

SELF-PERCEPTIONS, MASCULINITY AND FEMALE OFFENDERS

By Victoria Herrington and Claire Nee¹

Abstract

It is generally accepted that men commit more crime than women; a statistic that has led many to look for an explanation for such disparity between the sexes. One explanation has proposed that masculinity and crime are inherently linked, and apparent increases in female offending in recent years has led some to conclude that this must be the result of women's increased masculinity. Research aimed at identifying this increase has failed to yield consistent results. This study utilised a self-perception measure of masculinity and femininity to explore this idea with four groups of women. A total of ninety-seven violent female offenders, non-violent female offenders, full time mothers and professional women were questioned. Results found that offenders perceived themselves as possessing significantly more masculine characteristics than non-offenders, and that violent offenders perceived themselves as the most masculine. Specifically, more offenders perceived themselves as glamorous, adventurous and rude, and more violent offenders thought of themselves as aggressive. Perceptions of a 'typical women' were also measured in an attempt to measure how different participants' viewed themselves from other women. All of our women saw 'her' as more feminine and less masculine than themselves. Reasons for these findings and issues around perceptions are discussed. The authors conclude that further, qualitative explorations of the concepts of masculinity and femininity amongst these populations need to be undertaken before one can definitively link masculinity and criminality.

¹ Victoria Herrington was a M.Sc. student at the University of Portsmouth at the time of the research. She is currently a Research Fellow at the Institute for Criminal Policy Research (ICPR), King's College London. Dr. Claire Nee is Director of the International Centre for Research in Forensic Psychology at the University of Portsmouth.

Introduction

Gender and Crime

Until recently, academic debate has generally accepted that crime and criminality are the domain of the male (Campbell, 2002; Heidensohn, 1994; Leonard, 1982), a view endorsed by official statistics and self report studies, which have long indicated that men are more likely than women to be both the perpetrators and the victims of a wide range of criminals acts (Home Office, 2002; Flood-Page et al., 2000; White and Kowalski, 1994). Equally it has become generally accepted that women commit a small share of all crimes, which are less serious and less professional in nature, resulting in their smaller representation within the criminal justice system (Heidensohn, 1994). This suggests that gender may be of greater statistical significance in differentiating between criminals and non-criminals than any other characteristic (Worrall, 2001; Morris, 1987; Stoll, 1974).

Recent years have seen a substantial increase in the number of women coming into contact with the criminal justice system in the U.K., and in particular an increase in the number of women incarcerated. Figures from the Home Office and Her Majesty' Prison Service indicate a rise of 15% in the number of women incarcerated between 2001 and 2002, compared to an increase of 6% for men (cited in Fawcett Society, 2003). Despite such increases, the comparably small number of women within the criminal justice

system continues today.² Explanations for this have typically come from one of two standpoints: That women simply commit less crime, or that women commit as much crime as men but that this remains hidden (Pollock, 1950). Whilst the latter stand has found some empirical support - that women are treated more leniently by courts for example (Box, 1983), most research fails to find this to be the case (Hedderman and Gelsthorpe, 1997) and suggests that the use of severe sentences, such as imprisonment, may actually be increasing disproportionately for women against the rate of use for men (Hedderman, 2003). Much research accepts therefore that women commit significantly less crime than men (Kruttschnitt et al., 2002), that their offences are typically less serious in nature and that their criminal careers are shorter (Fawcett Society, 2003; Hedderman, 2003). Searches for an explanation for this disparity have been numerous, although one has remained particularly popular with the media, general public and the scientific community. This theory highlights a link between crime and masculinity.³

Since the early days of criminology, when theoretical debate was dictated from a predominately biological perspective, attempts have been made to establish a link between the physiological characteristics of an individual and their propensity to commit

² Many have comprehensively reviewed official statistics concerning women within the criminal justice system and examining the validity of arguments of increased female offending (see Deakin and Spencer, 2003; Home Office, 2002). These discussions do not bear duplication here and the crux of this paper is in self-perceptions.

³ It would be advisable to draw a theoretical distinction between sex and gender. Sex is usually regarded as having a biological origin, whereas gender can be regarded as less concrete a distinction where the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' are afforded to behavioural characteristics which are commonly, although not exclusively associated with males and females (Heidensohn, 1989). For the purpose of this discussion, 'male' and 'female' will be ascribed to those distinguished by their biological and sexual attributes, whereas the terms masculine and feminine will describe those traits, behaviours and characteristics that have been traditionally associated with males and females respectively.

crime. Such attempts concentrated upon finding a biological explanation for men's criminality and led to the development of a theoretical link between masculinity and crime. Proponents of this view believed that biological characteristics associated with being male - such as aggression and dominance - increased an individual's tendency for criminality, and in particular for violence. Women were not frequently involved in crime and aggression therefore because they lacked these biologically masculine - and thus criminal- characteristics. Women were inherently passive and conservative, so less criminally capable than men whose criminality was a function of their biology (Lombroso and Ferrero, 1895). Women who did indulge in crime, were seen as non-female and inherently masculine (Carlen, 1985; Heidensohn, 1985); described as 'graceless, lumpish and uncouth', they were seen to possess the physical traits likening them more to men than women (Cowie et al., 1968). Women's apparent lack of criminality was further explained by a belief that criminal characteristics had been 'bred out' through a process of natural selection, with the more 'manly' females (and thus those whose biology had made them more criminally inclined), failing to find sexual partners with whom to propagate their criminogenic tendencies (Lombroso and Ferrero, 1895).

In more recent years, purely biological explanations for criminal behaviour have fallen out of favour, in part because of the difficulty accounting for the vast majority of males who did not offend⁴. Most recent research has developed around a socially orientated

⁴ That said, the role of evolution has recently been revisited by Anne Campbell and colleagues (2001). Campbell has proposed that natural selection has resulted in differences in evolved levels of fear. In short, women are less frequently involved in crime because evolutionary pressure has resulted in their development of a lower threshold for fear and more limited risk taking (Campbell, 2002; Campbell et al., 2001).

framework, although a belief in the link between criminality and masculinity has persisted. Socialisation into sex-stereotypes is central to the gender and crime debate within this framework, with socialisation defined as the transmission of appropriate behaviours, roles, attitudes and beliefs from generation to generation (Weinreich, 1980). This theory supposes that gender is a highly significant factor in the upbringing of children, with differences found in the socialisation of boys and girls and stereotypical beliefs about gender appropriate behaviours for males and females (Leventhal, 1977; Oakley, 1974, cited in Haralambos and Holborn, 1990). *This* is reflected in socialisation (Weinreich, 1980) and is responsible then for the (criminal) behaviour of males and females, rather than biologically determined sex differences (Omodei, 1981). Whereas female socialisation is thought to emphasise conformity, the deviant behaviour of males is tolerated and even condoned and excused (Heidensohn, 1989). Goals and behaviours encouraged for males are thought to have much in common with criminal activity (Dobash et al., 1995; Omodei, 1981), with personal characteristics encouraged through socialisation into the male gender role (such as aggression, being adventuresome and tough) thought necessary for involvement in crime (Naffine, 1987; Eagly, 1987). Crime is seen as symbolically masculine - and masculinity as supplying the motive for crime (Naffine, 1987). The dividing line between the two is a thin one (Oakley, 1972).

Taken to the logical conclusion, the more masculine an individual the more frequently involved in crime we might expect s/he will be - particularly with relation to violent offending which is thought to engender a greater degree of masculinity. Women who

offend are not 'proper women' (Worrall, 1990), and female aggression is often judged more harshly than aggression by males because it reflects a greater departure from female social norms (Gelsthorpe, 2003; Paul and Baenninger, 1991). Violent women (in particular) must therefore be mentally ill or emulating men (Campbell, 1993), because simply, this is not how nice girls should behave (Batchelor, 2001).

This argument suggests that female offenders must have been (wrongly) socialised into male gender roles. Some justification for this stand has been drawn from the belief that female offending has increased in tandem with the greater emancipation of women and an apparent 'masculinization' of female behaviour in general during the 1970s Women's Liberation Movement (Heidensohn, 1989; Adler, 1975; Simon, 1975). Increased offending was thought inevitable as barriers that protected male prerogatives broke down and socially defined gender roles became increasingly alike (Adler, 1977). Women's increased involvement in crime was seen then as a function of them more frequently adopting traditionally masculine characteristics (Norland, Wessel and Shover, 1981).

Biological, socialisation and masculinization explanations of female offending all hold at their core that crime is a masculine activity and that by definition therefore, female

offenders must be more masculine. Whilst this may seem over simplistic, the notion has proven attractively straightforward and, for the media in particular, has proved to be a newsworthy explanation for even recent apparent increases in female offending.

(Batchelor, 2001; Batchelor, Burman and Brown, 2001). This research aimed to examine female offending and specifically the idea that female offending was linked to higher levels of masculinity.

Previous Research

Several empirical studies have been conducted looking at women's masculinity, self-perceived or otherwise. Unfortunately few are recent and most have yielded limited or inconsistent support. Some indicate that self-reported possession of typically male traits increase an individual's propensity to commit crime (Cullen, Golden and Cullen 1979; Eve and Edmonds, 1978; Shover, Norland and Thornton, 1979; Widon, 1979), but others fail to find the female offender any more masculine in sex-role or attitude than non-offenders, and even to score higher on femininity measures than control groups (Simon and Landis, 1991; Naffine, 1987). The evidence is therefore ambiguous and there remains no clear-cut support for the notion that a woman's increased masculinity leads to her criminality.

Methodological variations might in part account for inconsistency in previous research findings. One problem associated with early studies had been a tendency to accept sex-stereotypes as reliably descriptive of males and females with certain characteristics used to differentiate the sexes without documentation of the validity. As such many studies may have started out with faulty concepts of femininity and masculinity (Shover and Norland, 1978).

A second problem relates to the participants who were employed in the research. Here the issues are four-fold:

- Small sample sizes were often used, sometimes with only 25 to 50 individuals involved (e.g. Leventhal 1977).
- Participants were not always drawn from offender populations, with students - typically a highly selective group constituting the intellectually elite, socially aware and more politically liberal sections of society (Williams and Best, 1990) - used as a substitute (e.g. Eve and Edmonds, 1978).
- Ages of participants varied significantly, ranging from groups of 10 year old children (e.g. Shover, Norland and Thornton, 1979) to college students and adults (e.g. Cullen, Golden and Cullen, 1979).
- There was a tendency to treat the female offending population homogenously, failing to draw distinctions between the perpetrators of theoretically different crimes (Daniel and Kashani, 1983).

On this last point, it is important to appreciate that the motivation for offending is likely different for offenders committing different offence types. For example, property offenders are more likely driven by economic gain; violent offenders may be more motivated by expressive needs (Nee and Taylor, 2000; Campbell, 1993; Cornish and Clarke, 1986). In terms of masculinity, one might hypothesise that violence and aggression in particular require a greater degree of masculinity, certainly representing a greater departure from acceptable female behaviour (Gelsthorpe, 2003; Batchelor, 2001).

One would expect then that violent offending be more prevalent among the more

masculine female offenders. Whilst a violent / non-violent distinction might seem crude, it would be misguided to consider all female (or male) offenders as the same.

The Present Investigation

Building upon the masculinity concepts outlined earlier, this research investigated the argument that female offenders are more masculine in their attitudes and beliefs than their non-offending counterparts. It also set out to redress some of the methodological flaws outlined above. Self-perceptions of masculinity and femininity were collected from women convicted of criminal offences and from a control group of non-offending women. These two groups were sub-divided, allowing further comparison. The offender sample consisted of women convicted of traditionally masculine person-directed violent offences and women convicted of non-violent crimes. The non-offender group comprised women currently engaged in traditionally masculine professional roles and those in the traditionally female role of full-time parenting. It would be misleading to represent the non-offending women as formal 'control groups', with socio-demographic differences not controlled for⁵.

⁵ This was as a result of the small sample sizes recruited to this study. The scope of this research therefore remains exploratory.

This was an exploratory study and while previous empirical research was ambiguous in its findings, theoretical explanations led us to expect that:

- Women convicted of criminal offences would possess more of the characteristics traditionally associated with masculinity, and therefore score higher for masculinity than the non-offending women.
- Within the offending population, women convicted of violent crimes would possess more of the characteristics traditionally associated with masculinity, and therefore score higher for masculinity than non-violent offenders.

Method

Participants

Ninety-seven participants completed a short postal questionnaire and returned it for inclusion in the analysis. All female offenders involved in the research had been convicted of offences and were presently serving custodial sentences for their offence. They were identified and recruited with the assistance of prison governors and completed the questionnaire independently or with assistance of the researchers⁶. Professional women were recruited through the Human Resource (HR) departments of local employers, and full time parents were contacted with the assistance of parent and child organisations in the Portsmouth area. Again, questionnaires were completed independently or with our assistance during visits.

Twenty-four participants were currently serving a prison sentence for a violent crime, including murder and armed robbery, and thirty-two women were serving a sentence for non-violent offences including burglary, theft and drug possession (N = 56 for offender sample). Twenty-seven of the non-offending sample were categorised as employed in professional occupations, and fourteen were full-time parents (N = 41 for non-offender sample). The ages of the sample ranged from 16 to 57 years old with an overall mean age of 30. Mean ages for each of the four groups were 25 for violent offenders, 29 for non-violent offenders, 30 for full time parents and 36 for professional women. Professional women were inevitably a little older because of the time needed to develop their career.

The majority of offenders were now single (n = 36), with most non-offenders in some form of a relationship (n = 28). Thirty-six women had no children still living at the family home. The remaining women had between one and three such dependants.

Data collection instrument

Self-perceived masculine and feminine characteristics were collected through the questionnaire. We wanted to know to what extent women considered themselves masculine or feminine. After collecting background data regarding demographic factors (age and marital status) and degree of criminal involvement, our questionnaire directed participants to tick off items from a list of standardised 'masculine' and 'feminine' adjectives that applied to them. Secondly, they were asked to repeat this exercise on a second sheet, but this time in relation to those items they felt applied to a 'typical' woman. The latter task was aimed to qualify the extent to which women saw their own profile deviating from their idea of 'the norm'. We used lists of adjectives generated by Williams and Best (1990).

Williams and Best (1990) had argued that sex-trait stereotypes were psychological characteristics or behavioural traits that were perceived to characterise one sex much more frequently than the other. Sex-trait stereotypes are paramount in the development of beliefs about appropriate behaviour for males and females. Williams and Best (1990) argued that it is sex-trait stereotypes that are the essence of perceived masculinity and

⁶ All offender participants were aware that participation was voluntary and that participating would not have any positive or negative consequences for them regarding their sentence. Any woman that was interested in completing the www.internetjournalofcriminology.com

femininity. Whilst there are other (Likert scale-type) measures available, we wanted to present a clear and simple check box instrument, and Williams and Best's checklist - described below - seemed a useful and appropriate way to measure these perceptions.

The 'Adjective Checklist' (AC) was developed using an original list of 300 adjectives from Gough and Heilbrun (1965), which were tested in 28 countries with a sample of 2,800 participants. Participants were asked to consider each adjective and make a relative decision about whether it was *generally said* to be more frequently associated with men, women, or undifferentiated between the sexes. This resulted in a list of 57 adjectives highly associated with either men or women (Williams and Best, 1990).

This list was adapted for use in the current investigation, with issues of cultural relevance and literacy addressed by removing adjectives the authors felt were associated with higher levels of educational attainment⁷, and in six cases replacing one word with another of the same meaning derived from the Oxford English Dictionary. Thirty-four adjectives were used, 17 highly associated with males and 17 with females, as presented in Table 1.

questionnaire did so, so we have no figures on response rates or if any declined to participate.

⁷Figures from the Department of Education and Skills estimate that approximately half of all prisoners have severe problems with literacy (Sourced from DFES website, 2004).

Table I. The Adjective Checklist-34 (AC - 34)

MALE ADJECTIVES	FEMALE ADJECTIVES
Dominant	Complaining
Masculine	Sympathetic
Adventurous	Warm
Rude	Nervous
Assertive	Glamorous
Enterprising	Obedient
Boastful	Soft-hearted
Courageous	Nagging
Confident	Affectionate
Aggressive	Attractive
Reckless	Gentle
Daring	Sentimental
Tough	Emotional
Sensible	Sensitive
Rough	Appreciative
Logical	Feminine
Unemotional	Moody

The questionnaire therefore provided four scores for each participant, (2 masculine and 2 feminine) out of a possible total of 17. These scores formed the basis of the masculinity and femininity measurements, which were derived for each group by taking the mean score across the cases. In other words, masculinity and femininity were measured by

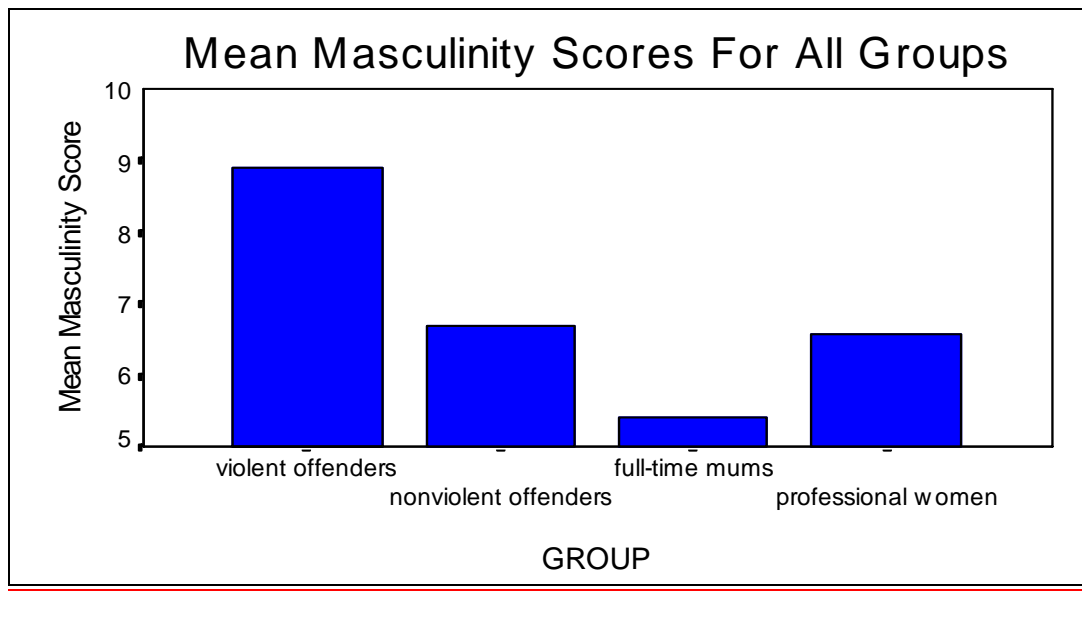
counting the total number of masculine and feminine characteristics checked by respondents.

Results

Masculinity

A two (masculinity score; femininity score) by four (group) ANOVA found that for perceptions of self, all women scored significantly higher on the femininity than the masculinity scale ($F_{(1, 93)} = 45.30$ $p < 0.001$). A one-way ANOVA looking at masculinity scores for the groups identified violent offenders having the highest average masculinity scores and full-time parents the lowest ($F_{(3,93)} = 3.59$ $p < 0.05$). There was also a significant difference between offenders and non-offenders as a whole, supporting our first hypothesis ($F_{(1,95)} = 3.91$ $p < 0.05$). Moreover, a significant difference was found between violent and non-violent offenders ($F_{(1,54)} = 4.3$ $p < 0.05$), supporting our second hypothesis that violent offenders would possess more traditionally masculine characteristics and score higher on the masculinity measure than non-violent offenders (see Table 2).

Table II. Mean masculinity scores for all groups



These data support our premise, with female offenders scoring higher on a measure of masculinity than their non-offending counterparts, and women imprisoned for violent offences reporting to possess more traditionally masculine characteristics than women imprisoned for non-violent crimes. Interestingly, a comparison of the two non-offender groups highlighted that professional women also perceived themselves to possess more traditionally masculine characteristics than full-time parents, although this was not statistically significant.

Femininity

Comparisons of femininity scores were also conducted, as some research had supported the possibility that low femininity scores could be as indicative of criminality as high masculinity scores (Widom, 1979). The two by four ANOVA detailed above had already indicated that all women had scored higher on a measure of femininity than masculinity – and in fact all women had checked an average of more than nine ‘feminine’ characteristics – i.e. more than half of those presented. A one-way ANOVA looking at femininity revealed however that whilst non-violent offenders scored highest on self-rated femininity and professional women had the lowest average scores, these, did not differ significantly between the four groups of women. ($F_{(3,93)} = 0.62$ $p > 0.05$),

Types of male and female characteristics

The analysis thus far has examined differences between the groups in terms of the *total number* of male and female characteristics that participants’ perceived themselves to

have. We turn now to examine the *types* of male and female characteristics each group had assigned themselves. A number of chi-square tests⁸ highlighted that a significantly higher proportion of offenders than non-offenders perceived themselves as possessing the adventurous ($\chi^2 = 7.98$, df 3, $p < 0.05$) and rude ($\chi^2 = 9.13$, df 3, $p < 0.05$) characteristics. Significantly more offenders and professional women perceived themselves as daring ($\chi^2 = 8.80$, df 3, $p < 0.05$); and significantly more violent offenders perceived themselves as aggressive ($\chi^2 = 13.43$, df 3, $p < 0.01$). More offenders than non-offenders also believed themselves to be glamorous ($\chi^2 = 11.19$, df 3, $p < 0.05$).

The 'typical' woman

Data concerning perceptions of a 'typical woman' were also collected. We hoped this would allow each group to act as its own 'control' facilitating comparisons between perceptions of 'self' and 'typicality'. In line with self-perceptions, a two (masculinity; femininity) by four (group) ANOVA revealed that all women perceived a typical woman to have significantly more feminine than masculine characteristics ($F_{(1,91)} = 160.61$ $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, comparison of mean masculinity and femininity scores for 'self' and 'typicality' indicated that all of the women perceived a typical woman to be *more* feminine and *less* masculine than themselves. In other words, all women perceived themselves to be significantly more masculine and less feminine than their idea of

⁸ Unfortunately due to the small sample sizes involved a number of chi values could not be calculated, with the tests violating the assumption of minimum cell frequency (< 5). We report therefore only on those chi values that could be calculated. This does not mean that there would have been no significant differences between groups on the remaining adjectives had a larger sample been employed.

typicality ($F_{(1,91)} = 28.78$ $p < 0.001$). This did not differ significantly between the four groups.

A one way ANOVA found that offenders assigned a significantly higher number of masculine characteristics to their perception of the typical woman ($F_{(1,94)} = 6.52$ $p < 0.05$).

Chi square tests indicated that offenders perceived a typical woman specifically as more dominant ($\chi^2 = 11.38$, df 3, $p < 0.01$), adventurous ($\chi^2 = 11.79$, df 3, $p < 0.01$), glamorous ($\chi^2 = 24.20$, df 3, $p < 0.0001$) and daring ($\chi^2 = 13.53$, df 3, $p < 0.01$) than non-offenders did.

Discussion and Conclusions

Before embarking upon a discussion of the results and their implications, it is worth remembering that sample sizes involved here were small, precluding the matching of samples on demographic variables such as age, ethnicity and socio-economic background. Whilst this may limit generalisations from this work, and affect the robustness of the statistical findings; both criticisms of previous research in this area; our study did result in the predicted findings and a number of conclusions can be drawn. Although, as expected from an exploratory study of this type, findings should be regarded as indicative only.

Firstly, the women incarcerated for criminal offences in our study perceived themselves to possess more characteristics regarded as traditionally 'masculine' than their non-offending counterparts, especially those imprisoned for violent crimes. However, this correlation does not signify causation. Alternative explanations are numerous and include the possibility that higher levels of self-perceived masculinity among female offenders, particularly violent female offenders, is a function of criminal identity exacerbated, or wholly caused by, the experience of incarceration. That is, perceiving oneself as adventurous or rude may be the result of involvement in crime and/or incarceration - rather than the cause of it. Certainly in light of offenders' perceptions of both self and typical women as more masculine than non-offenders', the possibility that something unique to the *prison experience* affected perceptions should be considered.

The concept of desirability may also explain a greater sense of 'masculinity' amongst the offenders. Notions of social desirability bias lead us to suppose that more respondents want to describe themselves in positive rather than negative terms. Interpretation of the AC-34 in terms of desirability might lead to women wishing to report the feminine trait of 'attractiveness', but not 'complaining'. Likewise for masculine characteristics, women may wish to see themselves as 'confident', but not 'boastful'. Somewhat intertwined is the notion of trait desirability and subculture. Women within the offending population might view traits such as adventurousness and daring more desirably than full time mums; as a result of their cultural milieu and because these arguably represent the characteristics necessary to survive and succeed in their lifestyle. Equally, violent offenders may perceive themselves aggressive because this characteristic is more desirable within their particular subculture. Both offenders and professional women may perceive themselves as daring, due perhaps to their break from the more traditional female norm of full time parenting.

Trait comprehension is another point worth consideration here. Efforts were made to ensure that all adjectives were culturally relevant and unambiguous; although Laider and Hunt's work with girl gang members has highlighted that certain terms might be highly gendered - meaning different things to males and females. They found that 'respect' could not be understood solely in masculine terms of power and control and that among the women they interviewed it was associated with the pursuit of respectability - an important

dimension of 'being feminine' (Laider and Hunt, 2001: 664). One might suppose that this could also be the case with our different groups of women discussed above: Toughness for one group might mean physical strength or resolve, for another it might have emotional connotations.

Whether women actually possess these perceived characteristics to such differing degrees; are consciously conforming to their subcultural stereotypes; desire certain characteristics above others; or simply understand them to mean different things; remains an open question. Despite this, our findings stand: Our women offenders perceived themselves to be significantly different to the non-offenders using more adjectives defined as masculine.

Interestingly, all women scored highly on our femininity measure too, which leads us to conclude that female offenders – and violent offenders in particular – perceived themselves as both highly masculine *and* highly feminine. High masculinity and femininity is termed 'androgyny'. Traditional androgyny is supposed to combine the positive traits of masculinity and femininity – taking the best from both worlds. However, it is equally likely that an androgynous individual take on the negative traits of masculinity and femininity; in the words of Brenda Woodhill;

Nowhere in the literature has it been suggested that humans never behave in an undesirable fashion, therefore the androgynous personality may also include

competence in undesirable behaviours or vices. For example a positive androgynous person may demonstrate high levels of independence (m+), compassion (f+), ambition (m+) and tolerance (f+), where as a negatively androgynous person may demonstrate high levels of submissiveness (f -) and selfishness (m -), or be temperamental (f -) and aggressive (m -). (Woodhill, 2003: xx).

If we consider our results, women offenders were more rude, daring (along with professional women) and aggressive (for violent offenders), each of which might be interpreted as among the more negative masculine characteristics. Our offenders were also more glamorous – an arguably positive feminine trait; and more adventurous – a positive masculine characteristic. In terms of androgyny then, our offenders had drawn more greatly upon the negative masculine characteristics than the positive. Woodhill notes that a negatively androgynous individual will have a bigger repertoire of undesirable behaviours from which to choose a response (Woodhill, 2003: xx), with both masculine and feminine responses available to them. The significant differences between the groups of women that we have highlighted in this paper certainly suggest that our offenders may have chosen more frequently from the negatively masculine list than non-offenders – perhaps accounting in part for their current situation. In this sense then, one cannot conclude that female offenders are simply more masculine although they do perceive themselves to possess more masculine characteristics. The positivity and negativity of each characteristic - together with the behaviour likely to be displayed as a result and any mitigating responses from other (positive and/or feminine) characteristics also held - must be considered.

In conclusion then, whilst this study has generated the findings we predicted; that female offenders, in particular violent female offenders, would perceive themselves as more 'masculine' than non-offenders; the next step should involve in-depth qualitative explorations of what comprises masculinity and femininity today, with characteristics considered more in terms of their positiveness and negativeness. Are offenders more androgynous, but draw more on the negativity of masculinity and femininity? Do non-offending women draw more on the positivity? Or do they have fewer (masculine) responses available to them, drawing instead on negative female attributes such as submissiveness? A better appreciation of how men view themselves would also obviously further our knowledge in the whole field of enquiry. Building on the findings here, a deeper understanding of how the individual currently defines themselves in terms of masculinity and femininity will help us to tease out any meaningful and useful links between masculinity, femininity and criminality. In turn, this may well add to our growing knowledge about gender issues in the aetiology of crime.

References

- Adler, F. (1975) *Sisters in crime: The rise of the new female criminal*. New York: McGraw-Hill
- Adler, F. (1977) 'The interaction between women's emancipation and female criminality: A cross-cultural perspective', *International Journal of Criminology and Penology*, 5: 101-112
- Batchelor, S. (2001) 'The myth of girl gangs', *Criminal Justice Matters*. Spring, 43: 26-27
- Batchelor, S., Burman, M. and Brown, J. (2001) 'Discussing Violence: Let's hear it from the girls', *Probation Journal*, Vol 48(2): 125-134
- Box, S. (1983) *Power, Crime and Mystification*. London: Tavistock
- Brearley, N. (1996) 'Law and order in England and Wales', in Lancaster, S. (ed) *Development in politics: An annual review vol 7*. Ormskirk: Causeway Press
- Brehm, S. and Kassin, S. (1993) *Social Psychology*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company
- Campbell, A. (2002) *A mind of her own: The evolutionary psychology of women*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Campbell, A. (1993) *Men, women and aggression*. New York: Basic Books.
- Campbell, A., Muncer, S. and Bibel, D. (2001) 'Women and crime – An evolutionary approach', *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 6: 481-497
- Carlen, P. (1985) 'Criminal women, myths and misogyny', in Carlen, P. (ed) *Criminal women: Autobiographical accounts*. Cambridge: Polity Press

- Cornish, D.B. and Clarke, R.V.G. (1986) *The reasoning criminal*. New York: Springer-Verlag
- Cowie, J., Cowie, V. and Slater, E. (1968) *Delinquency in girls*. London: Heinemann
- Cullen, F.T., Golden, K.M. and Cullen, J.B. (1979) 'Sex and Delinquency: A partial test of the masculinity hypothesis', *Criminology*, 17: 301-310
- Daniel, A.E. and Kashani, J.H. (1983) 'Women who commit crimes of violence', *Psychiatric Annals*, 13(9): 697-713
- Deakin, J. and Spencer, J. (2003) 'Women behind bars: Explanations and Implications' *The Howard Journal*, 42(2): 123-136.
- Dobash, R.E., Dobash, K.P. and Noaks, L. (1995) 'Thinking about gender and crime', in Dobash, R.E., Dobash, K.P. and Noaks, S.L.(eds) *Gender and Crime*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press
- Eagly, A.H. (1987) *Sex Differences in Social Behaviour: A Social Role Interpretation*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Eve, R. and Edmonds, K.R. (1978) *Women's liberation and female criminality: or 'sister, will you give me back my dime?'* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the society for the study of social problems: San Francisco
- Fawcett Society. (2003) *Commission on women and the criminal justice system: Interim Report – Women and offending*: Fawcett Society
- Flood-Page, C., Campbell, S., Harrington, V. and Miller, J. (2000) *Youth Crime: Findings from the 1998/99 Youth Lifestyles Survey. Home Office Research Study 209*. London: Home Office

- Gough, H. and Heilbrun, A.B. (1965) *The Adjective CheckList Manual*. Palo Alto, CA: Psychologists Press
- Gelsthorpe, L. (2003) 'Feminist perspectives on women and crime: Making women count', *Criminal Justice Matters*, 53
- Glaser, B. and Strauss, A.L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago: Aldine
- Haralambos, M. and Holborn, M. (1990) *Sociology: Themes and Perspective*. London: Harper Collins
- Haskell, M.R. and Yablonsky, L. (1974) *Crime and delinquency 2nd edition*. Chicago: Rand McNally
- Hedderman, C. (2003). 'Why are more women being sentenced to custody?', in McIvor G, (ed) *Women who offend*. London: Jessica Kingsley
- Hedderman, C. and Gelsthorpe, L. (1997) *Understanding the sentencing of women. Home Office Research Study No. 170*. London: Home Office
- Heidensohn, F. (1985) *Women and Crime*. Basingstoke: Macmillan
- Heidensohn, F. (1989) 'Gender and crime', in Heidensohn, F. *Crime and society*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Heidensohn, F. (1994) 'Gender and crime', in Maguire, M., Morgan, R. and Reiner, R. (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Home Office (2002) *Statistics on women and the Criminal Justice System 2002*. London: HMSO
- Kruttschnitt, C., Gartner, R. and Ferraro, K. (2002) 'Women's involvement in serious interpersonal violence', *Aggression and violent behaviour*. 7: 529-565

- Laidler, K.J. and Hunt, G. (2001) 'Accomplishing femininity among the girls in the gang' *British Journal of Criminology*, 41: 656-678
- Lasley, J., Kuhl, A.F. and Roberg, R.R. (1985) 'Relationship of non-traditional sex-role attitudes to severity of women's criminal behaviour', *Psychological Reports*, 56: 155-158
- Leonard, E.B. (1982) *Women, crime and society*. NY/London: Longman Inc
- Leventhal, G. (1977) 'Female criminality: Is 'Women's Lib' to blame?' *Psychological Reports*, 41: 1179-1182
- Lombroso, C., and Ferrero, W. (1895) *The female offender*. London: Fisher Unwin.
- Millett, K. (1970) *Sexual Politics*. New York: Doubleday
- Morris, A. (1987) *Women, crime and criminal justice*. Worcester: Billing and Sons
- Naffine, N. (1987) *Female Crime*. Sydney: Allen And Unwin
- Naffine, N. (1981) 'Theorizing about female crime', in Mukherjee, S.K. and Scutt, J.A. *Women and Crime*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin
- Nee, C. and Taylor, M. (1988) 'Residential burglary in the Republic of Ireland', *Howard Journal*, 27: 2
- Norland, S. Wessel, R.C. and Shover, N. (1981) 'Masculinity and delinquency', *Criminology*, Vol 19(3): 421-433
- Oakley, A. (1972) *Sex, gender and society*. New York: Harper & Row
- Omodei, R. (1981) 'The mythinterpretation of female crime', in Mukherjee, S.K. and Scutt, J.A.(eds) *Women and Crime*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin
- Paul, L, and Baenninger, M. (1991) 'Aggression by women: Mores, myths and methods', in Baenninger, R. (ed) *Targets of violence and aggression*. North Holland: Elsevier Science Publishers

- Pollack, O. (1950) *The Criminality of women*. New York: A S Barnes/Perpetua
- Shover, N. and Norland, S. (1978) 'Sex-roles and criminality: Science or conventional wisdom?', *Sex-Roles*, 4 (1):111-125
- Shover, N., Norland, S. and Thornton, W.E. (1979) 'Gender roles and delinquency', *Social Forces*, 58: 162-175
- Simon, R.J. (1975) *The contemporary woman and crime*. Rockville, MD: National Institute of Mental Health, Crime and Delinquency Issues
- Simon, R.J. and Landis, J. (1991) *The crimes women commit the punishments they receive*. Lexington, MA: D.C.Heath
- Stoll, C.S. (1974) *Female and male: Socialisation, social roles and social structure*. Iowa: WMC Brown Company
- Weinreich, H. (1980) 'Sex-Role Socialisation' in Chetwynd, J. and Hartnett, O. (eds) *The sex-role system: Psychological and sociological perspectives*. London: Routledge
- White, J.W. and Kowalski, R.M. (1994) 'Deconstructing the myth of the non-aggressive woman', *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 18: 487-508
- Widom, C.S. (1979) 'Female Offenders: Three assumptions about self-esteem, sex-role identity and feminism', *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 6: 365-382
- Williams, J.E. and Best, D.L. (1990) *Measuring Sex Stereotypes: A Multi-Nation Study*. California: Sage
- Williams, J.E. and Best, D.L. (1977) 'Sex stereotypes and trait favourability on the Adjective Checklist', *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 37: 101-110

Williams, P. and Dickinson, J. (1993) 'Fear Of Crime: Read All About It? The relationship between newspaper crime reporting and fear of crime', *British Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 33(1): 33-56

Worrall, A. (2001) 'Girls at risk? Reflections of changing attitudes to young women's offending', *Probation Journal*, 48(2): 86-92