained girls generally demonstrate the highest rates of PTSD, it is clear that delinquent boys experience high rates of PTSD compared with community samples of adolescents, where the prevalence rates are approximately 3% for girls and 1% for boys (Cuffe et al. 1998). For both genders, therefore, the role of PTSD in juvenile delinquency appears to be a critical area for future research, prevention, and intervention.

Is Trauma A *Differential* Risk Factor for Girls' Delinquency?

We next reviewed the available research evidence in support of the proposition that trauma is a risk factor for delinquency that is particularly potent for girls. Among the studies of PTSD among detained youth summarized in Table 8.1, only one is longitudinal and, because the samples are composed of delinquent youth, many do not include a measure of delinquency – thus this literature is limited in its ability to shed light on this question. Therefore, we expanded our search of the literature to include studies of incarcerated youth that focus not on PTSD per se, but on whether youth have experienced events that are presumed to be traumagenic (i.e., maltreatment and community violence). Nine cross-sectional studies and ten prospective longitudinal studies were found that examined the relationship between adverse events and delinquency in juvenile justice-involved samples.

Exposure to adverse events. First, we examined the rates of exposure to adverse events. Studies of detained girls only find high rates of exposure to maltreatment and violence. For example, Chamberlain and Moore (2002) report that 93% of a sample of 42 girls mandated to out-of-home treatment had undergone a terrifying experience in the past year: 67% had been attacked or beaten, 40% had been forced to engage in a sexual act, 26% had been in a car accident, and 14% had experienced a natural disaster. In a subsequent study, Smith et al. (2006) found that sexual abuse was reported by 76% of a sample of 88 girls drawn from this same population. Ariga and colleagues (2008) found that over half of the girls in juvenile detention had experienced sexual abuse and 45% had been a victim of another form of violence. Acoca's (1998) data from the California Girls' Study revealed that 81% had experienced one or more form of physical or sexual abuse, and 25% had been neglected. Nearly one-third had been kicked out of their homes during their early teens – in most cases by their own mothers. Rates of maltreatment for detained youth also may vary by ethnicity, with higher rates of physical and sexual abuse reported by White girls in a long-term juvenile facility (90 and 62%, respectively) when compared with their African-American peers (70 and 46%; Holsinger and Holsinger 2005).

Among the studies that have compared rates of exposure by gender, Belknap and Holsinger (2006), Kerig et al. (2010, in press), Martin et al. (2008), McCabe et al. (2002), and Stewart et al. (2008) found that girls had experienced more of all forms of abuse than boys. In addition, Ford et al. (2010) found that girls in the National Survey of Adolescents were more likely than boys to have experienced multiple forms of maltreatment (i.e., poly-victimization). Other investigators find that delinquent girls have experienced higher rates of physical abuse than their male peers (Dembo et al. 2007; Johansson and Kempf-Leonard 2009; Martin et al. 2008; McCabe et al. 2002; Roe-Sepowitz 2009). McCabe et al. (2002) also found that females were significantly more likely than males to experience emotional abuse and neglect. Although some researchers have not found significant differences in the overall rates of childhood maltreatment for boys and girls (Dembo et al. 1998; Smith and Thornberry 1995; Tyler et al. 2008), these studies have tended to combine various maltreatment categories in ways that might obscure gender differences.

In addition, investigators tend to find that detained girls and boys have experienced *different kinds* of traumatic events: for example, girls are more likely to report being direct victims, whereas boys are more often the witnesses of violence (Cauffman et al. 1998; Kerig et al. 2009, 2010, in press). In other studies, boys more often than girls report experiencing accidents (Abram et al. 2004) or physical assaults (Lawyer et al. 2006; Yoshinaga et al. 2004). However, among all these gender differences, one finding emerges with clear consistency across studies: In every study in which sexual abuse or sexual assault is assessed, girls more frequently report being victimized than do boys (Abram et al. 2004; Belknap and Holsinger 2006; Dembo et al. 1998; Ford et al. 2008; Johansson and Kempf-Leonard 2009; Kerig et al. 2009, 2010, in press; Lawyer et al. 2006; McCabe et al. 2002; Tyler et al. 2008; Wood et al. 2002; Yoshinaga et al. 2004). In addition to childhood sexual abuse, between 35 and 50% of detained females report experiencing sexual victimization outside the family (Abram et al. 2004; Dembo et al. 2007; Dixon et al. 2005; Wareham and Dembo 2007). These rates are much higher than those found for male delinquents, although the high prevalence of sexual victimization among male delinquents (approximately 20%; Dembo et al. 1998, 2007) also is concerning.

Relations between trauma and delinquency. Next, we looked for evidence that there are gender differences in the *relations* among trauma, PTSD, and delinquency in juvenile justice-involved samples. Concurrent studies of female-only samples generally find an association between exposure to adversity and delinquent behavior, as do studies including both boys and girls. Among the three studies suggestive of a gender-differentiated link, McCabe and colleagues (2002) found that adjudicated girls were more likely than boys to have experienced all forms of abuse and also were more likely to meet criteria for a diagnosis of a disruptive behavior disorder; Wood and colleagues (2002) found that physical abuse was differentially associated with gun use for girls; and Martin and colleagues (2008) found that girls in detention were more likely than boys to have experienced abuse, to have elevated scores on a measure of PTSD symptoms, and to be charged with violent crimes. However, the results of studies examining concurrent relations between trauma and delinquency are complicated by the fact that boys overall are more likely to engage in

delinquent behavior. For example, Broman-Fulks and colleagues (2007), Ford et al. (2010), and Lawyer et al. (2006) all found that the combination of male gender and multiple forms of maltreatment was associated with the highest likelihood of delinquency.

The handful of prospective longitudinal studies we were able to locate are in a better position to address the question of whether adverse experiences increase the risk for girls' delinquency over time, although none of these directly assessed PTSD. Although Wilson et al. (2009) found only modest longitudinal relations between maltreatment and antisocial behavior in their meta-analysis of studies composed of a wide variety of samples, in the majority of prospective studies of juvenile justice-involved youth uncovered in our review, maltreatment and exposure to violence were predictive of delinquency (Cernkovich et al. 2008; Feiring et al. 2007; Lansford et al. 2007; Mersky and Reynolds 2007; Smith and Thornberry 1995; Stewart et al. 2008; Tyler et al. 2008; Widom et al. 2006; Widom and White 1997). For example, Cernkovich et al. (2008) found that, among 127 detained girls, those who reported having been physically or sexually abused when aged 13–21 were more likely to engage in antisocial behavior 13 years later. However, among the studies that included both genders and tested for gender differences, only one suggested that maltreatment is a stronger predictor of delinquent behavior for girls than boys. In a prospective cohort study of 1,190 youth, Widom and White (1997) found that, whereas all youth who had experienced abuse or maltreatment were at increased risk for arrest for a non-violent crime when compared with controls, only maltreated girls were at increased risk for being arrested for a *violent* crime. Although other studies show differences by gender, these tend to be more qualitative than quantitative: for example, Widom et al. (2006) found that the effects of maltreatment were direct for boys but were mediated by alcohol abuse for girls; Mersky and Reynolds (2007) found that maltreatment was associated with somewhat different offenses for girls than boys (i.e., having a violent petition); and Tyler et al. (2008) found that different forms of child maltreatment were better predictors of delinquency for each gender (i.e., neglect for boys and physical abuse for girls).

PTSD as a mechanism of effect. The question of whether PTSD comprises a mechanism by which exposure to trauma leads to antisocial behavior in boys and girls has been tested directly in very few empirical studies, only one of which is longitudinal. For example, Becker and colleagues (in press) found that PTSD, in conjunction with young age and African-American ethnicity, increased the risk of recidivism over the course of 2 years for detained girls but not for boys. The remainder of the studies published to date are cross-sectional. Wood et al. (2002) found that maltreatment was related to PTSD, and PTSD was related to delinquency, but the interrelations among these variables were not investigated. Ford et al. (2010) found that poly-victimization was associated with an increased likelihood of PTSD and delinquency, but that the association between victimization and delinquency was not accounted for by PTSD. In contrast, Kerig and colleagues (2009) formally tested for mediation in samples of detained boys and girls and found that PTSD mediated the association between trauma exposure and internalizing symptoms for girls but mediated the associations between trauma and both internalizing and externalizing

for boys. Similarly, using a community sample of urban adolescents, Ruchkin and colleagues (2007) found that PTSD partially mediated the relation between exposure to violence and violent behavior – but only for boys; for girls, PTSD was a mediator of the association between violence exposure and internalizing symptoms. In a subsequent study, Kerig et al. (in press) found that PTSD symptom clusters mediated the relations between trauma and mental health in gender-differentiated ways with, for girls only, symptoms of reexperiencing and avoidance acting as mediators of internalizing.

Summary. Although many studies show that detained girls have been exposed to more adverse events overall than boys, others do not. Instead, a very consistent finding across studies is that girls have experienced more sexual abuse than boys. Among the cross-sectional and longitudinal studies we located, there is consistent evidence for a association between maltreatment and delinquency for both juvenile justice-involved youth. However, few studies actually have addressed the question whether the relation between trauma and delinquent behavior is moderated by gender, and therefore the jury must be considered still to be out on this charge.

What Mechanisms Might Account for an Association Between Trauma and Girls' Delinquency?

Given that PTSD is a disorder in the anxiety spectrum, it is intriguing to consider how an internalizing disorder might lead to externalizing in youth – particularly for girls, who generally are more likely than boys to react to traumatic events with internalizing rather than externalizing problems (Gorman-Smith and Tolan 1998; Jenkins and Bell 1994). Several mechanisms have been suggested, although evidence supporting these models is only beginning to emerge (Kerig and Becker 2010).

Trauma coping model. One integrative model is that proposed by Ford and colleagues (2006), who posit that antisocial behavior comprises a means of coping with the overwhelming assault to the self that comprises trauma. In an attempt to gain a sense of control and redress the injustice of their maltreatment, traumatized youth may adopt a "survival coping" mode in which outwardly expressed defiance and callousness mask an inner sense of hopelessness, shame, and despair. Over time, the unrelenting distress and terror associated with trauma create a heightened sense of alarm that exhausts the individual's resources and interferes with the capacity of the executive functions of the brain to mediate thought, emotion, and behavior. Moreover, if the interpersonal environment does not respond to the youth's distress with care and protection, defiance may give way to desperation and a perceived justification to take any means necessary to defend the self against a hostile world. In this mode, termed "victim coping," the youth exhibits an increasing loss of empathy toward others, depleted ability to regulate affect, rigid cognitive style, and diminished sense of future. Although this model is proposed to be relevant for both genders, the fact noted earlier that girls more often have experienced more traumas within the

context of interpersonal relationships – such as child abuse, parental abandonment, or sexual assault – may perhaps make them especially vulnerable to the development of a victim coping mentality.

Emotion processes. As Horowitz (1993) suggests, PTSD involves a vacillation between dysregulated emotions and attempts to compensate through overcontrol. Emotion dysregulation itself might contribute to the development of delinquent behavior, such as by increasing irritability, oppositionality, and impulsivity (Pappagallo et al. 2004). However, another purported mechanism specifically linking PTSD and juvenile delinquency is the defensive strategy of emotion numbing. Lansford and colleagues (2006) speculated that emotion numbing might act as a "pathological adaptation" (p. 51) which protects the youth from the conscious awareness of overwhelming distress, while at the same time increasing the likelihood that the youth will act it out against others. In a preliminary test of this model in a sample of community youth, Allwood et al. (2011) found that posttrauma numbing of fear was associated with exposure to violence and was predictive of delinquency. A broader construct related to emotion numbing is experiential avoidance, which includes emotional, cognitive, and behavioral efforts to block a traumatic experience from awareness (Hayes et al. 1996). In a sample of detained youth, Zerubavel and colleagues (2009) found that experiential avoidance was highest among those whose traumatic experiences were characterized by betrayal in the context of a personal relationship. Clearly more research is needed to determine whether these emotion regulation strategies provide a possible explanatory mechanism for the prediction of juvenile delinquency.

Cognitive processes. A third set of mechanisms proposed is in the cognitive realm and focuses on the role of attributions of stigmatization and shame in the development of delinquent behavior. Both stigma (the perception of being "damaged goods") and shame (the belief that one's inherent "badness" is responsible for negative events) are internal experiences that arise in the context of traumatic abuse (Finkelhor and Browne 1988), which is all-too common in lives of delinquent youth. Perceived stigma is theorized to contribute to the development of a deviant identity, and, in an attempt to maintain consistency with that negative self-view, draws youth toward engagement in misbehavior and association with antisocial peers (Feiring et al. 2007). Shame, in turn, engenders an uncomfortable internal state that the youth attempts to escape through displacement into anger, which increases the likelihood of aggression toward others. As the literature reviewed in this chapter shows, girls are disproportionately likely to have experienced sexual abuse, a form of trauma that is particularly heavily implicated in the development of stigmatization and shame (Finkelhor and Brown 1988; Freyd 1997); therefore, it is conceivable that these negative cognitions might comprise particularly powerful predictors for female delinquency. In one of the few studies to test these mechanisms of effect, Feiring and colleagues (2007) found that, among 160 youth with histories of child sexual abuse (73% of whom were girls), stigma and shame following from the abuse were related to increased delinquent behavior over the course of 6 years, and this association was mediated by anger and affiliation with deviant peers.

Attachment. A fourth promising integrative model derives from attachment theory, which focuses on how disturbed parent–child relationships become internalized and guide thoughts, feelings, and behavior along maladaptive pathways. According to attachment theorists, the risk factors that contribute to delinquency – particularly violence in the home – affect important underlying developmental processes that are crucial for the formation of healthy individuation and satisfying intimate relationships (Allen et al. 1997; Kerig and Becker 2010). Youth from maltreating homes develop internal working models of relationship that are characterized by insecurity, anxiety, and expectations of hostility and rejection from others (Cicchetti and Howes 1991), expectations that may become self-fulfilling prophecies and thus justify the belief that "the best defense is a good offense." As they emerge into adolescence, youth who have experienced neglect or abuse in the home tend to precociously detach themselves from the family of origin only to form intense but dysfunctional attachments to troubled peers (Wolfe and Wekerle 1997), peers whose influence helps to pull the youth further toward an antisocial lifestyle (Patterson et al. 1998). In short, youth who are unable to develop the kind of trusting and trustworthy relationships that might foster prosocial behavior are at increased risk for not only moving away from others, to use Karen Horney's (1945) terms, but also moving against them. In one promising study of this model drawn from a community sample, Salzinger et al. (2007) found that attachment to parents mediated the association between earlier child abuse and later self-reports of violent delinquency, with the model supported equally well for boys and girls.

Transactional effects. Definitive research on the links among traumatic experiences, PTSD, and delinquency also will need to take a transactional, dynamic approach. The experiential avoidance framework (Hayes et al. 1996) would suggest that some forms of delinquent behavior – such as sexual promiscuity, substance use, or running away – comprise maladaptive strategies for coping with trauma, and thus derive directly from posttraumatic stress. However, even should it prove to be the case that trauma is a catalyst that sets youth on the pathway to delinquency, it also is likely that engagement in a delinquent lifestyle in turn increases youth exposure to traumatic events – whether in the form of unintended byproducts of high-risk behaviors, such as car accidents or drug overdoses; intentional acts perpetrated by antisocial peers, such as physical or sexual assaults; or rituals associated with the antisocial lifestyle itself, such as violent gang initiations. Therefore, a dynamic developmental model must consider the possibility that trauma might lead to engagement in risky behaviors, which increase the likelihood of involvement in the juvenile justice system, thus contributing to further stigmatization and alienation, further fostering the adoption of a delinquent lifestyle/identity/peer group, which in turn increases the risk of exposure to new traumatic events.

In addition, particularly for girls, there is concern that involvement in the juvenile justice system in itself comprises a traumatic stressor. Not only is there concern that the experience of arrest and incarceration itself might trigger posttraumatic reactions in traumatized girls (Hennessy et al. 2004), but Acoca (1998) also provides harrowing descriptions of verbal, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse enduring by girls during

their detention: "the abuses that a majority of girls have experienced in their homes, in their schools, or on the streets are often mirrored and compounded by injuries they later received within the juvenile justice system" (p. 562). The iatrogenic effects of detention, and how those interact particularly with the sequelae of trauma, will be an important topic for further study and clinical attention.

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Part IV
Intervention and Implications for Practice and Policy

Chapter 9
Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care as an Intervention for Juvenile Justice Girls in Out-of-Home Care

Leslie D. Leve, Patricia Chamberlain, Dana K. Smith, and Gordon T. Harold

Overview

In the last decade, service providers are increasingly aware of the need for interventions to address the unique service challenges of girls referred from the juvenile justice system that male-oriented treatments are not particularly well-suited to address (see Part III). The focus of this chapter is on a family-based intervention, Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC; Chamberlain 2003), that was originally developed for males from juvenile justice as an alternative to group and residential care. During the last 15 years, MTFC was adapted to fit the treatment needs of girls and was tested in two continuously run randomized clinical trials. In this chapter, we present (a) an overview of the MTFC model, focusing on modifications made for girls; (b) a description of two studies focused on evaluating the efficacy of MTFC with girls in the juvenile justice system; and (c) a summary of results from the completed trials demonstrating the efficacy of MTFC as compared to treatment in group/residential care (representing services as usual for girls with severe delinquency referred from the juvenile justice system). A range of results are presented, including re-offending rates, time spent in locked settings, self-reported delinquency, and pregnancy rates. Clinical implications for the treatment and prevention of delinquency in girls are discussed.

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Are the Treatment Needs of Girls Unique?

Although there remains controversy over whether there are sex differences in the patterns of development of delinquency (e.g., early vs. late onset subtypes; Leve and Chamberlain 2004; Moffitt and Caspi 2001; Silverthorn and Frick 1999), it is well-documented that girls' needs represent some unique challenges for service providers. For example, in a 1999 examination of the types of problems among youth in juvenile detention facilities, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention found that while girls comprised only approximately 17% of the total detained population, they represented 64% of the runaways, 47% of the truants, and 28% of the curfew violators (Desai et al. 2006). Since that time, girls are the fastest growing segment of the delinquency population in the USA (Zahn et al. 2008; see also Chap. 1).

Work also shows that girls are more likely than their male counterparts to have been a victim of child abuse and to have been placed out of their family homes (Leve and Chamberlain 2005a; see also Chap. 8). Prior work also suggests that girls' families of origin may be more dysfunctional and complex (Henggeler et al. 1987). For example, in our sample of juvenile justice girls, biological parent criminality predicted girls' age of first arrest (Leve and Chamberlain 2004). In that same set of analyses, we found that girls who were subjected to multiple changes in caregivers were first arrested at an earlier age. Family conflict has been found to account for a larger portion of female than male offenses (Zahn et al. 2008). These factors may heighten the risk for later problems with emotion regulation and vulnerability to stressful experiences in interpersonal situations that could contribute to the risk for running away and difficulty maintaining stable relationships with peers and caretaking adults (see Chap. 6, for a discussion of peer relationships and girls' delinquency).

Extant research documents that delinquent girls are at risk for poor adult relationships, early pregnancy, and transmitting a myriad of problems to their offspring. For example, data from a prospective longitudinal study of adolescent girls who were elevated on antisocial behavior or delinquency found that at age 21, compared to their delinquent male counterparts, girls who were delinquent as adolescents were 2.6 times more likely to have cohabited with more than one partner, were more likely to abuse or be abused by their partner, and were 2.8 times more likely to have become a parent. In fact, nearly one-third of girls with conduct disorders had become mothers by age 21. Further, these young women had high rates of social services utilization during the young adult transition and were 2.4 times more likely than their delinquent male counterparts to receive social welfare assistance from multiple government sources (Moffitt et al. 2001). Furthermore, in a 10-year follow-up study, Capaldi (1991) found that mothers who had their first child by age 20 were twice as likely to have children with early starting delinquency (prior to age 14; 35 vs. 18%) compared to mothers who had their first child after age 20, suggesting associations between early motherhood and children's involvement in the correctional system. Together, these findings highlight a myriad of risks associated with female antisocial behavior, including the possible intergenerational transmission of problem behaviors.

Previous research also indicates overlap between developmental risk patterns for female and male delinquents. Such factors include a lack of adult supervision and mentoring, associations with delinquent peers, and a lack of engagement in school (e.g., Eddy and Chamberlain 2000). One challenge is to identify and develop effective interventions that obviate these well-known risks and strengthen youth's skills and resiliency (Leve et al. 2009), while also targeting some of the female-specific treatment needs reviewed above. Numerous treatment models show effectiveness with boys, including MTFC, Multi-Systemic Therapy (Henggeler et al. 2002), and Functional Family Therapy (Alexander et al. 2000). These same treatment targets would logically apply to girls; however, questions remain as to whether treatment adjustments are needed to better speak to the unique problems in delinquent girls.

Basic Components of the MTFC Intervention Model

The MTFC intervention model involves placing youths individually in well-trained and supervised foster homes (see Chamberlain 2003, for a detailed description of MTFC). Close consultation, training, and support of the foster parents form the cornerstone of the MTFC model. Foster parents receive state certification after 20-h of pre-service orientation. Program Supervisors with small caseloads (ten families each) maintain daily contact with MTFC parents to collect data on youth adjustment and to provide ongoing consultation, support, and crisis intervention. The basic components of MTFC include the following: (a) daily (Monday–Friday) telephone contact with MTFC parents using the Parent Daily Report checklist (PDR; Chamberlain and Reid 1987); (b) weekly foster parent group meetings led by the Program Supervisor focused on supervision, training in parenting practices, and support; (c) an individualized behavior management program implemented daily in the home by the foster parent; (d) individual therapy for the youth; (e) individual skills training/coaching for the youth; (f) family therapy (for biological/adoptive/relative family of the youth) focused on parent management strategies; (g) close monitoring of school attendance, performance, and homework completion; (h) case management to coordinate the MTFC, family, peer, and school settings; (i) 24-h on-call staff availability to MTFC and biological parents; and (j) psychiatric consultation as needed. The MTFC intervention embodies a strong focus on strength-building and positive reinforcement, and specific treatment services are tailored to the child's developmental level. The MTFC team consists of a Program Supervisor (who is the clinical lead), the treatment foster parents, family and individual therapists, a skills trainer, and a foster parent recruiter/trainer.

The MTFC model has received national attention as a cost-effective alternative to residential care. The results of a series of independent cost–benefit analyses from the Washington State Public Policy group (Aos et al. 1999, 2001) and findings from randomized controlled trials led MTFC to be selected as one of ten evidence-based National Model Programs (The Blueprints Programs; Elliott 1998) by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and as one of nine National Exemplary

Safe, Disciplined, and Drug Free Schools model programs. The MTFC model was also highlighted in two US Surgeon's General reports (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS] 2000a, b) and was selected by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention as an Exemplary I program for Strengthening America's Families (Chamberlain 1998). In addition, it was selected in 2009 by the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy as meeting "top tier" evidence of effectiveness (Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, n. d.).

MTFC Adapted for Girls

In our preparatory work for conducting a randomized clinical trial with girls, we examined the characteristics of both boys and girls who were treated in MTFC through community service organizations. Significant and meaningful sex differences in the clinical needs and treatment processes for girls and boys were identified. Specifically, although girls' rates of criminal behavior decreased over time, their rates of emotional and behavioral problems did not (Chamberlain and Reid 1994). These pilot data led us to focus on adapting the model to incorporate female-specific intervention components that might be more relevant for addressing the types of problems that adolescent girls were experiencing.

Five specific adaptations were developed based on previous research and our clinical experiences, each of which focused on additional training for foster parents and therapists on new strategies and protocols relevant for girls. The female-focused intervention components included the following adaptations: (a) providing girls with reinforcement and sanctions for coping with and avoiding social/relational aggression; (b) working with girls to develop and practice strategies for emotional regulation, such as early recognition of their feelings of distress and problem solving coping mechanisms; (c) helping girls develop peer relationship building skills, such as initiating conversations and modulating their level of self disclosure to fit the situation; (d) teaching girls strategies to avoid and deal with sexually risky and coercive situations; and (e) helping girls understand their personal risks for drug use, including priority setting using motivational interviewing and provision of incentives for abstinence from drug use monitored through random urinalysis. Each of these adaptations is described below.

Avoiding social/relational aggression. Although social aggression negatively impacts relationships for both boys and girls (Kupersmidt and Patterson 1991), girls rely more frequently on strategies that include behaviors such as ignoring exclusion, gossip, and disdainful facial expressions (Underwood 2003). Furthermore, social aggression leads to peer rejection, loneliness, isolation, and depression. Accordingly, MTFC pre-service training for foster parents was expanded to include methods for identifying and intervening with socially aggressive behaviors which are often subtle and do not appear to be serious (e.g., "it was just a look"). Once identified, behavior management plans are developed and implemented to reinforce

girls for abstaining from such tactics and to teach them how to cope with being on the receiving end of peer social aggression.

Improving emotion regulation. Research links experiences of childhood maltreatment with deficits in modulating emotions and regulating affective responses (Camras et al. 1988). Such deficits of emotion dysregulation include difficulty controlling behaviors in the face of emotional distress and deficits in the functional use of emotions as a source of information (Gratz et al. 2008). MTFC intervention targets were adapted to include a two-step process (a) helping girls to increase their awareness of situations that provoke negative emotions, and (b) teaching girls strategies to control their immediate impulses and behaviors. Foster parents and therapists work together to positively reinforce girls for identifying their emotional states and for developing and practicing coping strategies to help them modulate their level of emotional arousal and responses in difficult situations. We taught and practiced the principle that major life decisions or actions that could result in significant long-lasting changes should never be made when one is upset or agitated. This principle emphasized teaching girls to control their behaviors when experiencing negative emotions, rather than controlling the occurrence of the negative emotions themselves (Gratz and Roemer 2008).

Building peer relationship skills. The MTFC model was also adapted to include a focus on building peer relationship skills. Our prior research and clinical experience with girls in the juvenile justice system suggested that they typically lacked relationships with close female peers, preferring instead to associate with older, delinquent male peers (see Chap. 6 for discussion of peer relationships among court-involved girls). To address this treatment need, peer relationship skills were taught by the skills coach under the supervision of the Program Supervisor. A treatment plan was developed that identified specific skills based on the girl's individual needs. Girls were reinforced for practicing the targeted skills in the community with the skills coach, in the foster home with foster parents, and at school with peers. Reinforcement included earning daily points that translated into increases in privileges and material rewards.

Avoiding risky sexual encounters. Previous studies indicate that delinquency often co-occurs with risky sexual behavior and teenage pregnancy (Ary et al. 1999; Huizinga et al. 1993). Our previous work confirmed that girls in the juvenile justice system were at high risk for these problems, and typically had false knowledge about pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (Leve and Chamberlain 2005a). For example, at the baseline assessment, 40% of the girls in our study reported having had sex with a stranger/someone known less than 24 h in the past year, and 46% had three or more partners in the past year, yet over one-third never or rarely used safe sex practices. Intervention services were adapted to provide girls with information on dating, sexual behavior norms, and HIV-prevention behaviors. They were taught strategies for being sexually responsible, including specific training on decision making, identification and awareness of sexual coercion, and refusal skills. Role play exercises were conducted using the "Virtual Date" DVD (Northwest Media, Inc. 2002) which depicts key decision points in a practice date.

Reducing substance use. As noted in other chapters (see Chap. 7), girls with serious delinquency problems often abuse drugs and alcohol. In our sample, the majority of girls had elevated substance use, with 12-month prevalence rates of 46% for marijuana and 77% for alcohol. The use of hard substances in the prior 12 months was also high: methamphetamine (29%), cocaine or crack (13%), hallucinogens (7%), and ecstasy (5%). Given these high rates, the MTFC intervention was modified to include motivational interviews designed to assess girls' motivation to change and to calibrate her view of where her substance use patterns stacked up relative to her peers. The goal was to help girls develop concrete personal goals. The interviews were given during the first 3 weeks of placement in the foster home. The purpose was to assess the youth's level of "readiness to change" and to provide support and encouragement for moving further along the continuum toward abstinence. Under the direction of the Program Supervisor, the individual therapist helped the girl identify steps toward her personal goals, and the skills coach worked to set up opportunities for making progress on those goals. Foster parents and skills coaches reinforced progress with points and verbal statements. Girls were given random urinalysis tests and additional tests were given if there was a suspicion of use (e.g., missed classes at school). Girls earned a reward for each negative test when no substances were detected and were given consequences such as lower privilege levels for positive tests.

The five new components described above were integrated into the basic MTFC model throughout the girls' course of services. The Program Supervisor was charged with the responsibility of integrating these components into all aspects of the girl's treatment plan, including working with her biological family or other permanency resource.

Two Randomized Clinical Trials of MTFC for Girls

Two trials of MTFC for females in the juvenile justice system were conducted based on the treatment needs and intervention methods described above. The trials were funded by the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Institute on Drug Abuse beginning in 1997 and concluding in 2008. The two trials were conducted consecutively, with rolling recruitment of all eligible girls in Lane County, Oregon and the surrounding counties. Inclusion criteria for both studies were as follows: female, 13–17 years old, at least one criminal referral in the prior year, court-mandated placement in out-of-home care, and not currently pregnant.

In both studies, girls who met these criteria were randomly assigned at approximately equal rates to either out-of-home services as usual (typically Group Care; GC) or MTFC. Consent for participation was obtained from juvenile justice authorities, parents, and girls. The sample for the first trial included 81 girls recruited between winter 1997 and summer 2002 (MTFC $n=37$; GC $n=44$). The sample for the second trial consisted of 85 girls recruited between fall 2002 and fall 2006 (MTFC $n=44$; GC $n=41$). The combined sample therefore included 81 MTFC girls and 85 GC girls. Recruitment procedures for the two trials were identical. Trial 1

Table 9.1 Demograpic characteristics at baseline

	Trial 1 Group care ($n=44$)	Trial 1 MTFC ($n=37$)	Trial 2 Group care ($n=41$)	Trial 2 MTFC ($n=44$)
Baseline characteristics				
Ethnicity				
Caucasian	68%	84%	68%	77%
Black	0%	3%	5%	0%
Native American	9%	5%	0%	0%
Hispanic	11%	0%	7%	9%
Asian	0%	0%	2%	0%
Mixed race	11%	8%	17%	16%
Age at baseline	15	15	16	15
Single parent family currently	68%	71%	51%	55%
Girl chronic truancy	84%	89%	90%	89%
Family income less than $10,000	35%	32%	37%	23%
At least 1 parent convicted of a crime	72%	80%	83%	80%
Alcohol use (0–6 scale)	3	3	3	3
Marijuana use (0–6 scale)	4	3	3	3
Other illicit drug use (0–6 scale)	3	2	2	2
Average # of lifetime arrests	12	12	12	11

included the first three female-adapted intervention components described above and Trial 2 included all five new components. Otherwise, the intervention models tested in the two trials were identical.

Girls assigned to the control condition (Group Care; GC) received the usual services for youth placed in out-of-home care for chronic delinquency in Oregon, including community-based group care. GC girls were placed in 1 of 35 community-based GC programs located in Oregon; across the two trials, each site served 1–12 study participants ($M=2.18$, SD = 2.95). The programs had 2–83 youths in residence ($M=13$) and 1–85 staff members (Mdn = 9); GC facilities either served girls only (68%) or served both genders, but the facilities housed girls and boys in separate units. Program philosophies were primarily behavioral (67%) or multiperspective (33%); 80% of the programs reported delivering weekly therapeutic services.

Intervention services lasted approximately 6 months with no significant differences in the length of treatment between conditions. Demographic information is presented in Table 9.1.

Summary of Findings on the Efficacy of MTFC

In Trial 1, outcomes relating to the hypothesized effects of the MTFC intervention on delinquency were examined. The results from these analyses indicate the efficacy of the MTFC intervention for (a) reducing delinquency at 12- and 24-month follow-ups

(Chamberlain et al. 2007; Leve et al. 2005), (b) reducing deviant peer affiliations during treatment and at the 12-month follow-up (Leve and Chamberlain 2005b), and (c) increasing time spent on homework and school attendance (Leve and Chamberlain 2007). In addition, deviant peer affiliation and time spent on homework mediated the effects of the intervention on delinquency outcomes (Leve and Chamberlain 2005b, 2007).

In 2008, when Trial 2 was completed, data from the two trials were merged, enabling an examination of lower base rate behaviors (e.g., pregnancy) and an exploration of moderated effects on delinquency outcomes. Below we summarize the results from analyses with the merged Trial 1 and Trial 2 data examining MTFC effects on the prevention of pregnancy and delinquency.

Prevention of pregnancy. Preventing teenage pregnancy is a national priority in the United States (Kirby 2007). However, programs aimed at preventing teenage pregnancy have met with limited success. Pregnancy rates are particularly high among segments of the population with prior child welfare involvement (e.g., youth in the juvenile justice system). For example, a survey of child welfare systems found that nearly 50% of girls served in these systems reported a pregnancy by age 19 years, compared with 20% of 19-year-old girls in a nationally representative sample (Courtney et al. 2005). Because delinquency shares a common etiology with risky sexual behavior, it is likely that interventions that target outcomes in the delinquency domain will also influence outcomes in related domains, such as pregnancy prevention. Such effects have been shown in prior prevention studies (e.g., Lonczak et al. 2002) and are consistent with experts' assertions that prevention programs should impact shared, distal influences on youth risk behavior (Flay 2002).

Based on this work, we hypothesized that girls assigned to MTFC would be less likely to become pregnant following the intervention than girls assigned to GC. The analytic sample included both Trial 1 and Trial 2 girls, and pregnancy rates were aggregated across the 24-month follow-up period. Controlling for baseline age, number of criminal referrals, trial (1 or 2), sexual activity, and prior pregnancies, logistic regression analyses indicated a significant effect of group condition, suggesting that (relative to GC) MTFC decreased the probability of pregnancy after baseline (Kerr et al. 2009). The odds for becoming pregnant during the follow-up period were 2.44 times greater for GC girls than for MTFC girls. Baseline pregnancy and criminal referral histories also independently predicted an increased likelihood of post-baseline pregnancy (regardless of group condition). These findings suggest the potential high public health impact of MTFC through the reduction of unwanted pregnancies (and associated births).

Delinquency. To replicate and extend the results from Trial 1, we created a delinquency composite similar to that used in Trial 1 (Chamberlain et al. 2007; Leve et al. 2005), but with data combined from both trials. Girls' rates of arrest, days spent in locked settings, and self-reported delinquency were standardized to form a mean (average) level construct representing delinquency in the 12-months post-baseline. Controlling for age and pre-baseline arrest rates, the results from a hierarchical linear regression analysis indicated a significant effect of the MTFC intervention ($\beta = -0.17$, $p < 0.05$). In addition, pre-baseline arrest rates (greater number of pre-baseline arrests)

Table 9.2 Hierarchical regression model predicting 12-month delinquency rates across trials

	Step 1	Step 2
Variable	β	β
Pre-baseline arrests	0.17*	0.17*
Girl age	–0.18*	–0.18*
Intervention condition		–0.17*

Note. Final step model, $F(3, 162) = 5.80^{**}$, $R^2 = 0.10$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.03^*$
$^*p < 0.05$

Table 9.3 Hierarchical regression models examining interaction effects on delinquency across trials

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Variable	β	β	β
Model 1 (self-reported delinquency)			
Girl age	–0.08	–0.08	–0.09
Pre-baseline self-reported delinquency	0.67***	0.67***	0.52***
Intervention condition		–0.04	0.04
Pre-baseline delinquency × intervention			–0.22*
Model 2 (days in locked settings)			
Girl age	–0.22**	–0.22**	–0.21**
Pre-baseline days in locked settings	0.21**	0.21**	0.19*
Intervention condition		–0.14$^+$	–0.14$^+$
Age × intervention			0.15$^+$

Note. Model 1: Final step model, $F(4, 143) = 30.87^{***}$, $R^2 = 0.46$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.02^*$
Model 2: Final step model, $F(4, 152) = 6.011^{***}$, $R^2 = 0.014$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.02^+$
$^+p < 0.10$; $^*p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$

and girl age (younger) were significant predictors of 12-month delinquency rates ($\beta = 0.17$ and –0.18, respectively, $p < 0.05$). Results are shown in Table 9.2. Although these results were generally expected given the significant MTFC intervention effects found with the Trial 1 only data, the extension of effects across trials is noteworthy.

Due to the increased sample size, the combined dataset additionally permitted a novel examination of potential moderating effects. For the next set of analyses, we explored moderating effects of girls' age and pre-baseline delinquency levels on the association between MTFC assignment and the three delinquency measures included in the delinquency construct. Multiple regression analyses indicated significant and trend-level interaction effects for self-reported delinquency and days in locked settings, as shown in Table 9.3 (no significant interaction effects were noted for arrests, and thus this outcome is excluded from further discussion). In this set of regression models, the primary independent variables were entered in Step 1 (age, pre-baseline behavior), intervention condition was entered in Step 2, and interaction terms between the independent variables and intervention condition were entered in Step 3. Non-significant interaction terms were later excluded from the models in order to maximize statistical power.

As shown in Model 1 (Table 9.3), there was a significant effect of pre-baseline delinquency on delinquency assessed 12-months later ($\beta = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$). However,

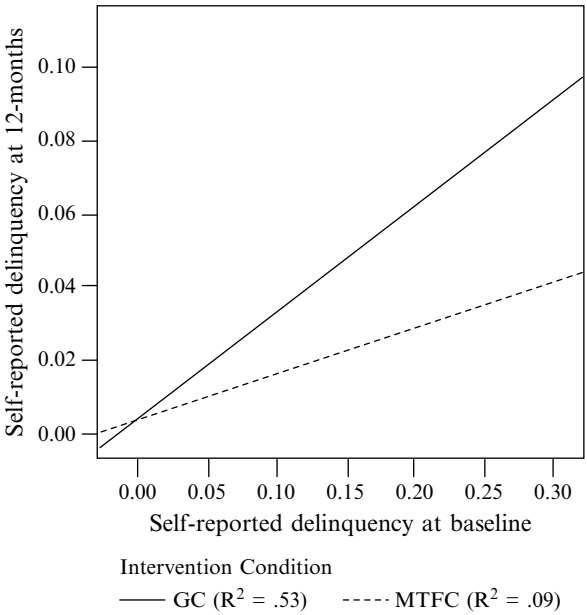

Fig. 9.1 Interaction between pre-baseline self-reported delinquency and intervention condition on self-reported delinquency at the 12-month follow-up

this effect was moderated by intervention condition, such that assignment to the MTFC condition ameliorated the effects of pre-baseline delinquency on 12-month delinquency, as compared to assignment to GC. As shown in Fig. 9.1, there was a strong and positive association between pre-baseline delinquency and 12-month delinquency for girls in GC ($r=0.72$, $p<0.001$), but this relationship was significantly attenuated for girls assigned to MTFC ($r=0.29$, $p<0.05$). This pattern suggests that MTFC (as compared to GC) might be particularly beneficial in offsetting risk trajectories for girls with higher levels of self-reported delinquency at intake.

Model 2 (Table 9.3) presents the results from the regression analysis examining the days in locked setting at the 12-month assessment. As shown in the table, Step 1 indicated a significant effect of girl age (younger) and pre-baseline days in locked settings (more pre-baseline days in locked settings) on 12-month days in locked settings ($\beta=-0.22$ and 0.21, respectively, both coefficients were significant at $p<0.01$). In addition, Steps 2 and 3 indicated a trend for the intervention to have a significant effect on days in locked settings (MTFC girls spent fewer days in locked settings in the 12-months post-baseline; $\beta=-0.14$, $p=0.060$), with a trend-level interaction between age and intervention condition also apparent ($\beta=0.15$, $p=0.055$). As shown in Fig. 9.2, the negative effect of being younger at intake on 12-month delinquency rates was ameliorated for girls assigned to MTFC (the correlation between age and 12-month days in locked settings was −0.05 for MTFC girls, $p=0.65$). In contrast, there was a modest relationship between age and 12-month days in locked settings for girls in GC (the correlation between age and 12-month days in locked settings was −0.35 for GC girls, $p<0.01$), suggesting that MTFC may be particularly beneficial in offsetting risk for younger girls (e.g., age 14 or younger)

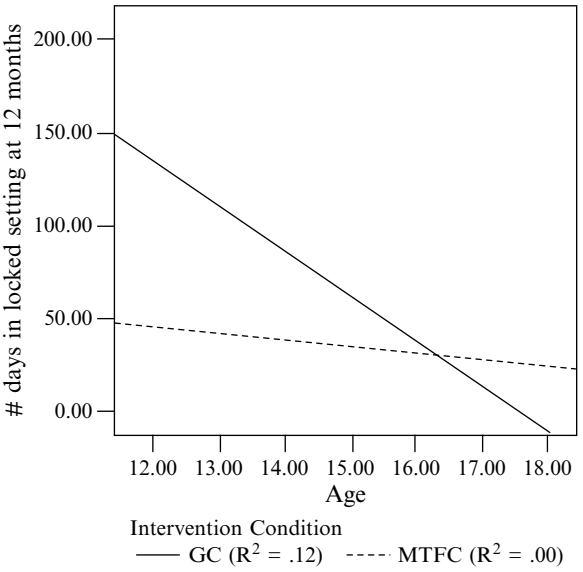

Fig. 9.2 Interaction between age and intervention condition on the number of days in locked settings at the 12-month follow-up

as compared to those in their late teens. Caution should be applied in interpreting these findings both in relation to the trend levels of significance of the observed effects and in relation to matters of statistical power pertinent to tests of statistical interaction. However, at an exploratory level, these effects highlight the efficacy of the MTFC intervention relative to GC in ameliorating delinquency outcomes relative to age.

Implications for the Treatment of Girls in the Juvenile Justice System

The results presented from the combined trial data not only extend the findings from Trial 1 showing that girls randomly assigned to the MTFC condition participated in significantly less delinquency, but the larger sample also allowed for the examination of intervention effects on a relatively low base rate but highly significant public health outcome (pregnancy), and for the examination of potential moderating effects that have distinct implications for clinical practice. Younger girls with histories of serious delinquency are at higher risk for cascading negative outcomes, including higher rates of continued delinquency, as was demonstrated in our data by pre-baseline delinquency rates predicting 12-month post-baseline delinquency rates. However, the heightened risk due to young age at baseline was obviated (at a trend level) by participation in MTFC, suggesting that MTFC is beneficial for all teenage girls, regardless of age. Additionally, girls who reported participating in relatively higher amounts of criminal behavior prior to study enrollment were especially responsive to participation in MTFC compared to GC. These findings provide some

guidance and assurance to MTFC providers who are concerned about admitting girls to their programs who are young and/or who report high levels of previous delinquency.

In terms of future studies, most outcomes examined to date have been behavioral and have not addressed issues related to the complex psychological presentation typical of delinquent girls. Based on prior research and on the high rates of childhood adversity and trauma found in our studies, we examined the association between early adversity and conduct problems. Not surprisingly, we found that girls in our sample experienced high rates of childhood trauma and mental health symptoms. Using a cumulative measure of adverse experiences derived from eight unique indicators, rates of adolescent offending and risky sexual behavior were predicted (Smith et al. 2006). These findings suggest that early adversity might play an important role in the later development of problems for girls.

In an effort to continually improve MTFC outcomes for girls and to specifically address girls' high rates of mental health problems, we are examining a further adaptation of the MTFC model to include a specific focus on the treatment of trauma. This additional adaptation was pilot tested in a small-scale randomized trial with MTFC girls, and results suggest improvements in trauma-related mental health symptoms (i.e., PTSD, internalizing problems). Further research is needed to examine the benefits of including trauma-focused treatment in a large-scale effectiveness trial. In addition, although MTFC is currently being implemented in numerous sites in the USA and in Europe, further studies are needed to examine whether integration of the MTFC model into typical Group Care settings produces effects that are comparable to those found in the randomized trials reported here.

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Chapter 10
Risk for Girls' Delinquency: Early Intervention to Promote Healthy Development

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Adult criminality is best understood in the context of delinquent behavior in childhood and adolescence (Farrington 1991). The first predictive models of criminal behavior were created long ago, but in recent years these models have been refined and provide a great deal of information about the pathways leading to criminal behavior (Moffitt et al. 2001; Pepler et al. 2010a). Boys and girls on the *early onset* pathway often experience the most troubled and diverse range of problems, which persist as they transition into adolescence and adulthood (Moffitt et al. 2001; Odgers et al. 2008; Yuile 2007). Because of the high prevalence of males in contact with the law, historically this research focused on boys and men. Increasing awareness of girls' delinquency and associated problems has led researchers and clinicians to advocate for the development of models to understand and address the development of delinquency in girls.

The immense costs associated with adolescent delinquency and adult criminality across the domains of physical and mental health, social services, and criminal justice systems are well established for boys (Kazdin and Wassell 2000). A growing body of literature regarding the unhealthy developmental pathways of aggressive girls,

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particularly in the domain of interpersonal relationships (Ehrensaft 2005), provides evidence for the social costs associated with girlhood delinquency. Considerable promise lies in effective early prevention and intervention programs. One of these programs, SNAP® GC (Stop-Now-And-Plan Girls Connection: Child Development Institute 2007; Earlscourt Child and Family Centre 2002), was tailored for young aggressive girls and their parents with the goal of moving these girls off a troubled developmental trajectory and toward healthy development and positive interpersonal relationships. In this chapter, we take a developmental approach to explore age-based changes in behavior problems, parenting skills, caregiver–daughter attachment, and risk for a group of aggressive girls and their caregivers.

SNAP® GC Program

Gender-sensitive programming is recommended to effectively address unique risk factors and developmental outcomes for girls (Zahn et al. 2008). The SNAP® GC is an innovative, evidence-based, gender-sensitive intervention for young aggressive girls, aged 6–12, and their families (Pepler et al. 2010b). To the best of our knowledge, it is the only such program with demonstrated effectiveness. Girls and their caregivers attend 12 concurrent and complementary group sessions based on cognitive-behavioral principles to facilitate their learning of effective self-control and social problem-solving skills.

The SNAP® GC provides support for the girls' problems with a focus on increasing self-control and social skills, managing anger, and replacing aggression with positive social problem-solving strategies. To enhance the protective processes of coping, the SNAP® GC helps girls develop their emotion regulation skills through cognitive-behavior strategies and relaxation. There is substantial evidence that antisocial girls tend to be comorbid, experiencing problems with depression as well as aggression (see Chap. 7; Moffitt et al. 2001; Pepler et al. 2010b). Further, parent training is identified by Kazdin and Wassell (2000) as the most effective programming for children with behavior problems. To achieve the mission of keeping girls in school and out of trouble, the SNAP® GC engages and supports parents to enhance the protective processes of positive and consistent parenting, the quality of the parent–daughter interactions, and attachment. Parents also receive support in managing and regulating their own anger and emotions to enhance their own coping abilities. Particular attention is paid to parents struggling with depression, with activities such as relaxation training and thought training (i.e., focusing on positive thoughts) to promote adaptive coping skills.

SNAP® GC underwent a rigorous evaluation with a randomized wait-list control group design and follow-up at four time points (immediate post, 6, 12, and 18 months posttreatment). When compared with the control group, the treatment group displayed significantly greater improvements in girls' behavioral, social, and emotional problems across the follow-up period according to parent report (Pepler et al. 2010b). Similarly, there was a significant group difference in parenting skills, with the treatment group parents and girls reporting significantly greater improvement in parental consistency,

effectiveness, and rational discipline than the control group (Pepler et al. 2010b). Parents who participated in the SNAP® GC program reported significantly lower levels of parenting stress following treatment (Vaughan et al. 2009). For more information about the SNAP® GC program and evaluation, refer to Levene et al. (2005), Pepler et al. (2010b), Vaughan et al. (2009), Walsh et al. (2002), and Yuile (2007).

Matching Risk to Interventions and Outcomes

Understanding the risk and protective factors that play a role in propelling children along unhealthy or healthy pathways is crucial for the development of effective programs. Innovative gender-sensitive assessment tools for children aged 6–12 were developed to identify early risk factors in girls that predict future antisocial behavior. These assessment tools were based on a review of best practices for risk assessment among adult populations and an extensive literature review to identify the most salient risk and protective factors for childhood aggression. Specifically, the Early Assessment Risk Lists are clinical rating tools developed for boys (EARL-20B: Augimeri et al. 2001) and girls (EARL-21G: Levene et al. 2001). Many of the risk factors identified in the EARL tools are common to boys and girls. *Sexual Development* and *Caregiver–Daughter Interactions* are unique risk factors identified for girls. Risks are categorized into child and family domains, reflecting the developmental-contextual theoretical model that underlies research on, and treatment for, the development of child behavior problems (e.g., Lerner 1993).

By integrating research into every aspect of the SNAP® GC, our team had the opportunity to refine both the intervention and the assessment tool based on emerging research on the development and treatment of antisocial behaviors. For example, program modifications were made in response to the identification of coping abilities as a salient risk factor such that higher levels of risk were associated with lower rates of behavior change in response to intervention (Yuile 2007). In this chapter, we collate research in the field with the EARL-21G risk factors and match them to the features of intervention and expected outcomes of the SNAP® GC. The elements of the SNAP® Girls Connection (SNAP® GC) program, as they map onto child and family level risk and protective factors for young aggressive girls, are discussed in Tables 10.1 and 10.2, respectively.

Overview of SNAP® GC Study

In this chapter, we describe research that explores the gender-sensitive risk factor of caregiver–daughter interactions for aggressive girls. We assessed families from the original evaluation study group (80 participants) at regular intervals (every year), for up to 4 years following treatment. We used specific measures of the quality of caregiver–daughter interaction in assessments following treatment to understand how these interactions changed over time. We organized the follow-up data according to the girls' ages so that we could consider the developmental trends in behavior

Table 10.1 Research and intervention strategies linked to child risk and protective factors[a]

Original research	EARL factors	New findings	Features of intervention	Outcomes
• Bi-directional association between risk for aggression and developmental problems (e.g., Brennan and Mednick 1997) • Girls who experience a delay in language may be at increased risk for aggression (e.g., Olson and Hoza 1993)	Developmental problems		Tutoring • Learning deficits Assessment/referral	• School success • Access to appropriate services
• Early onset of conduct problems is associated with persistent delinquency • Although debated, early onset girls' may engage in more severe delinquency than boys (e.g., Tolan and Thomas 1995)	Onset of behavioral difficulties	• Girls whose behavior problems began early (i.e., before 6), displayed slower rate of change through intervention (Yuile 2007)	SNAP® GC • Anger management skills SNAP® parent group • Positive models • Discipline and monitoring	• Early identification • Positive choices • Increased self-control/problem-solving • Decreased aggression/antisocial behavior
• Girls that experience or witness abuse have more externalizing problems than boys (e.g., O'Keefe 1994)	Abuse/neglect/trauma (ANT)	• 69% SNAP® GC girls had experiences of abuse/trauma or neglect, and this factor was associated with lower rates of improvement through treatment (Yuile 2007)	Individual Befriending • Trauma-focused therapy has been incorporated in individual sessions for girls' with a history of ANT GGUH	• Assertiveness • Physical and sexual health
• Hyperactivity/Impulsivity/Attention Deficits (HIA) is associated with more persistent and lengthy conduct problems (Offord et al. 1991) • Girls with HIA risks are more likely than boys with similar problems to exhibit conduct problems (e.g., Loeber and Keenan 1994)	HIA	• HIA difficulties were a strong predictor of behavior problems for SNAP® GC girls at admission (Yuile 2007)	SNAP® GC • Principles of behavior management and cognitive-behavioral therapy support children in regulating their behavior and impulses	• Realistic/prosocial goals • Effective self-control and problem-solving skills

• Girls are held to a high standard of social competence • Deficits in prosocial skills may make them more likely than boys to elicit negative reactions (e.g., Keenan and Shaw 1997)	Likeability	• Aggressive girls tend to rely on social skills that are maladaptive, and have few friends (Pepler et al. 2004) • Less likeability was linked to low rates of improvement through SNAP® GC (Yuile 2007)	SNAP® GC • Girls are provided opportunities to interact with peers, in the presence of supportive adults (i.e., "Circle Time" – a round robin of girls saying something positive to each other, thereby encouraging positive peer attention and promoting self-esteem)	• Increased social and recreational skills
• A pattern of peer rejection, aggressive behavior, and association with deviant peers can lead to serious delinquency (Dishion et al. 1999) • Girls may be led to associate with marginalized boys (e.g., Serbin et al. 1998) • Positive peer relations are protective (e.g., Warman and Cohen 2000)	Peer socialization	• Interpersonal relationships are tied more closely to girls' than boys' aggression (Ehrensaft 2005) • Peer socialization was a factor that predicted SNAP® GC girls' response to treatment (Yuile 2007) • Evidence that relationship capacity and healthy interactions are protective for girls (Yuile 2007)	SNAP® GC • Social skill development and training in encoding subtle behavioral cues Individual befriending • Modeling healthy relationship skills (between and young adult and the girls)	• Realistic/prosocial goals • Girl-friends • Positive friendships • Avoid delinquent friends
• Academic difficulties are associated with delinquent behavior (e.g., Fergusson and Woodward 2000) • Academic success may be particularly protective for girls	Academic performance	• A strong predictor of teacher-rated behavior problems for SNAP® GC girls at admission was academic difficulties (Yuile 2007)	School advocacy and tutoring Psychological assessment of learning or attention difficulties	• School success

(continued)

Table 10.1 (continued)

Original research	EARL factors	New findings	Features of intervention	Outcomes
• Neighborhood risk is associated with more childhood aggression (e.g., Colder et al. 2000) • Conversely, community cohesion and activities may be protective (e.g., Kohen et al. 1998)	Neighborhood	• Neighborhood risk was one of the strongest predictors of behavior problems at admission, and was associated with less improvement through SNAP® GC (Yuile 2007)	SNAP® parent group • Adequate parental monitoring is emphasized within the group Community hook up/advocacy • To facilitate social supports and services	• Alleviate ecosystemic stress • Strengthened family systems • Ecosystemic support
• Early maturation exacerbates behavior problems for girls (e.g., Caspi and Moffitt 1991), and precocious sexuality is expected to increase girls' vulnerability	Sexual development	• 25–33% SNAP® GC girls experienced early puberty or precocious sexual behavior, which was strong predictor of behavior problems at admission (Yuile 2007) • Almost all girls with sexual development issues, had also experienced Abuse/Trauma/Neglect, and the combination of these risks were linked with less improvement through treatment (Yuile 2007)	Girls Growing Up Healthy (GGUH) • Joint mother–daughter group with education about sexual health, body image, and puberty offered to those who have completed the SNAP® GC program	• Delay sexual activity and teen pregnancy
• Attitudes favoring antisocial behavior influence girls' and boys' behavior, only for girls do thoughts of social consequences impact behavior (e.g., Heimer 1996)	Antisocial attitudes	• Antisocial attitudes were a salient predictor of teacher-rated behavior problems for SNAP® GC girls at admission (Yuile 2007)	SNAP® GC • Improve social problem-solving and anger management skills • Thinking errors are addressed (e.g., hostile attributions)	• Social and recreational skills • Prosocial attitudes

• Girls typically use social aggression, boys use more physical aggression (e.g., Crick and Grotpeter 1995) • Girls using gender non-normative aggression are at greater risk of social, health problems, and criminality (e.g., Zoccolillo and Rogers 1991)	Antisocial behavior	• Girls are referred to treatment with more severe behavior problems than their male counterparts (Vaughan et al. 2009) • Antisocial behavior was a significant predictor of behavior problems for SNAP® GC girls (Yuile 2007)	SNAP® GC • Improve social problem-solving and anger management skills	• Positive choices • Anger management skills • Decreased aggression/ antisocial behavior
• Girls with behavior problems tend to have difficulty coping and using problem-solving skills to manage adversity. Depression, anxiety, and substance use are common (e.g., Cairns and Cairns 1994)	Coping ability	• Antisocial girls are more likely than boys to experience internalizing problems (Moffitt et al. 2001) • A significant predictor of behavior problems for SNAP® GC girls and difficulties coping were a marker of a slower rate of response to treatment (Yuile 2007) • In the absence of a pattern of association with other risk factors, comorbidity of depression and aggression is crucial to address in treatment (Yuile 2007)	SNAP® GC GGUH Leaders In Training (LIT) • Cognitive-behavioral techniques support behavior and emotion regulation in the face of difficult feelings and triggers • Relaxation techniques at the end of each group session support important coping skills • Specific consideration has been given to the comorbidity of depression and aggression in the LIT groups	• Assertiveness • Realistic/prosocial goals • Decreased internalizing behaviors

[a]A developmental model of risk and protective factors with the mission of keeping girls in school and out of trouble

Table 10.2 Research and intervention strategies linked to family risk and protective factors

Original research	EARL factors	New findings	Features of intervention	Outcomes
• Children from financially disadvantaged households are more likely to engage in antisocial behavior (e.g., Keiley et al. 2000) • Antisocial adolescent girls have often experienced severe poverty (e.g., Maughan et al. 2000)	Household circumstances	• Aggressive girls are more likely than boys to come from single-parent families, with less parental education (Fossum et al. 2007) and lower income (Vaughan et al. 2009) • Disadvantage was a strong predictor of teacher-rated behavior problems at admission to SNAP® GC (Yuile 2007)	• Community hook up • Advocacy • Family counseling • Referral	• Alleviate ecosystemic stress
• Family disruptions (i.e., out-of-home placements) are more frequent for antisocial adolescent girls than boys (e.g., Chamberlain and Reid 1994)	Caregiver continuity	• Disruptions in care giving was a strong predictor of parent-rated behavior problems at admission to SNAP® GC (Yuile 2007)	Family counseling SNAP® parent groups • Parent–child connection • Parenting skills Advocacy • Community • Social supports • Services	• Improved parenting skills • Increased attachment • Increased monitoring • Strengthened family systems • Ecosystemic support
• Positive social support is a protective factor, related to lower levels of childhood conduct problems (e.g., Dubow et al. 1997)	Supports	• Social support was a strong predictor of behavior problems for SNAP® GC girls at admission, and associated with less improvement through treatment (Yuile 2007)	Community hook-up • Parents can work on developing their social support networks	• Ecosystemic support

• Family stressors (i.e., divorce, depression, unemployment) are associated with children's antisocial behavior • Impact of stress may influence girls more than boys (e.g., Clarke-Stewart et al. 2000)	Stressors	• Parents of aggressive girls report more parenting and life stress and depression than parents of aggressive boys (Fossum et al. 2007; Vaughan et al. 2009) • Stressors impacting the family were associated with high levels of behavior problems for aggressive girls (Yuile 2007)	SNAP® Parent Groups • Parents learn relaxation strategies as one method of stress management and can model them for the girls Referrals to appropriate services	• Decreased stress levels • Access appropriate support services
• Harsh or inconsistent discipline and lack of monitoring are associated with childhood aggression (Weiss et al. 1992) • There are gender differences in parents treatment of girls and boys and in children's reaction to different types of discipline (e.g., Eron 1992)	Parenting style	• Parenting Style was one of the factors that predicted SNAP® GC girls' response to treatment (Yuile 2007)	SNAP® parent group • Parenting (discipline and monitoring) • Modeling • Contingency Family counseling	• Increased effective parenting (e.g., contingent responding, adept monitoring) and appropriate discipline • Anger management for parents, to decreased use of harsh discipline, and provides positive models

(continued)

Table 10.2 (continued)

Original research	EARL factors	New findings	Features of intervention	Outcomes
• Strained parent–child relationships or interactions lacking appropriate boundaries are associated with childhood aggression, particularly for girls (e.g., Pakaslahti et al. 1998)	Caregiver–daughter interaction	• Girls and women tend to have strong motivation for connection in relationships (Markovitz et al. 2001) • Parent–child interaction difficulties were associated with high levels of behavioral difficulties, and significantly predicted girls' path through treatment (Yuile 2007)	SNAP® GC SNAP® parent group Family counseling GGUH • Parent child connection • Mother–daughter bonding	• Improved relationship capacity
• Antisocial attitudes and behavior of parents and siblings are predictive of children's delinquency (e.g., Funk 1999)	Antisocial values and conduct		SNAP® GC SNAP® parent group Family counseling • The importance of the models that parents provide for their children is emphasized	• Reduced negative behaviors and attitudes within the family system

problems, parenting skills, and caregiver–daughter attachment for a group of girls who exhibited aggressive behavior problems. We were interested in examining how they managed the challenges of moving away from an antisocial trajectory.

For this descriptive study, we anticipated that following treatment, girls would have fewer behavioral and emotional difficulties and that their parents would report more positive parenting skills and connectedness with their daughters compared with girls of similar ages prior to treatment. Given our interest in functioning following treatment, we expected that girls who had received treatment would not experience the relatively typical peak in antisocial behavior during early adolescence, but rather that their behavior would remain more stable, even if at a more elevated level than is typical for same-aged peers. We also explored the EARL-21G risk scores to assess how the levels of risk and protective factors experienced by the girls and their families remained stable or changed as the girls entered adolescence. We do not include statistical tests in this chapter; rather, we provide a description of patterns over time. Although the findings from this study provide valuable and unique information about age-based trends in behaviors of young aggressive girls and their parents, we remain cautious in our interpretations given the small sample sizes and subsequent focus on descriptive analyses.

Eighty families participated in the SNAP® GC study, with the sample size decreasing over time through the follow-up period due to attrition. Girls' ages at admission ranged from 6 to 12. Sample sizes for the measures by age group ranged from 4 to 37, with the majority of age groups including ten or more participants. The largest numbers of participants across each of the measures tended to be for girls aged 8–12. Families were from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Households tended to be single-parent and female-led (68.2%). Financial difficulties were common, such that 63.0% had an annual income less than $30,000. More information about participant characteristics, measures, and methodology can be found by Pepler and colleagues (2010b).

Girls' Behavioral and Emotional Difficulties

The Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL; Achenbach 2001) T-scores provided an opportunity to compare this unique group of aggressive girls to a normative population of same-aged girls. Scores greater than 64 on the externalizing and internalizing composite scales indicate clinically significant difficulties. The graphical display of means, as shown in Fig. 10.1, indicate that these young aggressive girls experienced clinically elevated levels of externalizing and internalizing difficulties prior to treatment. Following treatment, their mean scores rarely reached the clinical level, although they were frequently in the Borderline-Clinical range (greater than 60). Commensurate with the work of Pepler and colleagues (2010a), among those in a group exhibiting high levels of antisocial behavior, the peak for girls' delinquency was early (during pre-adolescence). Similar patterns are found when the Conduct Problems, Rule Breaking and Aggression Scales are examined. Also evident is a peak in internalizing difficulties for girls around age 11.

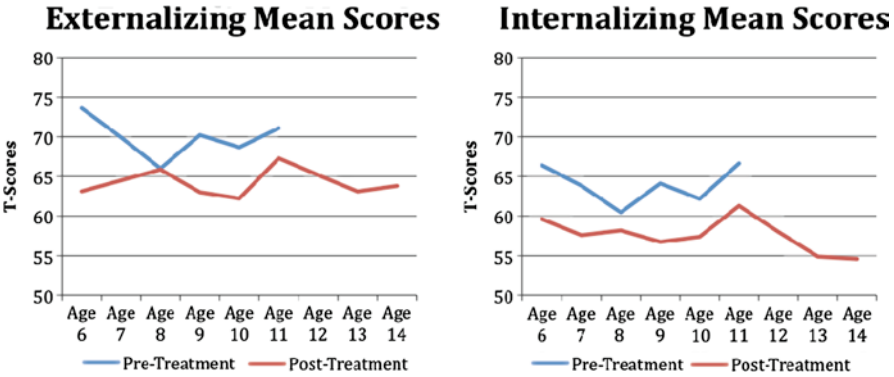


Fig. 10.1 Developmental progression of girls' externalizing and internalizing difficulties. *Note*: Pretreatment denotes the scores prior to the family beginning treatment. During the follow-up period, after the intervention programs, families were requested to participate in assessments on primarily a yearly basis. Thus the same families are represented within the pre- and posttreatment groups

Parenting Skills and Caregiver–Daughter Attachment

Results from the parenting scales on the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY: Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada 1999) are not as clear as those for the girls' behavior. Prior to treatment, there appeared to be some stability or a slight trend toward reporting more ineffective parenting strategies as girls entered preadolescence (such as difficulty managing child behavior, parental annoyance, and variable punishments depending on caregiver mood). For those who completed treatment, a general decrease was evidenced in the use of ineffective parenting strategies for girls after age 7 (see Fig. 10.2). Parental consistency appeared to be somewhat higher for families that completed treatment; however, the data suggest a decrease in consistency as girls move into adolescence for the posttreatment group. Conversely, there was an increasing trend for rational discipline as girls get older. Positive interactions appear to be quite high for caregivers and their daughters before and after treatment, with somewhat lower positivity around age 11 (which may co-occur with the peak in girls' behavior problems).

Our measure of parent–child attachment, the Comprehensive Adolescent-Parent Attachment Inventory (CAPAI; Moretti et al. 2000), was only administered during the follow-up period with the data beginning with girls 9 years of age. As shown in Fig. 10.2, the peaks for the avoidance and anxiety ratings occurred at age 10, with another increase at age 13. It also appears that the parent–child dyads in the current study had more struggles with attachment-based anxiety (including anxiety around being emotionally rejected or physically separated) than with the avoidance of closeness in their relationships.

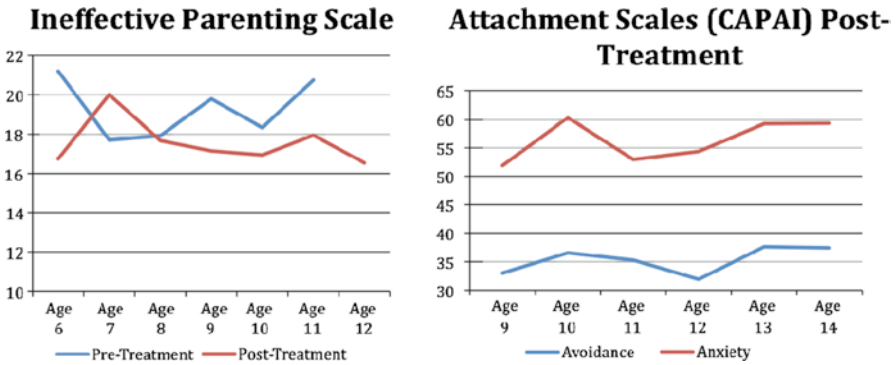
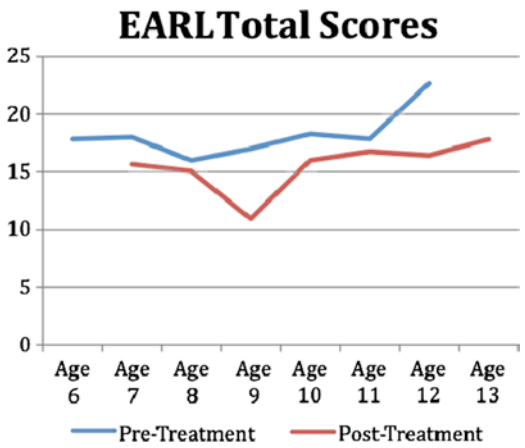


Fig. 10.2 Parenting skills and caregiver–daughter attachment from childhood to adolescence

Fig. 10.3 EARL-21 G scores across age



Clinician Rated Risk Factors

Assessments made by the clinical staff (child and youth workers or social workers) revealed changes in total risk scores after treatment and at different ages. Following treatment, girls' risks across domains appeared to be lower than for those of girls prior to treatment (see Fig. 10.3). Also interesting to note is that for all girls (pre- and posttreatment), the lowest risk was around age 9 with the highest risk around age 12. Taken together, the clinicians' and mothers' perspectives of girls' functioning provide consistent evidence in support of program effectiveness.

Discussion

Girls are referred for SNAP® GC as early as 6 years of age and experience clinically elevated levels of aggression, rule-breaking behaviors, and conduct problems. We believe that these girls are on an early onset pathway to delinquency and antisocial behavior, as indicated by their high clinical ratings on CBCL externalizing scales. In contrast to the expected trend for increasing rates of antisocial behavior over time among early onset girls, the age-based means for our sample of clinically referred young aggressive girls following treatment tend to be highest for problem behaviors at ages 11 and 12. By age 14, the mean is approximately ½ standard deviation lower than the high point at age 11. It is important to note that although the means for 14-year-old girls on conduct, rule-breaking, and aggression problems were lower than expected, they were still in a borderline-clinical range. This finding suggests that these girls are in need of ongoing support to ensure that they are able to meet the challenges of adolescence and avoid slipping back onto a negative developmental pathway.

For these clinically referred girls, the mean for internalizing problems was highest at age 11. Following the SNAP® GC program, the girls' mean for internalizing problems at age 14 was half a standard deviation lower than this age 11 peak. Given that the early adolescent years are generally associated with increases in girls' anxiety and depressive symptoms, it is encouraging that girls in the SNAP® GC program appeared to demonstrate reductions in rates of internalizing symptoms – at least in these early adolescent years.

Family Risks Before and After the Program

In the present study, we found that problems in parenting prior to treatment were highest when girls were age 9 or 11. The mean for positive interactions between parents and their daughters was also lowest when the girls were age 11. There were also high levels of ineffective parenting for the youngest girls (age 6). In examining the age-based means in the group that received treatment, we found greater consistency across ages in the ineffective, consistent, and rational parenting mean scores, without an elevated mean for problems at age 11. For the positive interaction scales, the mean at age 11 was somewhat low compared with the other ages, but the mean at age 12 was back in line with the other ages. Although we did not have pretreatment data on attachment, we found that the means for avoidance and anxiety were relatively consistent from age 9 to 14.

Conclusion

Our research indicates that, on average, girls and their parents who participated in SNAP® GC interventions demonstrate improved behavioral and emotional coping skills. A focus on both parent and child behaviors is critical to the success of this

program. The age-based trends explored in this chapter provide evidence for the promise of early interventions, such as SNAP® GC. Promotion of healthy development for young aggressive girls and prevention of escalating delinquency and internalizing problems, as is evident among *early onset* girls who received support compared with those without support. The data also indicate that girls' antisocial behavior problems are elevated in the early pubertal stage, as are their parents' difficulties. It may be most effective to identify at-risk girls and begin interventions and prevention efforts early – prior to the early adolescent years. Given the difficulties experienced by parents and within families of aggressive girls, it is important that prevention efforts involve the girls and their caregivers. Because the girls continued to experienced subclinical levels of conduct and rule-breaking problems following intervention, it is essential as they move into adolescence and face the many challenges typical of this period, that they are supported in continuing to develop their self-control, coping, and social problem-solving skills

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Chapter 11
Addressing Girls Delinquency: Recommendations for Policymakers and Practitioners

Janet Chiancone

The results outlined in the chapters of this book offer a comprehensive review of the trends of girls offending, as well as the unique (and same) risks to delinquency that girls experience as compared to boys. Findings offer insight into what we know about the trends and characteristics of girls offending and risk behavior (Chaps. 1, 4, and 5); the unique (as well as similar) factors that contribute to their offending (Chaps. 3, 4, 6–8), and the response (or non-response) of existing systems to provide support, prevention, and treatment (Chaps. 2, 9, and 10).

Official crime statistics in the USA demonstrate that juvenile arrests have dramatically fallen since the mid-1990s (Puzzanchera 2009). However, when it comes to girls, the rates are not dropping as dramatically as boys; nor do we see this sort of reduction when it comes to statistics of girls handled by the juvenile court system (Puzzanchera et al. 2009). Indeed, all indications are that the juvenile justice system is formally handling a larger proportion of girls than ever before – and the outcomes are not necessarily favorable for either girls or the communities in which they live.

One of the most encouraging – yet at the same time troubling – findings revealed through the research is that, contrary to the sound bites of popular news programs, girls are not any more violent today than they were in earlier generations (Steffensmeier et al. 2005; also see Chap. 1). Ironically, despite the women's movement and female advances in political, social, and economic access, one could argue that there has actually been a step backward when it comes to our cultural norms and expectations for girls' behavior and that as a society, our nation appears to be less tolerant of girls' behavior than in the past. Is this because media stories

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about "mean" and violent girls make compelling television entertainment? Despite attempts by respected criminologists to dispel the myths about girls' violence, including a New York Times Op-Ed (Chesney-Lind and Males 2010), the media – in particular television and internet outlets – continue to decry the "mean girls and bullies problem" in our society. Perhaps this phenomenon is also the residual impact of the focus on the alleged "superpredators" from the 1990s? In the early and mid-1990s, some researchers promoted a theory of the emergence in the new century of a generation of young, violent "superpredators." This supposition was picked up by many media outlets, culminating in a *Time Magazine* headline from January 1996 with the headline: "Now for the Bad News: A Teenage Timebomb." This sort of publicity supported the wide ranging "get tough on juvenile crime" policies that followed in just about all of the States – including reducing judicial discretion in prosecuting youth as adults, to formally processing cases that would have previously been diverted from juvenile court. While statistics and many highly regarded criminologists have since debunked the "superpredator" theory, the changes in law and policy that the theory promoted continue to impact how juvenile offenders are handled.

This book provides strong evidence that the increase in girls arrests is influenced by an array of factors, including the implementation of new laws and practices such as zero tolerance policies in schools and for drunk driving (discussed in Chap. 1); adoption of pro- and mandatory arrest laws in domestic violence incidents (Strom et al. 2010; Buzawa and Hotaling 2006; Chesney-Lind 2002 and discussed in Chaps. 3 and 4); bootstrapping and efforts to "protect" girls from their own bad behavior (Feld 2009; Chesney-Lind and Paramore 2001 and discussed in Chaps. 1 and 2); and net-widening, in which behavior that used to be considered "incorrigible" or "acting out" is now resulting in girls' arrests for assault (Feld 2009; Chesney-Lind and Paramore 2001; and discussed in Chaps. 1 and 2). In addition, the arrests of girls appears to have been a collateral consequence of the focus in many urban centers on situational crime prevention and intervention strategies (e.g., "broken windows" policing practices) largely because these strategies tend to focus on "low-level" offenders, a category that girls often fall into (discussed in Chap. 1).

Federal, state, and local policy makers have a key role to play in improving outcomes for girls, and they can start by taking the research findings in this book as guidance. The research findings lead themselves to a series of logical recommendations for improved policies and practice.

Implement arrest alternatives for first-time and low-level offenders – both boys and girls. The result of an arrest can have far-reaching impacts including the stigma of being labeled delinquent and being placed in a juvenile detention facility. Communities need to adopt alternatives to arrest which will ensure that an intervention occurs such that services and assistance can be provided, but which does not begin a process which drives a youth deeper into the juvenile justice system. For example, some communities implement civil citation programs as an alternative to arrest, in which a ticket is issued to the offending youth, requiring a court appearance and/or a referral for services, including a needs assessment to identify areas for assistance.

A primary advantage to this alternative is that the youth will not have a formal record of arrest, yet the court is able to provide (and fund) the needed services.[1]

Another approach used in many communities is the establishment of juvenile assessment centers (also referred to as community assessment centers) which serve as a 24-h single point of entry for youth who are arrested or have police contact, enable the immediate and comprehensive assessment of youth, and provide coordination with other youth serving agencies (Oldenettal and Wordes 2000). As outlined by Woolard in Chap. 3, many girls crossover between the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Strategies to coordinate across service sectors, together with detention alternatives discussed below, can ensure that a juvenile's needs are met without the long-term negative impact of an arrest. Although these approaches can have positive impacts for both genders, since a large proportion of girls who enter the juvenile justice system do so through arrests for first-time and low-level offending, the positive impact for girls could be realized rather quickly.

Engage law enforcement as a partner in girls' delinquency prevention and intervention, and provide them with alternatives to arrest, especially in pro- and mandatory arrest communities. Police are typically the first responders to incidents which result in girls' arrests. Such incidents include calls from schools for fights, as well as household calls for service for incidents of sibling and mother–daughter conflicts. Reforms in policing policies provide law enforcement with less discretion in determining whether or not to make an arrest in these situations and often girls are the ones arrested (Strom et al. 2010). This outcome happens in part because those who contact law enforcement (school officials, parents) refuse to allow the girl to remain, or because the alternative – arresting the parent – results in other challenges for the police.

To illustrate, an often-described scenario by law enforcement in such situations is that arresting the parent will result in having to contact child protective services to place the children who live in the home (the girl and her siblings) into foster care, since the adult is often the sole caregiver in residence. From the police perspective, the decision to arrest the girl (rather than the adult) is not only more expedient but is less disruptive to the family as a whole and in particular to young children in the household. Through training about girls' delinquency and behavior, and education about community resources, law enforcement officers can provide that first line of communication to girls, schools, and families about ways in which the situation can be de-escalated and addressed, and in which an arrest can be prevented. As discussed above, in situations where remaining in the home is not an option, juvenile and community assessment centers provide an immediate, appropriate mechanism for

[1] Florida State Statute XLVII, Chapter 985.12 (Civil Citation), enables the establishment of a Civil Citation (arrest alternative) program at the local level with the concurrence of the chief judge of the circuit, state attorney, public defender, and the head of each local law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction. Miami-Dade County's Juvenile Services Division has had such a program in place since 2007 and has seen drops in arrests overall and cost savings; the program is also being evaluated (see http://www.miamidade.gov/jsd/civil_citation.asp for more information).

responding to the needs of the girl and her family. This option allows police to remove the girl from the home to allow for a "cooling off" period, which also provides an opportunity for assessment of the situation and the girl's needs.

Identify alternatives to detention which provide for the safety and assistance that girls need. Anecdotally, some juvenile court judges report that while they do not like to place girls who are low level and status offenders in secure detention, they feel they have no option but to do so for the girl's own good, in an effort to prevent them from running away and to ensure that they receive services and counseling. Yet, there are communities that successfully balance the need to protect girls with the need to keep them out of the system. The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) administered by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, has worked in a number of communities to successfully reduce the number of youth placed in detention – in particular status offenders – while keeping them safe in alternative placements and programs, such as respite care, shelter programs, and group home settings. JDAI and initiatives in a similar vein take a community-wide approach, which engages professionals at all stages of the juvenile justice system and relies upon assessment data, to explore how to reduce the placement of less serious offenders; this work has also resulted in cost savings which can be redirected to more prevention and services (Annie E. Casey Foundation 2009).

Eliminate the Valid Court Order (VCO) exception to the DSO core requirement under the JJDPA. States receiving Formula Grant funding under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act of 1974, as amended, are required to comply with four core requirements. One of these is the Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (DSO)[2] requirement, which requires that states remove status offenders from secure placement in juvenile or adult facilities. However, many States utilize an exception to this requirement, which enables them to securely detain those status offenders who violate a valid court order. Of the States and territories that participate in the Formula Grants program, over half of them – 31 – utilized the VCO exception in 2007.[3] Between 2005 and 2007, the number of States utilizing the exception grew (from 28 in 2005 and 2006, to 31 in 2007). Over this 3-year period, States reported to OJJDP a total of over 31,000 cases in which the VCO was used. The result is that, in those states, numerous juvenile offenders are held in detention because they failed to comply with a court order which was issued because of a status offense, such as truancy or running away. Although states do not report the gender of those who are held under this exception, anecdotal reports indicate that girls are disproportionately impacted by this exception, primarily because they tend to make up a larger proportion of those arrested for status offenses in the first place.

[2] Status offenses are those acts that would not be crimes if committed by an adult. Examples include running away from home, being truant from school, smoking tobacco, drinking, or possessing alcohol.

[3] Data regarding the use of the Valid Court Order exception, by State or Territory, for 2005, 2006, and 2007 were provided to the author of this chapter through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request on September 30, 2010.

Assess the impact of school zero tolerance policies, and consider revising or dropping them. Juvenile arrests resulting from school referrals to law enforcement have dramatically increased since the implementation of school zero tolerance policies in the late 1990s. Incidents which used to be handled through discipline at the school level – classroom disruption, fights and ungovernable behavior – now appear to be cause for arrest and referral to juvenile court (Chesney-Lind 2002; Feld 2009; also see Chap. 4). Unfortunately, although these arrests have resulted in an increase in the juvenile court caseload, there is no indication that the response to these offending behaviors is more appropriate, provides greater accountability, or results in a more positive outcome than when they were handled at the school level.

Perhaps the primary impact has simply been that more juveniles – a great number of them girls – have been unable to return to their home school and reintegrate into their communities. For many girls, the best case scenario is that they are suspended and can return to their home school, or to an alternative school – the number of which have increased dramatically since the zero tolerance policies began. It is imperative that states and school districts examine the impact of their zero tolerance policies, and consider giving schools the individual discretion, staffing and resources they need to handle these incidents at the lowest possible level. The increase in the number of alternative schools in our nation is beginning to reintroduce a segregated system of education. The reforms to zero tolerance policies are urgently needed, especially now, when recent high profile incidents involving bullying (including cyber-bullying) threaten to only expand zero tolerance policies to be broader, and therefore are likely to result in higher rates of arrest for girls for their "mean" behavior.

Ensure that screening, assessment and services are gender-sensitive and evidence-based. Simply knowing that more girls are being arrested and formally handled within the juvenile justice system is not enough. The fact is that too many girls are coming into the system; but the reality is that they are arriving every day and they need help. Communities – including courts, schools, social services, law enforcement and families – must deliberately move to adopt an intervention process that is gender-sensitive and which handles youth individually; taking into account their individualized needs and strengths.

The first step in that process is to ensure that the screening and assessment of a girl's risks, needs, and strengths is done using instruments and methods that have demonstrated gender-sensitivity and which are also culturally relevant. The OJJDP Girls Study Group reviewed over 140 risk and needs assessment instruments and found that about half showed favorable gender-based analysis or provided gender-based development.[4] Chapter 7 discusses the complex set of mental health problems experienced by girls in juvenile justice settings, and in particular, the linkages between trauma and delinquency for girls. Nearly all chapters in this book identify victimization and trauma as a correlate to delinquency for girls – this includes the high rates of sexual abuse among delinquent girls, the crossover between the child

[4] Suitability of Assessment Instruments for Delinquent Girls Web-tool is available online at https://www.nttac.org/GirlsStudyGroup/instruments1.cfm

welfare and delinquency system, elevated rates of post-traumatic stress disorder among justice-involved girls, and even the experience of a traumatic event as part of entering a gang. Recent findings from the Survey of Youth in Residential Placement (SYRP),[5] a comprehensive survey of a national sample of youth in custody, only reinforces those findings. The SYRP found that, when compared to boys, a larger proportion of girls in custody report higher than average numbers of mental or emotional problems and traumatic experiences. Over one-third of girls in custody report a history of sexual abuse, which is four times the number of boys in custody who report this abuse history. In addition, twice as many girls than boys report past physical abuse and suicide attempts. While the rates of girls that report receiving individual counseling while in custody are higher than boys, the girls give their counseling lower ratings. Chapter 6 provides in-depth qualitative data on the substance use needs of court-involved girls. Similarly, one of the most notable findings of the SYRP is the significantly higher level of drug experience reported by girls in custody than boys in custody, and the effects of that drug use. When compared to boys, girls report using a wider array of drugs, and report that their use of drugs or alcohol kept them from meeting their responsibilities. Girls are also more likely to report having a recent blackout experience. Interestingly, fewer females than males are housed in facilities that offer substance abuse education, provide specialized units for substance abusing youth or offer ongoing treatment for substance abuse (Sedlak and McPherson 2010).

When it comes to the intervention and treatment services themselves, communities should explore and adopt programs that have been tested and shown to work for girls, or they should evaluate the programs and strategies they are already implementing to determine if they are working as intended. The pool of girls' delinquency programs which research has shown will reduce delinquency risk factors and recidivism is extremely limited. Chapters 9 and 10 describe two evidence-based interventions that have undertaken rigorous evaluations to measure impacts on girls delinquency and risk behavior. These include Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) and Stop Now and Plan (SNAP) Girls Connection. Both intervention programs showed very encouraging results in terms of reducing delinquency among girls, and improvements in protective factors. Additionally, some of the programs within the Blueprints for Violence Prevention Initiative (Blueprints for Violence Prevention 2010), including Multisystemic Family Therapy and Functional Family Therapy, have also shown effective results for girls, although these programs were not originally designed specifically for female juvenile offenders. Unfortunately, these programs are in a very lonely category. A review by the Girls Study Group indicated that of over 60 girls delinquency programs in existence, none could be classified as effective or even promising (Zahn et al. 2008). Nor could the GSG conclude that these programs were ineffective. The problem is simply that there is

[5] The Survey of Youth in Residential Placement (SYRP) was sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). Information about the survey and findings can be found at http://www.syrp.org.

inadequate research to make conclusions one way or another. This finding only highlights the urgent need for programs that work with delinquent girls to track outcomes, and to carry out an evaluation.

Focus on girls and their relationships – especially relationships with their female caregivers and female peers. A primary focus of the intervention at the policy and practice level, as well as when it comes to program services, needs to be on the quality of the relationship that girls have with their mothers and mother-figures. The data indicate that a large proportion of the girls' arrests which occur are the result of in-home conflict between girls and their siblings and/or their mothers (Strom et al. 2010; also see Chap. 4). It would be best to prevent this conflict in the first place, by expanding family-strengthening programs for at-risk families. Unfortunately, many "family-strengthening" programs focus largely on parenting skills for mothers and their young children. These programs often ignore the often complex and difficult relationship issues between preteen or adolescent girls and their mothers.

An exception to this is the program outlined in Chap. 10, SNAP Girls Connection. A concerted effort is needed to initiate bonding and communication activities, especially those that target strengthening, and sometimes simply building a relationship between girls and their caregivers. The sorts of activities that promote mother–daughter attachment are discussed in Chap. 10. For girls that are in custody, detention, and reentry programs need to be sure to have program components that promote positive communication and relationship strengthening so that after release girls can return home. These programs need to work with more than just the girl, of course, so parents/caregivers need to be fully engaged in the process. While many girls, programs include "connecting with positive adult figures" as a component in their overall strategy, very few appear to be centered around building the relationship between girls and their parents or adult caregivers, including their mothers. Specifically, the focus of most programs is on the individual girl, rather than addressing the larger systemic issues involved in conflict and communication between girls and their caregivers and siblings.

Programs also need to address the challenges that delinquent girls face in establishing and maintaining relationships with their female peers. As discussed in Chap. 6, many delinquent girls have problems relating to other girls and do not approach their female peers in the same way as girls in the general population. The friends that they do have are typically male (both romantic and non-romantic), and older. In addition, Chap. 5 outlines girls' involvement in gangs and reasons for involvement. Many girls' delinquency programs include group activities and opportunities for building peer relationships with other girls. These methods need to be evaluated to identify what is working and what could be replicated in other settings.

Support research and evaluation on girls risk behavior and offending. While the research outlined in this volume greatly advances our understanding of girls' at-risk behavior and delinquency, substantial gaps remain. Many of the chapters identify areas where more research is needed and policymakers and practitioners must take note of these recommendations. When a body of research is insufficient, we may over-rely on the limited findings available, and/or on anecdotes. The lack of data

comprises our ability to make informed decisions when it comes to prevention, intervention, and treatment for girls.

In general, the research needs to look at issues across the juvenile justice system and how the various decision points in that system impact girls (as well as who the girls are at these different decision points). For example, apart from a few studies of specific facilities or jurisdictions, very little is known about the experience of girls in custody (both in detention and corrections), as well as the largest population of girls in the system – those on probation. Some of the most important findings noted in this book are those garnered from longitudinal studies. It is crucial that these studies continue to be supported because what they tell us – about the experiences of girls, their families, and how it compares to formal contact with the juvenile justice system – are unmatched by other types of research.

Furthermore, although more quantitative research is sorely needed, also important is continued support of qualitative research efforts that can provide context and meaning to the findings. Qualitative research also enables us to include the girls own voices in the discussion of the findings and their implications for policy and practice. For example, while much of the research to date has established that victimization and traumatic experiences are parts of delinquent girls' histories, it is important to note that the girls themselves usually do not see themselves as victims. This sort of information can usually only be learned through qualitative research, yet has major implications when it comes to designing interventions and treatment programs.

Use data to examine issues of disproportionate contact for minority girls and respond appropriately. Another area in which we need more information is regarding how a girl's race and ethnicity interacts with her experiences in the juvenile justice system. The chapters of this book begin to shed light on previously unexplored issues, and the impact of these issues on the girls that are represented within the studies. In addition, the chapters discuss race and ethnicity within the context of the findings they report. Nonetheless, the limited research available makes it difficult to identify systematic issues which may impact girls with particular cultural, ethnic, or racial characteristics. Therefore, it is important that the findings are not used by policymakers and practitioners to make generalizations about the risk and offending behavior of all girls, or of their experience with the juvenile justice system.

Interestingly, the existing studies of girls in the juvenile justice system tend to include substantial groups of girls of color – this is most likely a reflection of the disproportionate number of minority girls that are being handled formally by the system. Since states and localities do not typically use their data to examine issues of disparate treatment and handling of minority girls, it is impossible to conclude that what works in one community to reduce girls entering the justice system will work in another. The limited information also makes designing programs that are appropriate and responsive to individual girls' needs very challenging. While the research regarding the needs and appropriate responses for all girls is sparse, when it comes to minority girls the information is even more limited. Two groups of girls for which there is almost no information available are American Indian/Alaska Native girls (especially those who live in tribal communities), and new immigrant girls. A major start would be for State and local policymakers and practitioners to

better understand their own population of girls – in their community, schools, child welfare system, courts, and facilities. Such work is a critical first step to understanding where there is disparity, and where resources should be targeted.

The recommendations above identify some important partners that need to be engaged in any effort to improve the juvenile justice system response to girls' risk behavior and delinquency. Law enforcement, courts, schools, mental health and social service providers, parents and the media – among others – need to be a part of any initiative that seeks to tackle girls offending (see Chap. 3 in particular for a detailed discussion of child welfare and girls' delinquency). It should start with a joint commitment to gain a better understanding of girls' needs, how we respond to those needs, and how we communicate with the larger society about them. Unfortunately, the increase in girls' arrests over the past decade, coupled with high profile incidents of "girl fights" and bullying incidents has strengthened the public perception of girls being "out of control." The combination of these factors shows that the issue of girls' delinquency does not happen in a vacuum, but is strongly impacted by our cultural norms and expectations. Girls are not more violent or delinquent today than they have been for the past many decades (Steffensmeier et al. 2005). The change has been in how they are perceived by the larger society, and especially by those who are implementing school and crime policies. Girls who get labeled as having bad behavior within school and other environments, engage in argumentative behavior with parents and siblings, skip school and eventually are arrested and locked up can become a self-fulfilling prophecy when our society expects it. That is why a comprehensive understanding of the policies and practices which contribute to the increase of girls entering the delinquency system is so crucial.

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