

Women and Girls' Offending

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Theories Part I

Positivist, Evolutionary, Strain, Differential Association, Social Control, and Women's Emancipation Theories

The academic field of criminology is implicitly colonizing . . . a discipline built upon penal tourism, applying a tour-bus approach to ideas on crime, casually sightseeing and piecing together snapshots of medical anthropology, biology, sociology, psychology, and patriarchal conceptions of racial gender to produce an incomplete yet seemingly cohesive conception of “the criminal.”

—Saleh-Hanna (2017, pp. 698, 691)

Most criminological theories were constructed by men and about why (some) men and boys break the law (Chesney-Lind & Chagnon, 2016; Leonard, 1982; Messerschmidt, 1993; Naffine, 1996). Criminology is not unique among academic disciplines in its historical exclusion of women and girls from most research questions (Fausto-Sterling, 1985; Allison Morris, 1987; Smart, 1976; Spender, 1981), but it is ironic given that sex/gender is one of the best predictors of criminality across time (Britton, 2000, p. 60) and age (Loeber & Farrington, 2000). There are two important implications of focusing solely on men and boys' experiences: (1) The theories and findings are really theories and findings about boys and men's crime, and (2) we must question the validity of any “general” theory if it does not also apply to girls/women (Allison Morris, 1987, p. 2).

Rasche (1975) offered three explanations for the historical neglect of women's offending: (1) Women make up a small percentage of prisoners (approximately 7%, currently); (2) prison authorities are more likely to oppose research on women (than on men) prisoners; and (3) women are deemed insignificant compared to the more "deserving" offenders: men. Smart (1976) reported that when women offenders were acknowledged in criminology research, it was in terms of their deviations from the stereotypical aspects of women's lives, such as maternal deprivation. Further, women law-breakers historically (and to some degree today) have been viewed as "abnormal" and as "worse" than male law-breakers—not only for breaking the law but also for stepping outside of prescribed gender roles of femininity and passivity.

Rasche's (1975) and Smart's (1976) charges still prevail to some extent, although there has been a huge increase in research on women prisoners and girl delinquents since 1975, particularly from a feminist perspective. This is due to three reasons. First, since 1980, the beginning of mass incarceration in the U.S., women's increasing rate of incarceration even outpaced men's (see Chapter 7 in this book). Second, the feminist movement influenced most scholars to acknowledge the significance of gender in studying crime and proposing theories. Finally, as stated previously, the feminist movement also resulted in far more women and feminist scholars studying crime.

It is impossible to discuss all theories that have been applied to offending and victimization, even in two chapters. The chapters are divided starting with some of the more sexist (and racist, classist, and heterosexist) theories, although not all of the theories in this chapter fall into this category, and some have been supported in feminist scholarship. The most sexist theories in this chapter are the positivist, evolutionary, and women's emancipation theories. The ones that have omitted girls/women underpinnings but have been more carefully applied include strain, differential association, and social control theories.¹ Finally, many of the studies reported in this and the following chapter use the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health data, often referred to as Add Health. These longitudinal data of nationally representative U.S. youths began in 1994 with the Wave I of questionnaires distributed to about 20,000 students in Grades 7 through 12, followed by Wave II in 1996 when almost 15,000 of the same individuals were interviewed, and to date, three more waves involving reinterviews. Wave IV, the most recently available at the time of writing this edition of this book, were when the research subjects were 24 to 32 years old.

The Original and Positivist Studies

The original and positivist studies of female criminality were conducted between the end of the 19th century and the middle of the 20th century. The most prominent researchers included Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero (1895/2004),

¹Some of these were or are called hypotheses instead of theories, but for simplicity, they will almost routinely be referred to as theories in this and the next chapter.

W. I. Thomas (1923, 1967a, 1967b), Sigmund Freud (1933), and Otto Pollak (1950). These studies were grounded in the belief that biological determinism accounts for female criminality: Whereas men are rational, women are driven by their biological constitutions. Positivist approaches were informed by four main assumptions: (1) Individual characteristics, not society, are responsible for criminal behavior; (2) there is an identifiable biological nature inherent in all women; (3) offending women are “masculine,” which makes them incompetent as women and thus prone to break the law; and (4) the differences between male and female criminality are due to sex, not gender, differences. The classical theorists have been accused of viewing women as turning to crime because of their “perversion of or rebellion against their natural feminine roles” (Klein, 1973, p. 5).

In addition to the sexist nature of the classical studies, they also have been classist, racist, and heterosexist, focusing on wealthy, white, straight, married women as the “feminine” standard. These theorists’ works are reviewed in the following sections. The historic legacy of racial criminalization is the U.S. history of equating a specific race with crime and the ongoing discrimination, assuming crime is biologically inherent to every race but white (Delgado, 1994; Hernández, 2017; Russell-Brown, 2009), including Black/African Americans (Hernández, 2017; Muhammad, 2010), Indigenous/Native Americans (Hernández, 2017; Ross, 1998), Latinx Americans (Flores, 2018; Hernández, 2017), and Asian Americans (Hernández, 2017). Notably, racial criminalization is even more heightened for immigrants of Color, regardless of whether they have become citizens (Flores, 2018; Hernández, 2017), and President Donald Trump’s racist rhetoric and practices regarding Latinx immigrants have increased equating Latinx people with crime (Flores, 2018), an association that is highly inaccurate. More specifically, research on the percentage of Latinx immigrants (and sometimes total number of Latinx residents regardless of citizen status) in an area is unrelated to the crime rate, or is actually a protective factor, with more Latinx residents related to lower crime rates (Light & Miller, 2018; Ramos & Wenger, 2019; Tosh, 2019; Wadsworth, 2010).

Similarly, before the 1970s it was customary practice in countries of the Global North (colonizers) to equate what we now refer to as LGBTQI+ with “criminal” and “deviant” (see Woods, 2015). The deviancy and criminal labels were applied to queer people for being gender nonconforming (if they were women/girls who presented as masculine or men/boys who were feminine) and for being sexual deviants for being attracted to their same sex (Woods, 2015). Queer criminology scholar Woods (2015) found that although the 1970s were key in the beginning of LGBTQI+ pride, LGBTQI+ people became invisible, disappearing from mainstream criminology and delinquency theories (p. 133).

Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909)

Lombroso, a physician, psychiatrist, and criminal anthropologist who studied incarcerated men and women in 19th-century Italy, is often referred to as the “father” of criminology. In forging a legacy of scientific studies of crime, however, his positivist method set the stage for sexist, racist, heterosexist, and classist approaches to studying the causes of crime and responding to alleged criminals. He published the first

edition of *Criminal Man* in Italian in 1876, and with his son-in-law, Guglielmo Ferrero, Lombroso published *Criminal Woman, the Prostitute, and the Normal Woman* (also referred to in English as *Criminal Woman* and *The Female Offender*) in Italian in 1893. Although *Criminal Woman* was first published in English two years later (in 1895), it was a far briefer version of the original *Criminal Woman* and retitled *The Female Offender* (Vyleta, 2006). Moreover, despite a total of five editions of *Criminal Man* published between 1876 and 1897, it was not published in English until 1911 (also a briefer version of the original but not as significantly cut as *Criminal Woman*) (Beccalossi, 2008). The late feminist criminologist Nicole Hahn Rafter, with historian Mary Gibson, provided far more detailed and comprehensive English translations of *Criminal Woman* in 2004 (Lombroso & Ferrero, 1895/2004) and material from all five editions of *Criminal Man* in 2006 (Lombroso 1876–1897/2006), which also includes Rafter and Gibson’s commentary on inconsistencies and troubling assumptions and positions.

Central to Lombroso’s work over time was his identification of *atavism*, a “throwback” to an earlier evolutionary human development stage, to explain criminal behavior. “Lombroso firmly maintained that deviants are less highly evolved than ‘normal’ law abiding citizens” (Smart, 1976, p. 31). In *Criminal Man*, Lombroso first proposed a racial hierarchy with Black Africans at the bottom and white Europeans at the top, identifying people of Color as “savages” with physiological and psychological anomalies (Lombroso, 1876–1897/2006). In the 1984 edition, Lombroso added the category of “born criminal” and added “degeneration to atavism to explain physical and biological malformation....rather than inherited weakness” (Beccalossi, 2008, p. 130). In their search for degeneration and atavism, and assuming criminal behavior was a biological trait, Lombroso and Ferrero measured and documented incarcerated women’s craniums, heights, weights, hair color (and baldness), moles, tattoos, and genitalia. Racism surfaces here in their description of how women of Color “resemble men in their strength, intelligence, and sexual promiscuity” (Lombroso & Ferrero, 1895/2004, p. 18). Another troubling impact of Lombroso and Ferrero’s (1895/2004) work is their association between women and girls’ sexuality and their offending, whereby they viewed women criminals as having been born with “exaggerated eroticism,” which was assumed to make them narcissistic (e.g., about their own sexual desires), more like men, and to make them prostitutes (p. 185). They state, “all those feelings of affection that bind woman to man are born not of sexual impulse, but from instincts of subjection and devotion acquired through adaptation” (p. 76). Oddly, Lombroso and Ferrero concluded that women offenders showed less degeneration (criminality and deviance) than men simply because women had not evolved as much as men, despite claiming that criminals were more atavistic (than noncriminals). That is, despite women’s perceived slower evolution, Lombroso and Ferrero viewed them as *less* likely than men to be criminal because they were “inferior” to men (Flood, 2007, p. 215).

Lombroso and Ferrero (1895/2004) provided two simplistic categories available to women, both of which they considered inferior to men: (1) bad, primitive, and masculine women; and (2) law-abiding, civilized, and feminine women (p. 10). Feinman (1986) identified this as a biologically driven Madonna/whore duality (p. 4). Madonnas were subservient, loyal, and submissive to their husbands who protected them, but the “whores” received men’s punishment for being evil and causing men pain and destroying them. Woods (2015) documents the legacy of

Lombroso's characterizations of queer women and men as inherently criminal, resulting in gender-nonconforming and queer people being "viewed through a lens of deviance" (p. 135).

Clearly, regardless of gender, by focusing on the physical and psychological makeup of the individual in determining criminal behavior, Lombroso and Ferrero dismissed both the effects of socialization or social-structural constraints as important determinants of criminal behavior, and the impact of sexist, racist, and/or classist *labeling* of behavior as criminal. Lombroso and Ferrero's work had devastating effects on the Italian women's movement at the time, providing "proof" that women are biologically inferior to men, thus unworthy of equality demands in education, work, and the home (Lombroso & Ferrero, 1895/2004). Notably, the "father" of criminology's work had longer lasting and more negative impacts on the study of female crime than on male crime (Lombroso & Ferrero, 1895/2004, p. 4).

W. I. Thomas (1863–1947), Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), and Otto Pollak (1908–1998)

Thomas, a U.S. sociologist heavily influenced by Lombroso, wrote the books *Sex and Society* (1907/1967a) and *The Unadjusted Girl* (1923/1967b), in which he constructed overly simplistic links between gender, sexuality, class, and crime. Considered more liberal than Lombroso, he defined criminality as "a socially induced pathology rather than a biological abnormality" (Smart, 1976, p. 37). Yet, his seeming obsession with women and girls' sexuality and denial of sexist access to opportunity indicate he was not so different. For example, like Lombroso and Ferrero, Thomas viewed gender differences in the likelihood to become "politicians, great artists, and intellectual giants" as sex (biological) differences, overlooking the strong societal restrictions of women during that era (Smart, 1976, p. 37). An example of a sex difference Thomas promoted was that love varieties are inherent in nervous systems, and women have more love varieties, resulting in their disproportionate "and intense need to give and feel love," which lead them into prostitution where they are "merely looking for the love and tenderness which all women need" (Smart, 1976, p. 39), discounting that most people who engage in sex work do so because access to legal or similarly lucrative work is not available to them. Similarly, Thomas equated girls and women's sex-outside-of-marriage with delinquency/criminality, whereas this "promiscuity" was never mentioned regarding boys and men's delinquency and criminality (Heidensohn, 1985, p. 117). He purported that middle-class women are less criminal due to their investment in protecting their chastity, while poor women long for crime in the manner of a new experience, and delinquent girls manipulate males into sex as a means of achieving their own goals.

Thomas favored psychological over economic motivations to explain female criminality; the disadvantaged position of women and girls in society held little importance to him in accounting for gender differences in crime. Given that Thomas was writing in an era of mass illness and starvation, the choice to ignore economic deprivation as a potential cause of female crime is rather remarkable (Klein, 1973). His later work, however, acknowledged that women were property of men, and he departed from social Darwinism to examine the complexity of

the interaction between society and the individual (Klein 1973). The impact of “promiscuity” being attributed almost solely to girls and women has had a lasting impact on their criminalization, as will be seen later in this book.

Founder of psychoanalysis, Austrian Sigmund Freud, centered his explanations of female behavior around the belief that women are anatomically inferior to men—hence, Freud’s infamous “penis envy” approach to explaining female behavior. To Freud, the healthy woman experiences heterosexual sex as a receptor, where sexual pleasure consists of pain, while the sexually healthy man is heterosexual and aggressive and inflicts pain (Klein, 1973). Included in this analysis is a glorification of women’s duties as wives and mothers and, in turn, the view that medical treatment of deviant women involves “helping” them adjust to their “proper” traditional gender roles (Klein, 1973, p. 5). In addition to the obvious sexism, Freud’s theories are fraught with racism, classism, and heterosexism, whereby “only upper- and middle-class women could possibly enjoy lives as sheltered darlings” (Klein, 1973, p. 18).

Pollak’s (1950) book *The Criminality of Women*, published more than a half century after Lombroso and Ferrero’s work, is intricately linked with their approach. Like Thomas, Pollak believed both biological and sociological factors affect crime. But like Thomas, Lombroso and Ferrero, Pollak portrayed biology and physiology as the fundamental influences on female criminality, repeating many of their assumptions and prejudices (Smart, 1976). Pollak purported that there are no real gender differences in offending, but rather, relative to boys and men, girls and women “mask” (hide) their crimes. In addition, girls and women receive more chivalrous (lenient) treatment in the criminal legal system, making it appear that they are less criminal. His supporting evidence for girls and women’s “deceitful” nature is their ability to hide their menstruation and orgasms and their inactive roles during sexual intercourse. One wonders what happened to girls and women who did *not* hide that they were menstruating, especially in that era. Additionally, Pollak failed to consider that women’s inactive role during heterosexual sex (where it existed or exists) may be culturally, rather than biologically, determined. Further, women’s training in acquiescence to men, particularly during sex, could account for the fact that women were not hiding orgasms but rather were not experiencing them. Smart compares Pollak’s deceitful woman analysis to Eve’s deceit with Adam (in the Bible), where women are viewed as evil and cunning: “It is Pollak’s contention that women are the masterminds behind criminal organizations; that they are the instigators of crime rather than the perpetrators; that they can and in fact do manipulate men into committing offenses whilst remaining immune from arrest themselves” (Smart, 1976, p. 47).

The Legacies of the Positivist Theorists From the 1960s and 1970s

The enduring effects of the positivists can be viewed in the research on female criminality that was published in the 1960s and 1970s. Similar to Pollak, Konopka’s (1966) book, *The Adolescent Girl in Conflict*, and Vedder and Somerville’s (1970) *The Delinquent Girl* identify girls as criminal instigators. Konopka views girls’ crime as a

result of emotional and sexuality problems, whereas Vedder and Sommerville view it as a result of girls' inability to adjust to the "normal" female role (Klein, 1973). Most disquieting, Vedder and Sommerville attribute high rates of delinquency among African American girls to "their lack of 'healthy' feminine narcissism"—an explanation with racist overtones (Klein, 1973, p. 25). Both books ignore economic and social explanations at the expense of explaining female criminality through physiology and psychology. Following this logic, they see psychotherapy as the solution to girls' delinquency and ignore the need to address the potentially criminogenic social and economic constraints in which many delinquent girls were (and still are) enmeshed. Finally, in their book *Delinquency in Girls*, Cowie, Cowie, and Slater (1968), rely on masculinity, femininity, and chromosomes to explain girls' criminality. "In this perspective, the female offender is different physiologically and psychologically from the 'normal' girl," in that the delinquent girl is too masculine and is rebelling against her femininity (Klein, 1973, p. 27).

Taken together, the positivists failed to see sexism in access to power, nor how this could intersect with race, class, and other characteristics. Thus, in the positivist school, even when some professed that social and economic factors could also play a role, women and girls' criminal (and some other) behaviors were believed to be largely biologically determined and often tied to their sexuality. The complexity of their criminal behavior was reduced to a challenge of the traditional gender role—a role not rooted in nature (biology), but rather societally specified. The positivists assumed that the girl or woman who defied the prescribed gender role had a problem, and thus the positivists were blind to the possibility that there was a problem with gender prescribed roles, regardless of girls and women's resources or situations, individually or collectively. They failed to recognize the racist and classist aspects of patriarchy whereby the prescribed societal gender roles often vary across race and class, with different (racist and classist) implications among women and girls (Rice, 1990). As we will see in the following three chapters, women and girls' offending is often still interpreted through a positivist lens, and the responses to offending girls and women are too often practiced with vestiges of the traditional or positivist approach, fraught with sexism, racism, and classism, and sex-negativity, including a hypervigilance about women and girls' sexuality.

Biosocial and Evolutionary (Psychological) Theories (BSETs)

One could argue that the primary legacy of the positivists from the 1990s are the researchers promoting the biosocial and evolutionary theories (BSETs). Since the 1990s, BSET theorists have gained increasing recognition for their claims that we cannot ignore biology in the commission of crimes or even blaming victims (at least in part, responsible for their victimizations). Biology as the "driver" is troublingly reminiscent of the early positivist theories. Notably, Saleh-Hanna (2017) compares the Global North's current "biosocial evolutionary perspective with criminology's

positivism, witnessing how this alliance infects and colonizes mainstream conceptions of crime and justice” (p. 691).

A 2009 article, “What Biosocial Criminology Offers Criminology,” while making a strong plug for the theory, only very briefly addresses gender and then does so in sexist contexts. Wright and Boisvert (2009) claim that men are more violent than women because women’s mating preferences are for the biologically competitive men (who will provide for them and their future children). However, it is unclear, and indeed counterintuitive, why women would prefer violent men and why they would be better providers and fathers. A large BSET study using U.S. federal sentencing data found that both men and women committed less physical aggression during property offending if they were parents (as opposed to nonparents) (Boothroyd & Cross, 2016). Although the authors did not have access to the individuals’ testosterone levels, they concluded that parental status was related to physical aggression due to lowered testosterone levels because other studies have reported lower testosterone levels during parenthood (which seems like a bit of a scientific leap to make).

L. Ellis (2004, p. 144) believes that the Y-chromosome and testosterone predispose most males to criminality in the form of nonplayful competition and victimizing behaviors around the onset of puberty “as they start their reproductive careers,” although other research insists “there is no evidence of an increase in aggression coinciding with puberty” (Archer, 2009, p. 259). Another study “proving” the link between male sex hormones and crime was a study of college students’ self-reported criminality and “androgen-promoted” physical traits, such as body hair, body strength, and penis size; as predicted, the men who reported the largest penises, most body hair, and so on, reported the most violent criminality (L. Ellis, Das, & Buker, 2008). L. Ellis et al. (2008) do not seem concerned that the men “doing gender” as hypermasculinity might also exaggerate their strength, body hair, and penis sizes. Alternatively, Archer (2009) believes that “physical aggression occurs as an innate pattern of behavior [by age two in both sexes] that is subsequently inhibited by social learning, to different extents in boys and girls” (p. 265).

BSET as an Explanation of Sexual Abuse

A significant amount of the BSET resurgence in the last quarter century has been to explain infidelity (cheating on one’s romantic/sexual partner) and gender-based abuses such as rape, intimate partner abuse, and child abuse (including child sexual abuse) rather than general offending or delinquency. Even in her groundbreaking book *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (discussed more fully in Chapters 7 and 8), feminist Brownmiller (1975) views rape as possible because men have penetrating penises and women have penetrable vaginas. BSET explanations of men’s violence against women emphasize that “sexually aggressive behavior is a biopsychosocial phenomenon that is primarily engaged in by males” (Hall, Hirschman, Graham, & Zaragoza, 1993, p. 1). But both males and females have genitalia that can be abused, and Cahill (2001) effectively argues that males also have penetrable anuses that can be sexually abused (by any gender). If we recognize that it is the ability to coerce or

physically overpower another person through forceful sexual contact, then clearly sexual abusers and victims alike can be any gender. Given that most babysitting, child-care work, childhood teaching, and parenting are performed by women (or girls) who typically have considerably more physical power than the children they oversee, we would expect child sexual abuse to be predominantly committed by women and girls. This is clearly not the case and defies the BSET contention that physical domination ability is the main determinant of sexually abusing,

Many current-day promoters of BSET claim to integrate the biosocial approach with social theory (just as some of the early positivists did), and some, even with feminist theory. But the result (similar to the similarly situated early positivists) is claiming that biology, with perhaps a smattering of sociological forces, predicts why females are victims and males are offenders. In this context, gender-based abuses (i.e., rape and intimate partner abuse) are typically explained (or even excused) by such biological forces as sex drives and hormones. Key to the evolutionary theory approach is the concept of *adaptation*. As applied to investigating why men/boys perpetrate rape, it is as an adaption that “would increase the reproduction or survival of descendants and, therefore, that person’s genetic material” (Burch & Gallup, 2004, p. 244).

L. Ellis (1993, p. 23) uses natural selection to explain that our gender roles are a result of our biological dispositions, whereby men gain by being pushy about sex and women gain by showing such feminine traits as coyness and hesitancy. He suggests men and boys compete for the best female sex partners, whereas girls and women compete with each other to find the best male who can provide for their offspring. Ellis believes that males do not rape because they want to dominate females but that they use these dominating and aggressive rape behaviors simply to copulate (have sexual intercourse) and spread their genes (p. 24). Similarly, Duntley and Shackelford (2008) report, “Rape is a strategy aimed directly at obtaining reproductive resources at a cost to the victim. A male rapist may benefit from the behavior by siring offspring that he may not otherwise have produced” (p. 376). Sociobiologists believe that men “naturally” pursue more sexual partners (to better plant their seeds), while women are more “naturally” monogamous (to be choosier in picking the fathers of their future children).

Baker’s (1996) *Sperm Wars* details (without any references to other research and no subsequent validation) ways in which sperm are “egg-getters” (try to fertilize ova) and “egg-killers” (try to kill other men’s sperm inside of women) and how confusing, unpredictable, and moody women are relative to men. L. Ellis and Walsh (1997) claim that women resist sex/rape until they are confident the male will provide for their offspring. Of course, this simplistic reasoning does not explain why men and boys, premenstrual girls, postmenopausal women, women and girls on effective birth control, and others would resist rape. Not surprisingly, Ellis and Walsh’s perspective is not only sexist but also racist and classist. For example, they suggest African Americans are more criminal than Whites and Asian Americans due to “an evolutionary foundation for racial/ethnic differences” (p. 252).

In 2000, Thornhill and Palmer published the controversial book *A Natural History of Rape: Biological Bases of Sexual Coercion*, claiming that an evolutionary approach is better suited to understanding the causes of rape than are social

science and social learning. Like L. Ellis (1993), they view rape as an adaptation used by men who are unsuccessful in their efforts to have consensual sex with women. The book has been soundly criticized on numerous fronts, including ignoring scientific evidence, misrepresenting facts, and being simplistic and misleading (Coyne & Berry, 2000; Ward & Siegert, 2002). With an amusing example, Coyne and Berry (2000) point out that evolutionary psychology and the focus on adaptation, specifically that natural selection is the basis for all human actions, are problematic: “The most imaginative and committed sociobiologist would be hard-pressed to show that masturbation, sadomasochism, bestiality, and pornography’s enthusiasm for high heels are all direct adaptations” (p. 122).

A 2014 BSET study using NIBRS (a U.S. police database) define it as “the largest sample of sexual assaults ever analyzed” (Felson & Cundiff, 2014, p. 281). The aim was to show that sexual assault is an exception to the Felson and Cundiff’s earlier age-desistance phenomenon (that most offenders slow or stop their criminal behavior as they age). They state:

Older men have almost as strong a sexual attraction to younger women as do younger men. . . . However, since young women tend not to be sexually attracted to older men, older men do not have sexual access to young women. While prostitutes provide older men opportunities for consensual sex with young women, their services are expensive. As a result, some men use illegitimate means, i.e., sexual assault, to satisfy their conventional aspirations. (Felson & Cundiff, 2014, p. 274)

Felson and Cundiff’s simplistic argument is that young women aged 15 to 19 are at the greatest risk of men raping them “because of their contact with motivated offenders, their vulnerability, and their sexual maturity and attractiveness” (p. 282), although they include no measures of victims’ and nonvictims’ “attractiveness” or sexual maturity. Because Felson and Cundiff (2014) found “males of all ages are likely to target young women” (p. 278) (but males also target boys and young men) and older men are more likely to commit sexual than physical assaults (p. 279), they concluded “the tendency for sexual assaults to involve male offenders and female victims reflects male sexuality rather than attitudes about women” (p. 273). In sum, BSET is used to excuse rapists while blaming biology and women and girl victims.

BSET as an Explanation of Intimate Partner Abuse (IPA)

In addition to sexual abuse, BSET is used as an explanation for intimate partner abuse (IPA) (domestic violence) (Janssen et al., 2005). One evolutionary psychologist insinuates that all women are more attracted to more domineering men (Barber, 1995, p. 418). A small study solely of men verbally and physically abusive to their wives attributed their IPA to their elevated testosterone levels (Soler, Vinayak, & Quadagno, 2000), while a larger study found no relationship between men and boys’ aggression and their testosterone levels (Huesmann, Lefkowitz, Eron, & Walder, 1984). Yet other BSET proponents hypothesized that “men’s partner-directed violence is

produced by psychological mechanisms evolved to solve the adaptive problem of paternity uncertainty” (Kaighobadi & Shackelford, 2009, p. 282). Other BSET studies focus on “competitively disadvantaged males” (CDMs), hypothesizing that men who rate as low quality for mates because of their low socioeconomic status and physical unattractiveness are more likely to use coerciveness and violence to gain sex (because it may be their only access to it) and to use violent sex against their wives and children in order to terrorize their wives (dominating their wives through abusing their children) into not leaving them (e.g., Figueredo et al., 2001; Figueredo & McCloskey, 1993). Once again, this approach is inherently offensive on numerous levels (e.g., class and societal ideas of attractiveness). Ironically, Figueredo and his colleagues’ test of this found the opposite of what was hypothesized: CDMs were more likely to abuse competitively disadvantaged females (CDFs) than the “higher mate quality [women] partners” they would seemingly need to abuse to “keep” (Figueredo et al., 2001, p. 315).

A survey study of women claimed to confirm BSET, reporting that women’s fear of crime levels predict their long-term mates, specifically that women with higher fear of crime levels prefer “aggressively dominant and physically formidable” mates (Snyder et al., 2011). This study did not address the culturally gendering phenomena confirmed by other research, by which women and girls are socialized to be afraid of crime and rape (Rader & Haynes, 2011; van Eijk, 2017), so much so that protecting themselves from men raping them is as a realistic, additional, gendered, and financial burden girls and women bear (Bitton & Shavit, 2015). And then there is the stark irony of society encouraging women to seek protection from men for men’s gender-based abuses of them.

Feminist and Other Responses to the Application of BSET to Gender-Based Abuses

Still others (not cited earlier) support BSET and/or using biology as a “cause” of crime, including gender-based abuses (e.g., Barber, 1995; Crawford & Johnston, 1999; Hines & Saudino, 2004; Wrangham & Peterson, 1996). Yet, the BSET explanation that gender-based abuses are biologically determined does not simply fly in the face of feminism but of science as well (e.g., Cahill, 2001; Fausto-Sterling, 2000; Small, 1993; T. Taylor, 1996). *Evolution, Gender, and Rape*, edited by C. B. Travis (2003), is an interdisciplinary book comprised solely of responses to Thornhill and Palmer (2000) and is unanimously critical of the “bad science” employed in *A Natural History of Rape*. Perhaps Cahill (2001) sums it up best when she poignantly argues in *Rethinking Rape*: “It is at least theoretically possible to understand the penis as other than a penetrating, violent tool, and indeed to rid it of such meaning entirely; and it is this theoretical possibility that affords room for hope” (p. 24).

A book edited by Björkqvist and Niemelä (1992), titled *Of Mice and Women: Aspects of Female Aggression*, reports studies by leading scholars regarding sex differences and similarities in aggressive behavior. One study concludes, “The majority of evidence indicates that in the general population differences in aggressiveness reflect the level of testosterone only to a limited extent, if at all. There is no reason to suggest that testosterone causes the behavior of males and females to differ markedly” (Benton, 1992, p. 46). Other studies reported in this

book are convincing in their overview of scientific research, maintaining that “too much” is being made of biological differences between females and males in attempts to “explain away” cultural differences. Indeed, a chapter on “biology and male aggression” concludes, “Finally, we can look forward to the day when the myth that male animals are more aggressive than females can no longer be used by those who would argue that war is the product of biology rather than culture” (Adams, 1992, p. 24). Indeed, in the introductory chapter, the editors state, “There is no reason to believe that women overall should be less motivated to be aggressive than men” (Björkqvist & Niemelä, 1992, p. 14). Rather, they claim that gender differences in aggressive behavior depend on culture, age, and situations.

A study of the role of sexual frustration as a cause of rape compared white, college undergraduate, unmarried heterosexual male students, 71 who identified as (consistent with the definition of) date rapists and 227 who did not (Kanin, 1985). All of the rapists reported raping girlfriends with whom they had previously experienced consensual sex. Contrary to what the biosocial and other theories would suggest, these men appeared to rape not because they did not have access to consensual sex (i.e., they were sexually frustrated) but rather because it was part of their socialization. This study found that the rapists were sexual predators, using many tactics to try to gain sex: “Sexual exploitation of the female largely permeates their entire male-female approach” (Kanin, 1985, p. 224). Moreover, those young men with the most success at obtaining heterosexual outlets consensually were also the young men most likely to date rape. The self-identified date rapists were far more likely to report their sex-obsessed behaviors as beginning with their peer groups in high school and to feel entitled to frequent sexual encounters. Kanin (1985) concluded that date rapists have a different sexual socialization that results in “an inordinately high value on sexual accomplishment” and an “exaggerated sexual impulse” (p. 229).

A national study to determine whether boys and men’s’ lower levels of self-control (relative to that of girls and women) are due to genetic sex differences reported that genetic influences on self-control are the same regardless of one’s sex/gender (Boisvert, Wright, Knopik, & Vaske, 2013). A meta-analysis, drawing on data from more than 30 studies in eight countries, tested whether “natural selection shaped jealousy,” hypothesizing that men are primarily jealous over a mate’s *sexual* infidelity [cheating] and women over a mate’s *emotional* infidelity” (C. R. Harris, 2003, p. 102). In contrast to BSET, they found no gender differences regarding jealousy over infidelity. One large study found that gender inequality and IPA were positively related: the more inequality, the more IPA. Thus, the author concluded that we should shift our focus from violent people to the violent cultures that produce them (Handwerker, 1998, p. 206).

Significantly, BSETs are not only insulting to girls and women, viewing them as pathetic, needy competitors for male attention, but also insulting to boys and men, viewing them as incapable of controlling their biological urges or in a constant need of fertilizing eggs and creating children (see Belknap, 1997). Fanghanel and Lim (2017) argue that the “contemporary rape culture” is the root of the “contemporary antagonism in gendered safety discourse” for women and girls:

the fine line of balancing their right to be “free” in public and their “obligation to be safe and ‘properly’ feminine” (p. 341).

Strain Theories

Traditional Strain Theory (TST)

Merton (1938, 1949) developed (traditional) strain theory (TST) drawing on Durkheim's anomie (state of normlessness) theory. A refreshing departure from biological determinism, Merton premised that strain and frustration occur when individuals are taught the same cultural goals with unequal access to attain these shared goals (e.g., owning a home, acquiring a college education). Among the criticisms of TST, the most important applicable to gender and race is that TST measures strains primarily in terms of class inequalities, comparing the strains of the working class to the middle class, and then only of boys. Approaches that focus on poverty as an explanation for criminal behavior, while preferable to biological explanations, frequently ignore that women are usually disproportionately impoverished compared with men, yet they commit far less crime (Faith, 1993, p. 107).

In his book *Delinquent Boys*, A. K. Cohen (1955) adapted Merton's TST to explain U.S. delinquent gangs among working-class boys. In Cohen's analysis, boys have broad and varied goals and ambitions, whereas girls' narrow ambitions center around males: dating, dancing, attractiveness, and, generally, acquiring a boyfriend or husband. Thus, men “are the rational doers and achievers” in U.S. culture, while girls and women exist solely to be the helpmates and companions of men (Naffine, 1987). Cohen (1955) also used racist code-speak in equating “aspects of ethnic backgrounds as examples of ‘subcultures’ but does not fully employ the concepts associated with racial inequality to examine boys' delinquency” (K. J. Cook, 2016, p. 337).

A strength of A. K. Cohen's (1955) work is addressing the construction of gender for boys, in that his work vividly depicts the role of masculinity in boys' delinquency, and he is likely the first theorist to pay attention to the construction of masculinity (he drew on Freud to do so). In contrast, however, he devoted only four pages of his book to girl delinquents, portraying them as boring and only capable of expressing their delinquency through sexual promiscuity (Mann, 1984; Naffine, 1987). In Cohen's prime, and still today, the term *promiscuity* is rarely if ever applied to boys and men, and Cohen joined the disturbing positivists' tendency to inextricably link girls' criminality and sexuality, while ignoring or implicitly applauding the identical sexual conduct of boys. In short, Cohen believed that boys have the “real” strains of employment and income in their lives, whereas girls' only strain is to date and marry well. Cohen was so confident of the accuracy of this stance on girls that he saw no need to confirm his hypothesis through data collection. R. R. Morris (1964), the first scholar to apply strain theory to girls (also applying it to boys), viewed girls as more dimensional than did her predecessors: Girls were not interested just in husband hunting but were also concerned with other affective relationships, such as with family members. Morris found that relative to boys, girls,

delinquent and not, were faced with less subcultural support and more disapproval for delinquency than boys, and she purported this might explain girls' lower delinquency rates.

It is instructive that studies in the late 1960s and 1970s found that girls' efforts to find mates were not related to their delinquency rates (Sandhu & Allen, 1969) and that the patterns of boys' and girls' delinquent behavior were quite similar, except that boys' rates were higher (Naffine, 1987, p. 18). Research on gender differences in the role of youth subcultures (often measured as gangs) tends to confirm that boys' subcultures are more prone to delinquency than girls' subcultures (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993; Joe & Chesney-Lind, 1995; Lerman, 1968; Morash, 1983, 1986; R. R. Morris, 1964, 1965; Rahav, 1984). Notably, research testing traditional strain theory has occurred rarely since the end of the 1990s. Overall, these research findings have been inconsistent regarding whether the strain of "blocked opportunity" is more, less, or equally related to boys' and girls' delinquency rates. Some studies claimed that strain similarly influenced girls' and boys' delinquency (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1979; Figueira-McDonough & Selo, 1980; D. A. Smith, 1979); others found it more relevant in predicting girls' than boys' delinquency (Datesman, Scarpitti, & Stephenson, 1975; J. O. Segrave & Hastad, 1983); and one found that strain is more influential in predicting boys' than girls' delinquency (R. L. Simons, Miller, & Aigner, 1980). Yet another study reported that TST variables were related in the opposite direction as expected for white females but in the expected direction for African American females (G. D. Hill & Crawford, 1990). Overall, the findings are quite mixed regarding whether strain, as it is traditionally defined (as blocked opportunities), affects boys' and girls' delinquency similarly or differently. Notably, gang studies in the 1980s and 1990s largely rebuff Cohen's gendered contention, finding that girls', like boys', gang membership, is driven to fulfill identities in environments plagued by classism, racism, and sexism (e.g., Campbell, 1987; Joe & Chesney-Lind, 1995). With the development of general strain theory, traditional strain theory has been far less tested in recent decades.

Opportunity Theory (OT)

A. K. Cohen's TST-based (mis)portrayal of delinquent girls was reaffirmed in Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) book *Delinquency and Opportunity*, but with a different twist in their version of strain theory, which they called opportunity theory (OT). Like Cohen's TST, Cloward and Ohlin's OT assumed delinquent boys, but not delinquent girls, had unequal legal opportunities to attain the American dream; girls encountered only frivolous concerns, such as finding boyfriends. Cloward and Ohlin's "twist" on TST is that in addition to unequal legal opportunities, youths (and adults) also have varied access to learn delinquent and criminal behaviors, and access to learn delinquency/criminality assists one in becoming delinquent/criminal.

Bottcher's (1995, 2001) data on the siblings of incarcerated boys provide some support for OT, mostly concerning boys' greater opportunities to commit crimes. The girls and boys were similarly barred by class from legal means to reach social and economic success, but girls' freedom was limited relative to boys' in their

demands to care for younger children. Because the boys could take part in more activities, meet more people, and cover wider geographical areas, they were more likely than the girls were to report conflict, peer pressure, and delinquency at younger ages (Bottcher, 1995, pp. 53–54).² Similar to the case with TST, little research has been conducted on OT in the current century, and when it is, it rarely addresses gender. An exception is Becker and McCorkel's (2011) study of over 16 million crime incidents reported to the police, which found support for OT. They stress "that gender is a crucial intervening variable shaping both [OT's] social location and social relationships. . . . Even within shared social locations, gender moderates access to social networks and this, in turn, influences access to licit and illicit opportunities" (p. 102).

General Strain Theory (GST)

Agnew (1985, 1992) revised TST into general strain theory (GST). GST advances and expands earlier strain theories by broadening the sources and types of adaptations to strains and acknowledging that goals may vary depending on an individual's gender, race, and class. Rather than simply focusing on structural factors limiting financial success (like TST), GST includes three psychosocial strain sources: (1) the presence of negative stimuli, (2) the loss of positive stimuli, and (3) the failure to achieve positive goals. According to GST, whether responses to strain and frustrations are law-abiding or delinquent depends on an individual youth's personality, self-esteem, social support system, and so on (e.g., if anger is the response, the coping strategy is more likely to be delinquent) (Agnew 1992). Additionally, GST addresses the importance of allowing for varied goals due to individuals' gender, race, and class differences (Broidy, 2001). Stated another way, GST suggests that both strains and the responses to these strains may be gendered, raced, or classed. Broidy and Agnew (1997) purported the gender gap in offending could also be due to gender differences in the types of strains and gender differences in the emotional responses to strains.

Bottcher (2001, p. 894) criticized GST for failing to consider gender as "a product of individual and interpersonal action," and Agnew (2001) himself published concerns with the tests of GST, specifically that many key strains outlined in GST were not included in the tests and that most GST tests focused on a single, cumulative measure of strain. For example, he noted that child abuse (including sexual abuse) and criminal victimization are important to account for as stressors for delinquent behavior. Additionally, Agnew pointed out that it is necessary to look at additional characteristics of the strain: The more severe, unjust, lasting, and central to the individual's life the strain is, the more likely it will result in anger, and thus, criminal behavior. Moreover, he recognized that abuse and criminal victimization are often perceived as unjust and serious and thus could result in stronger feelings of anger and injustice than other strains. Stated alternatively, victims of abuse may engage in delinquent or criminal behavior in efforts to compensate for the serious injustices they have experienced (Agnew, 2001, 2002).

²Bottcher's (1995) study provides information relevant to many theories and will be further cited.

Significantly, a 2008 review of GST (Cernkovich, Lanctôt, & Giordano, 2008) criticizes the tests of it for using almost exclusively male samples. Many recent GST studies have boy-only samples (e.g., Del Toro et al., 2019). Even when girls, women, or both are included, gender is used as a control variable rather than to understand how strains are gendered (e.g., Capowich, Mazerolle, & Piquero, 2001; C. Farrell & Zimmerman, 2018; Gallupe & Baron, 2009; Hay, 2003; Hay & Evans, 2006; Jang & Rhodes, 2012; M. C. Johnson & Menard, 2012; Langton & Piquero, 2007). In addition, abuse and trauma victimizations are far too often left out of the “strain” measures or analyses (e.g., Capowich et al., 2001; Cheung & Cheung, 2010; Dierenfeldt, Shadwick, & Kwak, 2019; D. Eitle, 2002; Hoffmann & Su, 1997). A GST study focusing on “family strain” did not include sexual abuse victimization (Hay, 2003).

Broidy’s (2001) test of GST reported that while strain causes anger in both sexes, girls were more likely to report other negative emotions (e.g., guilt, worthlessness, disappointment, depression, worry, fear, and insecurity). Broidy and Agnew (1997) found that both strain and the responses to strain explain gender differences in offending. For example, compared with boys, girls reported more restrictions on their lives and behaviors and greater family caretaking expectations; they were also more likely to report all types of abuse (emotional, physical, and sexual). While girls reported feeling more stress surrounding close relationships with friends and family, boys reported feeling more strain about external achievement such as material success. Another study found, as predicted by GST, that anger was a significant predictor of violent, property, and drug crimes, and criminal behavior was related to sexual abuse, homelessness, relative deprivation, and more deviant peers (Baron, 2004). Although this study reported that gender “was a significant predictor of crime” (Baron, 2004, p. 474), it did not explain how.

Notably, tests of GST often find many gender similarities in responses to the same strains. One study confirmed GST, finding that stressful life events increased the likelihood of delinquency, but this relationship was the same regardless of a youth’s gender, class, self-esteem, or perceived control over her or his environment (Hoffmann & Cerbone, 1999). Similarly, another GST study found that individual strains (i.e., physical abuse, sexual abuse, academic problems, future expectations, school dropout, and criminal legal system involvement) increased all three types of offending studied (property crimes, threatening interpersonal aggression, and using interpersonal aggression), and the increase was consistent across gender (Jennings, Piquero, Gover, & Perez, 2009).

A large GST study of youths who were referred to juvenile court looked at how gender and living situation were related to initial and recidivate arrests and youths’ responses to strain regarding drug offending (Grothoff, Kempf-Leonard, & Mullins, 2014). Girls reported 3 times as much child abuse as boys (physical, sexual, and emotional), and while it increased girls’ drug arrests (as expected), it decreased boys’. Boys, but not girls, not living with one or both parents were more likely to recidivate. Mental health problems increased both girls’ and boys’ drug offenses similarly (Grothoff et al., 2014). Hay’s (2003) GST study measured family strain using five dimensions: physical punishment, parental rejection, psychological

control, unfair discipline, and non-intact family among high school students. Hay found no gender differences in youth anger levels resulting from family strain; however, girls' feelings of guilt associated with family strain were higher than boys'. Moreover, this gender difference in the response of guilt to family strain explained much of the overall gender difference in delinquency, in that anger encourages delinquency while guilt discourages delinquency.

Notably, the GST tests have focused far more on anger than depression. Many studies conclude that boys report significantly more delinquent behavior than girls do, whereas girls report more negative self-feelings (e.g., depression, anxiety, self-esteem) than boys do (Jang & Rhodes, 2012; Jennings et al., 2009; Kaplan & Lin, 2000; Kaufman, 2009; Luthar & D'Avanzo, 1999; Ostrowsky & Messner, 2005). Kaufman's (2009) longitudinal GST study found that depressive symptoms predicted suicidal thoughts, weekly drinking, running away, and violent offending among girls but "only" suicidal thoughts and running away among boys.

Ostrowsky and Messner's (2005) GST study found victimized young adults were more likely to commit property and violent offenses than their nonvictimized counterparts, strains tended to have more impact on violent than property crimes, and strains were related to depression. Notably, strains were more commonly associated with depression among the young women than among the young men, but the young men who were strained and depressed were more likely to offend (Ostrowsky & Messner, 2005). A GST study of women and men involved in drug courts across the United States found recent sexual or physical abuse increased the risk of further substance use, and this was associated with (or mediated by) increased depression following either of these (sexual or physical) abuses (Zweig, Yahner, & Rossman, 2012). However, the resulting depression could not explain the reuse of substances for recent sexual abuse victims as completely as depression explained the drug reuse by recent physical abuse victims (Zweig et al., 2012).

Watts and Iratzoqui (2019) conducted one of the few GST studies that included girls and boys, ran the models separately for each, and included three types of abuse or maltreatment (i.e., physical, sexual, and neglect by a parent or guardian before sixth grade) and six self-reported offenses (i.e., violent, property, drug use, drug-selling, alcohol use, running away). They concluded that "child maltreatment increases delinquent behavior during middle adolescence, that different types of maltreatment differentially shape delinquent behavior, and that these relationships are marked more by gender similarity than gender difference" (p. 178). Specifically, their findings, summarized in Table 2.1, indicate that the three abuses impact both girls' and boys' violent offenses and running away the most, and alcohol and drug use the least. Child neglect is more frequently significantly related to the types of offenses than is physical or sexual abuse. Although other research shows that girls are significantly more likely than boys to be victimized by sexual abuse, this study found sexual abuse victimization is more likely to increase boys' than girls' subsequent offending—specifically, their violent offending, drug-selling, and running away. Indeed, all abuse in general impacts boys' likelihood of subsequent offending far more often than it does girls' likelihood in this study. One could speculate that the other GST research on

TABLE 2.1 • Watts and Iratzoqui's Test of General Strain Theory (GST): The Impact of Different Types of Abuse/Maltreatment on Different Types of Offending^a

Offense Type × Abuse Type	Girls	Boys
Violent Offense		
Physical Abuse	+	+
Sexual Abuse		+
Neglect	+	+
Property Offense		
Physical Abuse	+	+
Sexual Abuse		
Neglect	+	+
Drug Use		
Physical Abuse		
Sexual Abuse		
Neglect	+	+
Drug-Selling		
Physical Abuse		+
Sexual Abuse		
Neglect		
Alcohol Use		
Physical Abuse	+	
Sexual Abuse		
Neglect	+	+
Running Away		
Physical Abuse	+	+
Sexual Abuse		+
Neglect	+	+

^aThe models controlled for race/ethnicity, parent's education, public assistance (SES measure), self-control, peer deviancy, and closeness to mother. Offending variables are self-reported (not necessarily known by the criminal legal system). The abuse/maltreatment variables only measured these abuses before the start of sixth grade and if perpetrator was a parent or adult caregiver.

Source: Watts, S. J., & Iratzoqui, A. (2019). Gender, child maltreatment, and delinquency. *Victims & Offenders, 14*(2), 165–182.

Note: Data from U.S. National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health). Sample = 14,322 youths followed over time.

gender differences in anger and depression (as reviewed earlier) could incite boys to be more likely to externalize (via anger) and girls to be more likely to internalize (via depression) their negative emotions from being abused and neglected.

Some GST research has included only girls and women in their samples. Belknap, Holsinger, and Little (2012) applied GST to incarcerated girls to study how different types of abuse (differentiated by family-perpetrated vs. non-family-perpetrated and sexual abuse vs. physical abuse) impacted girls' self-harming (e.g., cutting, suicide attempts, etc.), while controlling for the girls' sexual identities. Consistent with "community" (nonincarcerated sample) studies, they found that sexual minority status (SMS) girls (those who identified as lesbian or bisexual) reported more of all types of abuses (than their straight counterparts) and more self-harming behaviors than non-SMS (straight) girls. However, when controlling for abuse, the relationships between sexual identity (SMS vs. non-SMS) and self-harming disappeared (Belknap, Holsinger et al., 2012). Stated alternatively, the relationship between sexual identity and self-harming was indirect and completely explained by abuse; this indicated that SMS girls were disproportionately abused as a gender-based/homophobic response, and this was related to self-harming. (Thus, deterring homophobic assaults and bullying will likely deter the association between SMS and self-harming.) This needs to be tested in community samples as well.

A GST study of drug and alcohol use among women incarcerated in Oklahoma looked at a long list of strains (primarily different types of abuse and traumas), as well as anger, self-esteem, and antisocial behavior (Sharp, Peck, & Hartsfield, 2012). Consistent with GST, the greater the cumulative strain, the greater the women's anger, and the more likely they were to abuse substances. Also, both sexual abuse and witnessing their mothers being abused were related to daily drug use. Contrary to GST, self-esteem and antisocial behavior were not related to daily drug or alcohol use (Sharp et al., 2012).

Differential Association Theory (DAT) and Social Learning Theory (SLT)

Differential Association Theory (DAT)

E. H. Sutherland, first alone and then in collaboration with Cressey, developed the theory of differential association (DAT) in the classic text *Principles of Criminology* (E. H. Sutherland, 1939; E. H. Sutherland & Cressey, 1966). Sutherland's attempt was to move the major explanation of criminal behavior from poverty to association: Just as any other behavior is learned, so is criminal behavior. Thus, one's peer group association is instrumental in determining whether one becomes delinquent.

Although Sutherland and Cressey agreed with Cohen's contention that there is unequal access to success in the United States, they departed from Cohen's belief that all classes have internalized the same definition of success (i.e., the goals of middle-class males). Further, Sutherland and Cressey claimed that criminal subcultures are not unique to frustrated working-class male youths; people of all classes, including white-collar workers, can and do partake in criminal behavior.

Similarly, whereas Cohen defined a U.S. culture that excludes women and girls, Sutherland and Cressey's perspective is not so exclusively male in theory and is presented as a general non-sex-specific theory (Naffine, 1987).

Despite Sutherland and Cressey's promise of a non-sex-specific theory, they rarely addressed girls. And where girls are briefly mentioned, they are viewed as uniform and homogeneous. Again, girls are treated as peripheral and insignificant to the mainstream culture. Thus, Sutherland and Cressey's gender-neutral approach exists only in words, not in content. What is additionally disturbing is the easy acceptance of Sutherland and Cressey's view of males as "free to engage in a range of behaviors" and the view of girls as belonging in the family (Naffine, 1987). Further, girls' perceived tendency toward abiding the law is portrayed as dull rather than as positive and moral (Naffine, 1987).

Feminist criticisms of DAT have centered mainly on Sutherland and Cressey's decision to avoid discussing girls and women in any meaningful way (see K. J. Cook, 2016; Leonard, 1982; Naffine, 1987). K. J. Cook (2016, p. 336) takes this on most effectively by citing Sutherland and Cressey (1974) as stating "no other trait has as great a statistical importance as does sex in differentiating criminals from noncriminals," and yet this was followed by their dismissal of sex and gender. K. J. Cook (2016) states, "And so, with the stroke of the pen, Sutherland and Cressey proclaim that the leading predictor of crime is inconsequential to understanding the causes of crime, and amputated gender from serious consideration by the scholarly community for decades to come" (p. 336). Some feminists have suggested, however, that DAT is a useful way of examining male and female delinquency rates and of explaining gender differences. Two points are important. First, girls' relatively lower crime rates may largely be a result of the constraints they experience compared with boys. For example, at least traditionally, girls have been expected to stay closer to home, are more likely to have curfews, are more likely to be disciplined (particularly for minor infractions and sexual experimentation), and are generally provided less freedom than their brothers and other boys. The differential socialization of girls and boys, then, is believed to result in different or gendered behaviors of girls and boys (see Hoffman-Bustamante, 1973; Leonard, 1982; Lorber, 1994; Messner, 2000; Allison Morris, 1987; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004; Risman, 2004). The second point is that the increase in girls' delinquency rates in the past couple of decades might be explained by females' increased freedom. Even Cressey (1964) asserted that where there is greater gender equality, the association between crime and gender is likely to be lower.

Although Sutherland and Cressey failed to examine the relevance of DAT for an explanation of girls' criminality, others did so, and DAT provides some useful insight to girls' lower offending behaviors relative to boys'. For example, while finding support for DAT and a strong relationship between delinquent friends and delinquent behavior for both girls and boys, Hindelang (1971) reported that girls had fewer delinquent friends and less delinquent behavior than boys did. Giordano (1978) found delinquent girls were significantly influenced by their peers, but more so by their girl peers than their boy peers. Mears, Ploeger, and Warr (1998) found that while girls reported greater moral disapproval of all types of offenses, this could not solely explain boys' higher rates of offending. Rather,

it was this greater moral disapproval combined with the ability or desire to better block their delinquent peers' influence that accounted for girls' lower offense rates. Heimer and De Coster (1999) found that emotional bonds to families resulted in less attachment to violent behavior for girls (but not boys), traditional views of gender decreased girls' (but not boys') violence, and boys (but not girls) learned violence from aggressive friends and coercive parental discipline.

Social Learning Theory (SLT)

Social learning theory (SLT) originated in the late 1930s, with renowned psychologist B. F. Skinner positing the stimulus–response determinants of human behavior (i.e., with various stimuli, how do people respond?). Skinner's explanations of behavior were via operant conditioning, or how behaviors are reinforced or modified via punishment and rewards (Ferster & Skinner, 1957; Skinner, 1938). N. E. Miller and Dollard's *Social Learning and Imitation*, published in 1941, also posited the stimulus–response concept whereby behaviors are typically learned habits that are reinforced through social interactions. Albert Bandura furthered this theory, including a study comparing aggressive and nonaggressive boys (e.g., Bandura, 1973; Bandura & Walters, 1959). Akers and Burgess (e.g., Akers, 1985; Burgess & Akers, 1966) then integrated SLT and operant conditioning into Sutherland's differential association theory (DAT), as a more comprehensive approach to explain criminal behavior, whereby operant conditions can move learners toward or away from crime. One of the encouraging aspects of SLT is that if criminal behavior can be learned, it can also be unlearned. Given that feminist scholars (see Giordano & Copp, 2019) and race scholars (e.g., Du Bois, 1899; Muhammad, 2010) have long held that environment/culture are the determinants of gender and race inequality, respectively, it is not surprising that they tend to support the posited parts of SLT.

M. B. Harris's (1996) extensive overview of research on physically (not sexually) aggressive behavior found it more consistent with SLT than BSET, stating that “cultural norms and gender role stereotypes, previous experiences with aggression, attitudes toward the aggression of others, and judgments of the justifiability of retaliation are even more important influences on aggression” than are biological factors (p. 141). Rader and Haynes (2011) make a compelling argument for using SLT to study gendered fear of crime socialization: Women's fear of crime is higher than men's not because they are more likely to be victims, but because they are more likely to be victimized by rape and they are socialized by society to be afraid of rape. Notably, a study of women's gun ownership from 1973 to 2010 found that despite gun manufacturers' increased marketing to women (using women's fear), there was a decline in women's gun ownership; researchers concluded that “hobbies and lifestyle factors may better explain women's interests in firearms” than their fear of crime (Koepfel & Nobles, 2017, p. 43).

Social Control Theories (SCTs)

The theories discussed thus far have focused on what makes people break the law. Conversely, social control theories (SCTs) are more concerned with explaining what compels most of society to abide by the law.

Social Bond Theory (SBT): Conventional Ties

In his 1969 book *Causes of Delinquency*, Hirschi describes social bond or control theory (SCT) as focusing on what motivates people to obey laws. Given that girls are more law-abiding than boys, it seems an ideal question to include them (Naffine, 1987). Additionally, where delinquent boys were often celebrated and revered in prior theory that focused on why some people (boys and men) commit crimes, in Hirschi's approach, the conforming (law-abiding) boy becomes ennobled and lauded as responsible, while the image of law-abiding girls in research testing the other theories are depicted as lifeless, boring, and dependent. In the prior studies asking, "Why do people offend?" the criminal boy is portrayed as exciting, instrumental, and masculine. In fact, Schur (1984) points out that men who conform are labeled "successful," whereas there is little or no reward for conforming women. "What all this seems to indicate is a profound criminological tendency to devalue the female and value the male even when they are doing precisely the same things" (Naffine, 1987, p. 67).

Hirschi's SCT examines four categories of "social bonds" that prevent youths from acting on their criminal desires: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. Specifically, youths' offending likelihood is related to their ties to (1) conventional people (especially parents), (2) conventional institutions and behaviors in employment and recreation, and (3) the rules of society. Although Hirschi contended that "social controls are gender neutral" (Chui & Chan, 2012, p. 372) and he included girls in his sample, oddly, he only analyzed data from boys, and only white boys, with whom he confirmed the social bond hypothesis that, indeed, the (white) boys with stronger conventional ties were less likely to report delinquency. Like Sutherland and Cressey, then, Hirschi (1) promised a non-sex-specific theory, (2) started with girls and boys in the study, and (3) for no apparent reason left out the girls (Naffine, 1987). Or, as one of the first gender-race criminology scholars, Mann (1984), points out:

Travis Hirschi stratified his samples by race, sex, school, and grade. He included 1,076 black girls and 846 nonblack girls; but in the analysis of his data Hirschi admits "the girls disappear," and he adds, "Since girls have been neglected for too long by students of delinquency, the exclusion of them is difficult to justify. I hope I return to them soon." He didn't. (p. 263)

Numerous studies have tested SBT, or individuals' (usually youths') ties to conventional people. Although a few SBT studies find no gender differences in the impact of social bonds deterring offending (Figueira-McDonough, Barton, & Sarri, 1981; Ford, 2009; Loukas, Ripperger-Suhler, & Horton, 2009), far more studies report gendered SBT relationships, likely because they conducted higher-level statistical modeling. Starting with the 1970s, one study found that although attachment to conventional people greatly decreased the gender differences in reported delinquency rates, these social ties did not completely eliminate or explain boys' higher offending rates (G. J. Jensen & Eve, 1976). Another 1970s study found that although conventional ties predicted both girls' and boys' offending, this relationship was stronger for boys (Hindelang, 1973).

SBT studies published in the 1980s found heroin addiction weakened women's ties to conventional people and jobs and propelled them into lives made up of criminal people and activities (Rosenbaum 1981); a dysfunctional family of origin places girls at increased risk of proceeding from youthful status offending to adult criminal offending (Rosenbaum 1989); and some parental behaviors impact daughters' more than sons' delinquency likelihood, and other parental behaviors predict sons' more than daughters' delinquency (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987). Turning to 1990s SBT research, Bottcher's (1995) substantial study of the siblings of incarcerated boys reported that social structure of gender is a major form of social control, specifically through activities and definitions of the youths. Bottcher (1995) and others found boys likely have more delinquent peers than girls due to their greater freedom to associate with delinquent peers; this result was confirmed by two studies in the 2000s (Church, Wharton, & Taylor, 2009; Rankin & Quane, 2002). Other 1990s studies found girls' lower offending levels (relative to boys' levels) were *not* due to weaker parental controls and supervision (Heimer & De Coster, 1999) and that the number of sisters youths have exerts no impact on their delinquency rate, whereas having more brothers increases boys' and decreases girls' likelihood of becoming delinquent (Lauritsen, 1993). Torstensson (1990) only included girls in her study and found social bonds to school had a significant but small role in deterring their delinquency.

As for SBT studies published since 2000, a longitudinal study of youths found that while stressful events increased both girls' and boys' depression as well as their offending, girls were more likely than boys to respond to stressful events by being upset or distressed, and boys were more likely than girls to respond by breaking the law (De Coster & Heimer, 2001). A study of Asian American youth subgroups' drug and alcohol use found some support for social control variables but showed that peer influence was a better predictor (Nagasawa, Qian, & Wong, 2000). After controlling for age, social control, and peer influence variables, there were no gender differences regarding drug and alcohol use among Japanese-, Chinese-, Korean-, Asian-, Indian-, and Pacific Islander American youths. However, even after controlling for these variables, among Filipino Americans, girls were more likely than boys to use drugs and alcohol, and among Southeast Asian Americans, boys were more likely than girls to use drugs and alcohol (Nagasawa et al., 2000). A longitudinal study of youths found boys were more violent than girls even after controlling for social control and bonding variables (Huang, Kosterman, Catalano, Hawkins, & Abbott, 2001).

One study of young people found that while both positive attachment bonds (e.g., to family and friends) and involvement bonds (e.g., studying, clubs, chores, etc.) resulted in less delinquency for both girls and boys, attachment bonds had a greater impact on girls (than boys) and involvement bonds had a greater impact on boys (than girls) (Huebner & Betts, 2002). Another study found that parental attachment was only related to deterring boys', not girls', serious delinquency, and activity involvement beyond sports was a protective factor against serious delinquency for boys but not girls (J. A. Booth, Farrell, & Varano, 2008). This same study found that sports involvement alone decreased girls' serious delinquency but not boys' (J. A. Booth et al., 2008). Chapple, McQuillan, and Berdahl's

(2005) study found that while girls as a group tend to have higher social bonds than boys, these bonds do not impact in a gendered manner for self-reported delinquency or theft; however, peer attachment was related to boys', but not girls', violent offending. Payne's (2009) study assessed various bonds across the crimes "delinquency" and "drug use," finding no gender differences in bonding variables' impacts on drug use or delinquency, except that commitment and belief bonds had a stronger protective effect for boys than girls on delinquency. This finding may be because there are fewer gender differences in drug use than in delinquency overall (Payne, 2009). An SBT study solely on girls found family bonding had no protective impact on their offending (Cernkovich et al., 2008).

Barnes, Hoffman, Welte, Farrell, and Dintcheff (2007) found that time spent with one's family increased the likelihood that both girls and boys would obey the laws (thus no gender differences), yet time spent with peers resulted in greater delinquency for boys but not girls. A study on in-school delinquency and attachments found support for SBT with a few gender differences (Hart & Mueller, 2013). Two bonds, "beliefs in commonly held social norms" and "commitment to sports activities" impacted only boys' school delinquency, but the "commitment to sports activities" was in the opposite direction than hypothesized: It increased boys' school delinquency (Hart & Mueller, 2013). Most SBT studies are on youths, but one on adult probationers found social bonds and drug use facilitated women's criminal behavior, whereas social bonds inhibited men's criminal behavior (and drugs moderated it) (De Li & MacKenzie, 2003).

A General Theory of Crime (GTC): Self-Control

SCT was advanced by Gottfredson and Hirschi in *A General Theory of Crime* (1990). A general theory of crime (GTC) attempts to "bridge" classical and positivist traditions, where "low self-control is an individual-level attribute that causes crime at all ages, when combined with appropriate opportunities and attractive targets" (C. Taylor, 2001, p. 373). Moving the emphasis from social control to self-control, GTC purports that self-control interacts with criminal opportunity to explain criminal and delinquent behavior: Individuals with low self-control and access to opportunities to commit offenses are more prone to offend. GTC suggests that gender, race, age, and class differences in delinquency are due to how these characteristics are related to social control and self-control. GTC has been criticized, however, for (1) ignoring gender (Bottcher, 2001; S. L. Miller & Burack, 1993); (2) dismissing and misrepresenting gender-based abuse (Flavin, 2001; S. L. Miller & Burack, 1993); (3) ignoring feminist research on gender divisions within families (Flavin, 2001; S. L. Miller & Burack, 1993); (4) ignoring the role of power in crime (i.e., crime is the logical result when it is an available and desirable resource when resources are limited) (Bottcher, 2001); and (5) not clearly stipulating what constitutes both social and self-control and how they might relate and interact ("rather than setting them up as contradictory concepts") (C. Taylor, 2001, p. 383).

K. J. Cook (2016, p. 338) notes that Gottfredson and Hirschi locate "ineffective child-rearing" as the main predictor of youths' low self-control, implicating parents' failures in monitoring, punishing, and being aware of their children's

problem behaviors. As feminists might expect, the poor parents are usually the mothers and single parents (who are also more likely to be mothers than fathers). “Like Sutherland and Cressy, and Cohen, again, they miss (or ignore) another important opportunity to advance our understanding of gender and crime” (K. J. Cook, 2016, p. 339).

Gender studies testing GTC, as expected, tend to find that that girls exhibit greater self-control than boys, and even after controlling for self-control and access to delinquent opportunities, boys are still more delinquent/criminal than girls are (De Li, 2004; LaGrange & Silverman, 1999; Nakhaie, Silverman, & LaGrange, 2000). Indeed, *self-control* was a better predictor of delinquency than *social control*, but the interaction of social control and self-control was the best predictor (De Li, 2004; Nakhaie et al., 2000). One study found self-control was related to girls' major but not their minor delinquency, and it was unrelated to boys' delinquency (Mason & Windle, 2002). Another study of adults found that while self-control was related to gender, and self-control was related to offending for both women and men, gender became nonsignificant in predicting offending when behaviorally based measures of self-control were in the model (Tittle, Ward, & Grasmick, 2003).

A study designed to test whether GTC could explain dating aggression found that lower self-control, greater opportunity to commit the abuse (e.g., more frequent private access to one's partner), and the perception of rewards from committing the abuse (e.g., more control over a partner and satisfaction from committing the abuse) all increased the likelihood of committing this abuse (Sellers, 1999). Using a large national longitudinal data set, Shoenberger and Rocheleau (2017) found that although parents discipline daughters and sons differently, contrary to GTC, “the consequences of parental discipline on the development of self-control also varies for boys and girls” (p. 283). The only parenting variables that were gendered in their relationship to self-control were spanking and discipline for grades. They impacted sons' more than daughters' self-control and in the opposite direction provided by GTC: Both spanking and disciplining for grades *decreased* boys' self-control. Muftić and Updegrove's (2018) large international self-report delinquency study found, as expected, parenting directly impacts both property and violent offending, “and that while self-control weakens this relationship, it does not fully mediate it”; no gender differences were found, however (p. 3058). Similarly, a 2017 Puerto Rican study on status offenses found support for GTC (and SCT) with low attachments to parents, schools, peers, and church increasing the likelihood of status crimes, but that self-control variables partially mediated this relationship (Alvarez-Rivera, Price, & Ticknor, 2017).

Power-Control Theory (PCT): Gendered Practices of Parents and Parenting

Hagan and colleagues (Hagan, Gillis, & Simpson, 1985; Hagan, Simpson, & Gillis, 1987) built on SCT with the development of power-control theory (PCT), one of the first theories to explicitly include gender. PCT joins class theory with research on gender and family relationships, focusing on power relations in two loci: the home and workplace.

PCT posits that gender power positions in the workplace impact gender power relations in the home, such that the control of youths is gender-determined, and then, so is delinquency (Hagan et al., 1987, p. 183). Thus, PCT asserts that the gender power makeup in the parents' relationship influences their children's delinquent behavior in gendered ways: In homes where there is less sexism in the parents' roles (usually meaning the mother works outside the home), there should be fewer gender differences between sons' and daughters' delinquent behaviors. An assumption of this theory is that daughters from egalitarian homes are socialized, like their brothers, to engage in risk-taking behaviors, and because risk-taking behavior is associated with delinquency, girls from the more egalitarian homes will be more delinquent than their "sisters" from traditional, patriarchal homes. Consistent with PCT, Hagan and colleagues (1987) found a greater gender difference in delinquency rates in patriarchal homes, where the mother has a lower status than the father, than in egalitarian homes, where parents have equivalent status, or where the mother is the only parent. Hagan (1989) later categorized parental controls into relational (the quality of the parent-child bond) and instrumental (parents' degree of surveillance and supervision).

Bottcher (2001) criticizes PCT for "the unsubstantiated assumption that parental power structures and control practices are key sites for the reproduction of gender as it relates to delinquency" (p. 896). Another clear limitation of PCT is the considerable number of families that are headed by a single parent or where the mother's employment status is higher than the father's or the father is unemployed (Uggen, 2000). Finally, PCT has been criticized for being tested largely on overall delinquency or crime rates, without addressing specific crimes where it may be more or less likely to be confirmed (Hirtenlehner, Blackwell, Leitgoeb, & Bacher, 2014), and for often leaving out such important structural factors as race (e.g., De Coster, 2012; D. Eitle, Niedrist, & Eitle, 2014; T. M. Eitle & Eitle, 2015) and class (De Coster, 2012; Gault-Sherman, 2013; Hirtenlehner et al., 2014). Leaving out race denies the significance of racial profiling and other forms of criminal legal system racism, and leaving out class denies the very real advantages of hiring lawyers, paying bail, and so on. Given the high correlation between race and class, including a class measure might be most important in property and sex work PCT applications, where people are sometimes engaging in these activities for survival.

Scholars' assessments of PCT studies overall report less than resounding support, calling them "inconsistent" (Kruttschnitt, 1996), "modest" (Bottcher, 2001), "mixed" (T. M. Eitle & Eitle, 2015; Hirtenlehner et al., 2014), and "undecided" (Schulze & Bryan, 2017). Hirtenlehner and colleagues (2014) note that PCT research has found "has found more support generated for the 'control' than for the 'power'" variables; whether a family is patriarchal or egalitarian "has found less support across tests of PCT" (p. 44). However, PCT has been confirmed in some research (e.g., Blackwell & Reed, 2003; D. Eitle et al., 2014; T. M. Eitle & Eitle, 2015; Hagan, Boehnke, & Merkens, 2004; McCarthy, Hagan, & Woodward, 1999; Wang, 2019), but one of these studies found that while girls from more egalitarian homes were more delinquent than girls from more patriarchal homes (as hypothesized), boys from more egalitarian homes were *less* delinquent than boys from more patriarchal homes (McCarthy et al., 1999). Another study found

that while higher parental controls led to lower criminal aspirations for girls and boys, there was no significant gender difference in the effect of parental controls within either the less or more patriarchal families (Blackwell & Piquero, 2005, p. 13). Blackwell (2000) incorporated perceived threats of the informal sanctions of shame and embarrassment into the PCT model and found, as expected, that gender differences in the perceived threat of legal sanctions were greater for those raised in more patriarchal homes, with girls perceiving a higher threat from legal sanctions than boys did. Another study reported that PCT variables (e.g., mothers' monitoring of youths) do not help explain gender differences in youths' self-reported victimizations, but these variables do help explain gender differences in youths' self-reported delinquency in the more patriarchal households, but the power-control variables mediate the relationship between gender and delinquency in the less patriarchal households (Blackwell, Sellers, & Schlaupitz, 2002).

Blackwell (2003) tested both SBT and PCT, finding (1) only in more patriarchal households do girls report higher levels of maternal control than boys, and in these homes, white youths reported lower levels of maternal control than did young people of Color; (2) there were no gender differences in either maternal or paternal controls in the less patriarchal homes; (3) there were no gender differences in youths reporting being emotionally attached to their parents; (4) regardless of the type of home (more or less patriarchal), girls were no more committed than boys to conventional norms; and (5) in more patriarchal homes, girls were more involved than boys in conventional activities (but there was no such gender difference in less patriarchal homes).

Another study found, however, that although both maternal and paternal support were effective in reducing delinquency, girls were more affected by maternal support and boys were more affected by paternal support (G. D. Hill & Atkinson, 1988). Similarly, one study found that youths' conflicts with their fathers, although related to both girls' and boys' delinquency, had a greater impact on the boys' delinquency, whereas youths' conflicts with their mothers caused more delinquency only among girls (Liu, 2004). A related study reported that girls' delinquency was more influenced than boys' by family risk factors (e.g., marital discord, marital instability, and discipline), but the gender stereotypes did not always fit (Dornfeld & Kruttschnitt, 1992). A study with a more detailed measure of parents' power structure did not find that parents' relative equality affected the daughters' or sons' delinquency rates; rather, these rates were related to the family's social class and the negative sanctions from the father (Morash & Chesney-Lind, 1991). Another replication found no class-gender variations, yet gender differences were related to race, with fewer gender differences among African American than white youths. The explanation offered for this difference was that "white families may be more 'patriarchal' than black families" (G. F. Jensen & Thompson, 1990, p. 1016). However, a more recent test of PCT using only youths from single-mother households found sons commit more delinquency than daughters in both white and Black families, even after controlling for maternal monitoring of the youths (Mack & Leiber, 2005). A large PCT study found parental bond consistently serves to temper the gender gap in crimes and across different classes of young people (Gault-Sherman, 2013).

A study that did not set out to test Hagan's PCT reported findings that are consistent in a general way with this theory. Bottcher's (1995) interviews with sisters and brothers of incarcerated boys suggest that girls have stronger informal social controls than boys in their families and are more aggressively controlled by social service and law enforcement professionals. She pointed out that in contrast to Hagan's theory, both the girls and the boys in her study reported that the increased familial control of girls is due to the effort to monitor the girls' (and not the boys') sexual activities. She concluded that, for the high-risk youths in her study, the parental control cited by Hagan "is a very limited component of the social control that gender encompasses" (Bottcher, 1995, p. 53). Similarly, a longitudinal study of 1,000 Minnesota youths collected data not only on parents' employment but also on the youths' employment under the assumption that boys who are given more freedom to work outside the home are also provided more access to offending (Uggen, 2000). This study reported that fathers' authority positions in the workplace increased the likelihood of arrests for sons but decreased it for daughters, whereas mothers' workplace authority increased the arrest likelihood for daughters but decreased it for sons. Additionally, regarding the youths' own employment in the workforce, having more workplace power and control increased boys' but decreased girls' likelihood of arrest (Uggen, 2000).

D. Eitle, Eitle, and Niedrist were the first to apply PCT to Indigenous youths, noting its relevance given that Indigenous families have historically been more egalitarian than other racial groups in the United States, particularly prior to colonization (D. Eitle et al., 2014; T. M. Eitle & Eitle, 2015, p. 689). Using National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health data, controlling for youths in two-parent families, they found considerable support for PCT among Indigenous youths (D. Eitle et al., 2014), more so than for white youths (T. M. Eitle & Eitle, 2015). Eitle et al. (2014) applied PCT to Indigenous youths for self-reported general, property, and violent delinquency. Findings included that Indigenous girls reported lower mother and father relational controls than Indigenous boys, for which PCT would suggest that their offending should be similar. However, only violent delinquent acts were higher for boys. In boy-only multivariate models, support was found for PCT only for property crimes, and it was far more limited even then. Girl-only models found PCT support: Girls' affective bond to fathers and being in patriarchal families reduced their likelihood of committing general, property, and violent delinquent behaviors. Having a grandparent living in the home decreased girls' (but not boys') proclivity for violent delinquency, which the authors claim is consistent with PCT regarding more (grand)parental control. Father control deterred both boys' and girls' property offending (and living in poverty only impacted boys' property offending). Finally, Eitle et al.'s (2014) comparison with similarly situated white youths found whether a family was patriarchal or egalitarian was never related to girls' or boys' general, violent, or property offending; mother relational bonds was a robust predictor for girls' and boys' offending, and a grandparent residing in the home had no impact on any white youths' self-reported general, property, or violent offending.

T. M. Eitle and Eitle (2015) applied PCT to Indigenous youths (with some comparisons to white youths) for substance use. First, among Indigenous youths,

gender was a greater predictor of substance use in patriarchal than in egalitarian families (there was little gender gap in substance use in egalitarian families). Second, Indigenous girls raised in egalitarian families reported more alcohol problems than boys in such homes. Third, parental controls suppress (but do not erase) the gender–substance use association. Fourth, and inconsistent with PCT, among these Indigenous youths, fathers' (and not mothers') relational control predicted girls' (and not boys') substance use—demonstrating the important roles fathers can play in their daughters' as well as sons' desistance from crime. Finally, T. M. Eitle and Eitle found support for PCT for alcohol consumption, marijuana consumption, and alcohol problems, for Indigenous but not white youths, suggesting PCT is better suited to explaining the delinquent behavior of Indigenous compared with white youths, at least for substance use.

Notably, some politicians, popular media, and researchers have blamed women's work outside the home as a cause of delinquency. (Also recall K. J. Cook's [2016] criticism of GTC, linking "ineffective child-rearing" with mothers, particularly poor and/or single mothers [p. 338].) However, careful research in this area finds no link between mothers' employment and their children's delinquency (Broidy, 1995; De Coster, 2012; Vander Ven, 2003). De Coster's (2012) analysis of U.S. data, comparing mothers who work outside the home with stay-at-home mothers, found huge variation within each group regarding their parenting behaviors. Mothers' employment status was found related to their children's delinquency when they were incongruent with their ideologies: Mothers who think it is inappropriate for mothers to work, but do work, and mothers who think it is appropriate for mothers to work but do not, are more likely to have delinquent children than mothers whose work status is congruent with their beliefs about whether it is "appropriate" for women to work (De Coster, 2012). A study using an extensive longitudinal data set of youths found the only instances where women's work could be linked in any fashion to their children's delinquency was when their work was coercive, they relied on welfare, and the family income was low, suggesting that "more children will be better off as women gain increased access to educational advancement, job training, and opportunities for stable, well-paying employment" (Vander Ven, 2003, p. 133).

Schulze and Bryan's (2017) intersectional and comprehensive PCT study of both status offenses and total offenses, appropriately and uniquely includes schools as a separate source of power and control in youths' lives. Their predominantly African American and poor sample was "composed entirely of juvenile offenders . . . arguably the most vulnerable among the juvenile population who are also subjected to the most systemic control" (p. 73). Whether the young adult was in a single-mother-parent, single-father-parent, or two-parent family was unrelated to being charged with a status offense or "total offenses," but young adults with "other" guardianship (e.g., foster home, residential care) or homelessness were more at risk of having status offenses. The only exception was when single-parent-mother was analyzed by race: In direct contrast to PCT, they found "single-mother-headed household" was a protective factor for girls against being charged with status (but not total) offenses. Family "dysfunction" and high scores on psychological symptoms affected girls and boys the same, increasing their

likelihood of both status and overall offenses. Parent/guardian criminality did not impact children's status or total offenses, while sibling criminality impacted both girls' and boys' total offending. Parent employment (at least one working parent) reduced youths' likelihood of total offenses. Schulze and Bryan (2017) concluded that PCT research must address "systemic processes directly" and "be cognizant of the fact that the modern family structure is dynamic," lessening "its predictive value to delinquency, especially if examined in isolation from other, known correlates that also operate as patriarchal controls" (p. 92).

Finally, Hagan and his colleagues (2004) reported the support for PCT is so strong that "male subcultural delinquents" may be "the social dinosaurs of a passing, more patriarchal era" (p. 659). Yet the reviewed research testing PCT is not very convincing, and the accounts of gender comparisons reported in Chapter 4 do not indicate that male subcultural delinquents are becoming social dinosaurs.

Women's Liberation/Emancipation Hypothesis (WLEH)

We have seen that traditionally, criminological theory showed only a passing interest in explaining the offending and the system's criminal processing of women and girls. All this changed in 1975, however, with the publication of Adler's (1975) *Sisters in Crime* and R. J. Simon's (1975) *Women and Crime*. These books, particularly Adler's, received a great deal of attention regarding their hypothesis that the women's liberation movement increases the female crime rate. Although similar overall, Adler and Simon differed concerning the types of crime the women's movement was expected to impact. Adler proposed that the violent crime rate would increase because of women's liberation. In contrast, Simon proposed that only the property crime rate would increase with women's liberation. Simon suggested further that women's violent crime would decrease because women's frustrations with life would diminish as they gained access to new work and educational opportunities. Also called the emancipation hypothesis, this approach suggests that the feminist movement, although working toward equality for women, increased the female crime rate.

Early critics found fault with the women's liberation/emancipation hypothesis (WLEH): "Circumstantial evidence seems to indict the women's movement for contributing to an increase in crime" (McCord & Otten, 1983, p. 3). Naffine (1987) summarized some of the troubling assumptions of WLEH: (1) Feminism brings out women's competitiveness, (2) the women's movement has opened up structural opportunities to increase places where women can offend, (3) women have fought and won the battle of equality, (4) feminism makes women want to behave like men, and (5) crime itself is inherently masculine. There are obvious problems with these assumptions. Even the most plausible assumption—that feminism has opened up women's structural opportunities—loses credibility when faced with statistics showing that women have not achieved equality in high-paying and managerial professions (see Chapters 10–12). These assumptions, and WLEH in general, have been soundly criticized not only for the unfounded stance that increasing gender equality *increases* girls and women's offending (in stark contrast to strain theories) but also for misusing and manipulating statistics where they were "confirmed" (see, e.g., Crites, 1976; Feinman, 1986; Leonard, 1982;

Allison Morris, 1987; Naffine, 1987; Smart, 1976, 1982; Steffensmeier & Streifel, 1992). Notably, a 1983 study using incarcerated women to test WLEH reported these women to be generally “traditional,” “feminine” (not “feminist”), and “conformist” in terms of sex roles, hardly the hard-core feminists Adler’s (1975) theory predicted (Bunch, Foley, & Urbina, 1983).

Analyses of changes in women and girls’ offending in the 1970s and 1980s reported that females’ violent crime rate remained relatively stable (see Feinman, 1986; Steffensmeier, 1980), whereas research on property crimes, particularly larceny and petty property crimes, indicated women’s rates increased during this time (e.g., Box & Hale, 1983, 1984; Chilton & Datesman, 1987; D. A. Smith & Visser, 1980; Steffensmeier & Streifel, 1992). But the increase in women’s property crime rates corresponded with the *feminization of poverty*, defined as the growing number of women (with and without dependents) living in poverty, which is a better predictor of women’s criminality—and then, of property crimes—than is the strength or weakness of the feminist movement. In fact, the types of crime for which women were increasingly arrested after the women’s movement of the 1970s—prostitution and offenses against the family (such as desertion, neglect, and nonsupport)—are crimes not “altogether compatible with the view of the emancipated female” (Steffensmeier & Allan, 1988).

In addition to the feminization of poverty, sentencing changes in the 1970s and 1980s to “get tough on crime” have done more than the feminist movement to increase females’ (and males’) official crime rate reported by the police (Box & Hale, 1984). Furthermore, if the women’s movement has had any negative effect on women’s criminality, it is that women appear to have become more likely to have their behaviors defined as criminal or delinquent by judges and police officers (D. A. Curran, 1984; Allison Morris, 1987). Notably, researchers specifically examining the effect of young women’s adherence to feminist ideals in the 1980s (e.g., regarding women and work and gender roles in the family) found that pro-feminist women and girls were no more likely than their more traditional sisters to self-report using aggression and criminal or delinquent behavior (Figueira-McDonough, 1984; McCord & Otten, 1983). Kruttschnitt’s (1996) careful overview of tests of Adler’s and Simon’s hypotheses concluded that economic marginalization, drug use, and changes in formal social control provide better predictors of female offending than do WLEHs or opportunity theories, but “they have yet to be formally integrated into an explanatory model of female offending or of gender differences in offending” (p. 137). As expected, this hypothesis is rarely tested any more (because it has so little credence).

Summary

Historically, most criminology theories have been developed by men and about men and boys’ offending. Even when theories were about “why people obey the law,” the focus was on men and boys. The classical/positivist theories were very biological in nature, fraught with sexism, racism, and classism. The more recent biosocial and evolutionary theories (BSETs) have resumed many of these troubling assumptions and fail to examine structural and societal explanations for criminal behavior.

Until the mid-1970s, most theorists made little attempt to account for women and girls' criminality. Social bond theory (SBT), developed in 1969, once (finally) applied to girls, confirmed social bonds and controls account for some gender differences in offending, indicating that it contributes to understanding girls and women's offending and to explaining the gender crime gap (addressed more in the next chapter). Power-control theory (PCT), developed in the mid-1980s, was also designed to address gender. It has mixed support and makes some sexist assumptions. More recent research addresses rethinking the (assumed negative) role of single mothers and mothering, but also fathering, and parenting, in general, and through less sexist, racist, and classist lenses (e.g., Schulze & Bryan, 2017). In 1975, for the first time, an approach was developed to explain women's criminal behavior: women's emancipation/liberation hypothesis (WLEH) (Adler, 1975; R. J. Simon, 1975). Unfortunately, this hypothesis was based on erroneous and sexist and class assumptions about the feminist movement and statistics, and the interpretations of data were often misleading. Given that studies repeatedly find no support for WLEH, and most of its premises contradict other theories, it is not clear why it is still tested, even if only occasionally. Notably, traditional strain theory never included abuse or other trauma victimizations, and general strain theory (GST) has rarely included these when they would seem to be such clear strains. Similarly, child abuse is rarely included in SBT tests, where parents' abuse would seemingly be related to children's attachment to their parents. The next chapter addresses some of the theories that have been explicitly designed to include girls and women and/or trauma and adverse life events, as well as some other theories that are more recent and offer potential for studying girls and women, gender, and the risks of offending.