

Gender Differences In Criminal Behavior

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Crimes committed by women differ from criminality done by men by the nature of a crime, and its' consequences, as well as by methods, crime weapon, and choice of victim. It is hard to object that crimes committed by women have more emotional characteristic than those committed by men.

Women are far less likely than men to commit crime and this pattern seems to hold true all over the world. Only 19% of known offenders are women. Nevertheless, women are far more likely to experience domestic violence. Two women are murdered every week by their current or former partner and 44% of violent incidents against women were domestic.

According to the stats of female offenders in prison most were in for drug, theft and handling stolen property offences, this accounted for 60% of known female offenders. 15% of sentenced female prisoners had previously been admitted to a psychiatric hospital and over 40% of sentenced women prisoners have been reported as being dependent on drugs in the year before coming to prison. An estimated 20% of women in prison have spent some time in care.

Until recently, criminal behavior has been mostly discussed from a male perspective and has been about men, for men and by men. Various theories have shown why some women commit fewer crimes than males. Lombroso believed that women were evolutionarily inferior to men, a lower form of life. He hypothesized that the "natural" female criminal was perceived to have the criminal qualities of the male plus the worst characteristics of women. This appeared to indicate that criminal women were genetically more male than female, therefore biologically abnormal.

Freud (1925) offered an explanation of female crime that, women are universally not able to fully resolve the Oedipus complex, have a great deal of need for the approval of men, so as a rule they do not risk upsetting them by committing crimes. The exceptional female who does offend is seen as suffering from extreme penis envy and, in a desire to be a man, takes an aggressive, non-conforming attitude that may result in criminal behavior.

In addition, scientists have suggested that the brain differences between male and female is an essential reason why women are more likely to stay out of harm's way. Current research has demonstrated that females, on average, have a larger deep limbic system than males. Due to this, women are more in touch with their feelings; they have an increased ability to bond and are connected to others.

Furthermore, some criminologists argue that women seldom have the opportunity to be involved in organised and corporate crime of which many men are guilty but not convicted. In terms of the ratio of conviction between females and males, where women have similar opportunities for criminal behavior in relation to males, their respective patterns of crimes appear to be broadly similar. However, while, in theory, women have similar opportunities as men to commit crime these may be limited by other factors. Such as employment related crime, as fewer women than men work, less opportunity exists. Women are also more-likely than men to have primary responsibility for child-care, which restricts opportunities for various types of criminal behavior.

Female crime is often explained as women's usual response to lack of opportunity and school failure. It is as a desperate attempt to escape from poverty rather than, as in the case of many men, an aggressive response to their social situation.

Courts may deal more-leniently with females, but when women commit crimes that go against male stereotypes of femininity, such as violence, women tend to be more harshly punished than men. As much female crime is petty, non-violent, like shop-lifting and prostitution, women not imprisoned as often as men. Moreover, female forms of crime may be "less visible" to the police. This is especially true in relation to crimes of violence, where women tend to be the victims rather than the perpetrators.

A rather different approach to the issue of gender and crime is society's concept of masculinity that leads to criminal behavior in boys and men. To be masculine means to assert authority and control over others, to be individualistic, aggressive and independent.

To sum up, the relationship between gender differences and criminal behavior is complex and varied, there are no simple answers. A number of factors must be taken into account, and the environmental influences and cultural traditions can be seen as the most important ones. The article was produced by the member of masterpapers.com. Sharon White is a senior writer and writers consultant at Research Papers. Get some useful tips for Coursework and Term Papers writing.