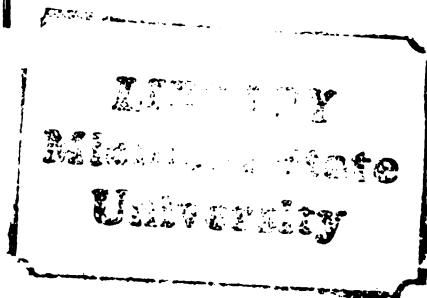






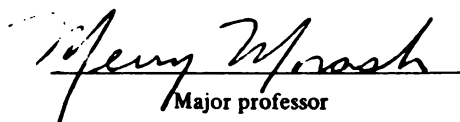
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THE RELATIONSHIP OF GENDER TO  
QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ASPECTS OF  
SELF-REPORTED DELINQUENCY

By

Susan K. Wright

A THESIS

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
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## ABSTRACT

### THE RELATIONSHIP OF GENDER TO QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ASPECTS OF SELF-REPORTED DELINQUENCY

By

Susan K. Wright

This study is a secondary analysis of self-reported delinquency data which examines the relationship of gender to the quantity and quality of the delinquent acts of theft and assault. The sample consisted of 197 working class youths from two Boston communities. Consistent with other research, the study demonstrates that males are more frequently and seriously involved in delinquency than females. The analysis further demonstrates that there are striking differences between girls and boys in the motivational and situational aspects of their delinquent behavior. These findings provide further evidence that there is little support for theoretical and empirical research which suggests that girls are becoming similar to boys in their patterns of delinquent behavior. Methodologically, the findings demonstrate the efficacy of utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data in order to avoid exaggerating or obscuring differences at either the aggregate or individual level of analysis.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In addition to offering the use of her fine data set without which it is doubtful any thesis would have been forthcoming, I would like to thank Dr. Merry Morash for her guidance and support which challenged and pushed me along at all the appropriate times. Her ability to avoid frustration when confronted with a recalcitrant student is to be commended and emulated. The detailed examination and constructive criticism of written products by Dr. John McNamara and Dr. Vincent Hoffman were also greatly appreciated.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship of gender to aspects of specific types of crimes committed by working class juveniles. The specific crimes that will be examined are theft and assault. Gender related differences on both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of these crimes will be investigated.<sup>1</sup>

Quantitative factors refer to the frequency that the particular type of crime is committed and the seriousness of the criminal act. The qualitative aspects of the crime pertain to the manner in which the crime is committed and include factors such as the cost of items stolen and the extent of injury to the assaulted party.

The study will be limited to an examination of working class youths because of the availability of data and in an effort to control for a potential interaction between social class and gender. This will permit a more precise test of the relationship of gender to both quantitative and qualitative indicators of delinquency.

The crimes of theft and assault were selected for study because each of these crimes has, traditionally, been linked to a particular sex and because of public concern with a perceived increase in theft and violence committed by females. In self-report data on delinquency such as that which will be used in this secondary analysis, a substantial proportion of the offenses which can be categorized as theft are shoplifting offenses. Shoplifting is a crime commonly associated with females (Steffensmeier and Steffensmeier, 1980:72). Criminal violence, on the other hand, is most typically ascribed to males. In comparing the behavior patterns of males and females with respect to these two crimes, it is expected that boys will report more frequent and serious involvement with both types of offenses. It is also predicted that both boys and girls will exhibit similar patterns in terms of the qualitative aspects of a crime if both report comparable levels of involvement with the crimes. The specific hypotheses related to these quantitative and qualitative dimensions will be restated in testable form in Chapter 3.

These general hypotheses are grounded in opportunity theory and its specific adaptation by Freda Adler to gender issues. Adler is one of a number of theorists who has suggested that social roles which govern gender specific behavior are changing such that the behavior of females and males is becoming more quantitatively and qualitatively similar. In Adler's (1975) version of this theoretical trend, it is predicted that as the social roles of females and males converge, the criminal behavior of females and

males will become comparable. Examination of this thesis with respect to a sample composed of working class youths is of particular interest given the rigidity traditionally associated with gender role socialization by the working class (for a review of the literature on social class and gender role socialization, see Pleck, 1981:88-89). It has been suggested that role changes associated with feminism have been less pronounced with respect to the lower socioeconomic classes which could result in wider gender variation in delinquent behavior (Richards, 1981:467).

### The Significance of the Problem

Traditionally, criminological theory has provided separate explanations for female and male criminal behavior (for analyses of theories that do this, see Smart, 1976; Klein, 1973; Leonard, 1982). Criminological research has long shown that boys and girls have differed both in terms of the amount of delinquency they exhibit and the nature of that delinquency. There has been a noted failure in criminological theory, however, to take into account the sex variable in etiological explanations of crime. Recent research, however, has begun to question the efficacy of gender specific etiologies and to incorporate the sex variable into more general theories of the causes of criminal behavior (e.g. Harris, 1977; Cloward and Piven, 1978). As Hindelang (1979:154) has pointed out,

the sex variable is "a powerful predictor of involvement in illegal activity" that warrants closer examination. This recognition that the critical factor of sex has been so often ignored in the literature has been a major impetus for research in the area of gender differences in delinquency.

Research questioning whether the long recognized differences in female and male delinquency exist today is one of the directions that this revitalized concern for gender issues is taking. Some researchers maintain that gender differences in delinquency are still apparent and explain these differences by pointing to variations in the socialization of boys and girls (Cloward and Piven, 1978; Harris, 1977). Other individuals, however, argue that differences in the delinquency of boys and girls are diminishing rapidly as a result of changes in society which are producing comparable types of behavior in both sexes (Adler, 1975). Proponents of the latter stance are attempting to explain why differences are disappearing rather than why the differences existed originally.

Adler has provided the most widely publicized theoretical explanation for differences in the criminality of females and males. It is particularly important at this time to test Adler's adaptation of opportunity theory because it has been a major impetus in the study of female criminality. Virtually every major piece of research in the area in recent years makes reference to Adler's thesis. Most of this type of research has focused on the quantitative dimension of criminal behavior. The emphasis in the

present study, however, will be on the qualitative aspects of the behavior. This will permit tests of specific hypotheses derived from Adler's general hypothesis that female criminal behavior will approximate that of males, not only in gross quantitative indicators of each type of crime, but also on qualitative indicators of the criminal activity.

It is expected that supporting or failing to support these specific hypotheses will add to the growing body of research attempting to incorporate gender considerations into a general theory of criminal behavior. Should gender differences in qualitative patterns of criminal behavior be identified, further study of the effect of gender specific socialization and its relationship to delinquency would be warranted. Similarly, identification of comparable patterns of behavior would indicate support for a critical portion of Adler's thesis.



Footnote

1. The notion of differentiating between the quantitative and qualitative aspects of criminal behavior is not original to this author. Richards (1981) used this differentiation in an article entitled, "Quantitative and Qualitative Sex Differences in Middle-Class Delinquency." Although the definitions used in this study refer to similar concepts, the operational definitions of the categories are significantly different.

## CHAPTER II

### THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### Introduction

In recent years, Adler's (1975, 1979a, 1979b, 1980, 1981) explanation of female criminality has been a focus of much of the research on gender and delinquency. This chapter will review that research in order to facilitate understanding the context of the present study. In this chapter, the origins of Adler's argument will be examined and the portions of her thesis which researchers have found controversial will be discussed. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the relevance of the present research to examining the similarity of boys and girls on the quantitative and qualitative dimension of delinquency to Adler's argument.

Adler's Thesis and Its Origins in Opportunity  
Theory

As Adler's thesis is a derivative of opportunity theory, a brief examination of the basic tenets of opportunity theory will be useful in understanding her application of that theory to issues of the criminality of females. Opportunity theory has its origins in strain theory and, as such, puts forth the premise that all individuals in this society share a common goal of success as defined by social norms. In Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) version of this theory, the opportunity for youths to obtain these commonly held goals is differentially distributed as a result of both sociological and psychological factors. As a result of blocked opportunities and inability to adapt goals downward, youths become frustrated and seek association with supportive subcultures. If the subculture with which a youth becomes associated provides opportunity for achievement via illegitimate means, the youth will become involved in delinquent activities.

The emphasis in Cloward and Ohlin's (1978) opportunity theory is on the sociological rather than the psychological factors which block the youth's opportunity to participate in legitimate activities to achieve a common goal. As support for this proposition, they point out that the lower class has a more difficult task in attempting to attain the goals of success by virtue of being further removed from the accepted goals than the

other classes. In addition, the lower class has greater opportunity to be exposed to illegitimate means of achieving those goals (Cloward and Ohlin, 1978). For example, exposure to street crime is greater for the lower class than for the middle class youth who resides in a suburb. As a result of this limited access to acceptable goals and greater access to illegitimate activities, Cloward and Ohlin posit that delinquency should occur more frequently in lower socioeconomic groups.

Adler's adaptation of differential opportunity theory suggests that females, regardless of social class, have experienced blocked opportunities for both legitimate and illegitimate means of attaining the common goals (Adler, 1975:105). This interpretation emphasizes sex as the primary differentiating variable rather than social class. It rests on the premise that social norms play a more important role in the development of delinquent behavior than do economic limitations. In this framework, cultural norms and prohibitions limit the female's access to both legitimate and illegitimate opportunities. As these prohibitions are lifted by the changing role of the female in society, Adler (1975) predicts that female crime should increase.

In establishing her case of blocked opportunities for females, Adler (1975:41) firmly supports the side of environment in the classical psychological debate over the relative effect of environment versus heredity. Although she acknowledges an undefined effect of physical differences between males and females, Adler (1975) posits that the majority of the differences between male and

female behavior can be attributed to culturally inculcated norms. She argues that these norms are changing as evidenced by the rise of the feminist movement. In support of these changes, Adler (1975) points to increases in the employment of women and purported increases in female crime rates.

### Potential Problems with Adler's Argument

As previously mentioned, much of the recent research in the area of female criminality has focused on the refutation of Adler's thesis. As a body, this research has identified three primary assumptions in her argument which are particularly vulnerable to debate. These assumptions can be grouped in the following manner:

1. Social norms are composed of sex-typed behaviors which can be attributed almost solely to environmental factors that impinge on females.
2. Social norms pertaining to females in this society are changing.
3. The effect of other conditions such as race and social class on the role of women is minimal.

Each of these three related assumptions is crucial to Adler's argument and has received the critical attention of researchers. These assumptions are the foundation upon which Adler's (1975) proposition that, given equal opportunity, the illegal behavior of females will approximate that of males is based. As there is

considerable controversy in the field regarding the validity of these assumptions, the majority of the literature review in this chapter will be devoted to an examination of the research pertaining to these unstated assumptions which indicate that Adler's argument may rest on faulty premises. The hypotheses tested in the present study are derived from Adler's equal opportunity proposition and, as such, reflect the biases of the assumptions on which they are based.

The remainder of this chapter will present a review of the literature relevant to Adler's three primary assumptions and the hypotheses to be tested in this study. Both empirical and theoretical ramifications of her theory will be explored.

### Social Norms and Sex-Typed Behaviors

Perhaps the most fundamental contention in Adler's argument is that social norms specifying gender behavior are the product of differential socialization rather than inherent characteristics. This proposition is particularly important to Adler's argument because inherent differences between the sexes could reduce the impact of socialization. According to Adler (1975:28) female/male differences in the frequency of criminal activity are less related to sex-typed behavior than to social norms that proscribe the appropriate behavior for each sex. Adler uses the term, sex-typed behavior, to connote inherent characteristics of the female or the

male. The term, social norms, on the other hand, is used to refer to a more amorphous concept of group behavior that is relatively unaffected by innate characteristics. In stressing that the primary differences between females and males are the result of social norms, Adler is suggesting that there are few inherent differences between the two. With cultural limitations removed, Adler predicts that males and females would behave similarly.

According to psychological research, the distinction between social norms and sex-typed behavior is considerably more blurred than indicated by Adler. The concept of social norms has been defined by one researcher in the following manner:

Norms are essentially reflections of value judgements which are tacitly agreed upon by the influential members of society and which establish, among other things, the guidelines for the socialization of children. All human societies have norms which regulate the behavior of their members; violations are more or less severely punished, depending upon the importance of the norm; one who wears inappropriate clothes to an event may be stared at, while one who wears no clothes at all may be put in jail. Such judgements about behavior vary greatly from one society to another and even between groups in a single society. But they all have one element in common, and that is that they are perceived as necessary for the survival of the group and for growth to maturity of the individual (Williams, 1977:318).

This implies that social norms define individual behaviors appropriate for groups of people in society. Similarly, it implies that social norms are composed of sets of individual behaviors that may vary by race or social class. In making the simple assumption that individual behavior is learned rather than innate, Adler has

firmly sided with the environmentalists in the longstanding psychological debate regarding the relative effect of nature versus nurture on human behavior.

In the most recent book edited by Adler (1981), she further confuses her argument by implying that her theory can be applied to an international examination of gender differences in criminal behavior. The scant attention to extensive cultural variations between the countries examined in this anthology is an indication of the degree to which Adler has avoided consideration of the full range of environmental variables that might affect gender differences. By ignoring the potentially confounding effects of such factors as race and social class, Adler has further weakened her argument regarding the relationship of environmental factors to the development of sex-typed behaviors.

In a review of research relevant to understanding the effect of social class and race on sex role socialization, Unger (1979:180) pointed out that lower-class white children appear to exhibit more rigidly stereotyped sex role behavior than middle-class or upper-class children. The same review also noted that girls appear to be less affected by socioeconomic class than boys and noted that racial differences appear to exist regarding the acceptance by young girls of stereotypical roles for men and women (Unger, 1979:180,182). These findings suggest that the relationship between social roles, race and sex may be considerably more complicated than indicated by Adler.

Psychological research with respect to environment versus



heredity issues has not been as definitive as Adler suggests. Psychologists have identified some types of behaviors such as aggression that appear to distinguish between the sexes at the aggregate level (Pleck, 1981:147). Research has not, however, conclusively demonstrated the degree to which behavior is the result of innate or environmental causes (Pleck, 1981; Schaffer, 1981; Parsons, 1980). If there are inherent elements as well as learned elements in sex-typical behavior, it would appear as though structural changes in society would not necessarily equalize the sexes in terms of their behavior. By ignoring this classic debate in psychology, Adler has oversimplified her argument in order to strengthen her contention that changing norms will eventually result in comparable behavior for females and males. Although many researchers agree with Adler's claim that the range of acceptable behavior for both sexes is broadening, few are as willing as she to attribute this change primarily to social norms. As Schaffer (1981:35) has suggested, the relationship between hormones, chromosomes, genes and specific sex-appropriate behavior is most probably indirect and complicated, but warrants further research given the current state of knowledge regarding the interaction of these factors. In other words, the concept of gender specific behavior may not be as simple as Adler suggests and may be affected by factors such as social class and race.

### Increasing Female Crime Rates?

Imbedded in Adler's assumption that social norms pertaining to sex-typed behavior can be attributed primarily to environmental causes is the implication that social change will result in comparable behavior on the part of females and males. This is the basis for her second assumption which is, to some researchers in the field, equally problematic to the first. Adler (1975) contends that the social norms governing the behavior of females are in the process of changing dramatically. She bases this part of her argument primarily on circumstantial evidence such as anecdotal reports of increased female crime and violence. There has been mixed support for this argument. In this section the literature pertaining to Adler's claim that female crime is increasing will be reviewed. Both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of criminal behavior will be examined.

Perhaps the most unequivocal support for Adler's propositions can be found in the work of Rita Simon regarding adult female criminality. Based on an analysis of the Uniform Crime Reports from 1955 to 1970, Simon (in Adler and Simon, 1979a:48) concluded that the gap between adult male and female arrest rates is closing with respect to certain types of property crimes such as larceny, fraud, embezzlement and forgery. Although she acknowledges that arrest rates may reflect other factors such as police discretion, Simon (in Adler and Simon, 1979a:113) attributes the change primarily to greater opportunities for women to commit crimes as a

result of their increased participation in the labor force. Her conclusion supports Adler's proposition that the women's movement can be directly tied to an increase in female crime.

In a similar vein, Wilson (1981) claims that the arrests of females for violent crimes have increased strikingly in recent years and are indicative of the changing role of women in this society. In her interpretation of her findings, Wilson concluded that those variables associated with violent crime used to be differentially distributed for females and males. According to Wilson (1981:122), the woman used to be able to avoid the use of violence by seeking the protection of a man. Wilson, in an extrapolation from Adler, suggests that increasing self-reliance on the part of women has resulted in both the readiness and willingness of women to defend themselves.

The work of Adler, Wilson and Simon is based primarily on official statistics and, as such, is most pertinent to Adler's claim that the amount of female crime is increasing. Since Short and Nye (1958) first reported their findings from a self-report study of a large sample of high school youths, however, researchers have been aware that sex differentials in official rates of delinquency are not mirrored in self-report studies. Some have used this difference between official and self-report data to illustrate the contention that increases in female crime have not been significant (Klein and Kress, 1976). Other researchers such as Figueira-McDonough et al. (1981) have found that self-report data indicates that females and males, in terms of the less serious

types of offenses, exhibit similar patterns although, in terms of serious offenses, sex differences are still obvious.

One recent self-report study, however, supports the contention of Adler that the amount of female crime is increasing. Feyerherm (1981:90) found that "the evidence...seems to indicate that there is substantial similarity in the patterns of delinquent behavior for males and females." Feyerherm (1981:92) further stated that, "it is clear that the social processes that move adolescents from the point of commission of a delinquent deed to the point of arrest tend to operate in ways that increase the likelihood of arrest for males rather than females." Feyerherm's conclusions support the claims of Adler, Simon and Wilson by suggesting that the amount of crime by females may more closely approximate that of males than previously thought.

Steffensmeier and Steffensmeier (1980) conclude, however, that even official statistics can be misleading in terms of official arrest rates. In this frequently cited study, these researchers compared juvenile female and male arrest rates taken from the Uniform Crime Reports for 1965 and 1972. In their study, they differentiated between the absolute and relative differences between the sexes in arrest rates. The relative gap was determined by dividing the female rate for each offense by the sum of the male rate and the female rate for that offense (Steffensmeier and Steffensmeier, 1980:64). In comparing the relative gap for the year 1965 to the relative gap for the year 1972, these researchers found that traditional patterns of crime were maintained

(Steffensmeier and Steffensmeier, 1980:70). A slight increase in petty property crimes was identified and these authors concluded this increase could probably be attributed to an increase in arrests for shoplifting which is considered to be a traditionally "female" crime (Steffensmeier and Steffensmeier, 1980:72). In another related study, Steffensmeier and Cobb (1981) noted that increases in the arrests of females could be attributed, in part, to a reduction in the chivalrous treatment of females by the legal system.

Victimization studies that have examined gender differences have also pointed to conclusions regarding gender differences in the amount of crime that are similar to those derived from self-report studies. The work of Hindelang (1979, 1971) again challenges the Adler proposition that female crime is increasing. Based on an analysis of victimization data from the National Crime Survey, Hindelang (1979:152) concluded that "proportionate female involvement has been relatively stable, except that larceny showed a slight increase in recent years. The same research further pointed out that making a causal inference that the emancipation of women is related to this slight increase is beyond the generalizability of this type of study (Hindelang, 1979:154).

Despite the findings that suggest that, quantitatively, female and male criminal behavior is and has been more similar than shown by official statistics, many researchers have found differences in the types of crimes that males and females are most likely to commit. The most prevalent difference identified by researchers

thus far is that increases in female crime rates have occurred with respect to property crimes such as shoplifting rather than both violent crimes and property crimes as is the case with males (Giallombardo, 1980; Steffensmeier, 1981; Conklin, 1981). In a comparison of official arrests from 1960 to 1978, Steffensmeier (1981:64) found "little support for the position that women are catching up with males in the commission of violent, masculine, white-collar, and....serious property crimes such as burglary and robbery." Instead, he found that more women are being arrested for petty property crimes and fraud than in the past. Steffensmeier (1981:62) concluded that "stability rather than change in sex differences in patterns of crimes is the overwhelmingly important observation."

Canter (1982), in one of the more methodologically sophisticated studies of the subject, reported that the delinquent involvement of both males and females followed similar patterns in terms of the types of delinquency with which the youths were involved, but noted that males were consistently more frequently involved in delinquent activities than females. The same study, however, also reported "that sex differences in delinquent behavior have remained stable across the decade from 1967 to 1977" (Canter, 1982:389). Canter believes that the results of her study, which utilizes a newly developed self-report instrument, corroborate the findings of Steffensmeier and Steffensmeier (1980) which indicated that the relative differences between males and females with respect to criminal activity have remained constant over the years.

In terms of the qualitative aspects of criminal behavior, research is less complete and conclusive with respect to gender differences. As qualitative data is usually not available from official sources, self-report studies provide the majority of the evidence with respect to this aspect of crime. Figueira-McDonough et al. (1981) found that the offenses of girls tended to be less frequent and serious than those of boys. Similarly, Giallombardo (1980:74) concluded that "females cause much less damage to society than males do," and that female crime follows traditional socialization patterns which limit the type of involvement of females with criminal activity.

Gold (1970), on the other hand, found that the types of delinquent behavior exhibited by females and males were similar. Gold also noted, however, that the girls were less frequently involved in criminal activities. The findings of Gold suggest mild support for Adler's contention that the behavior of girls is approximating that of boys although a cautionary note should be added to such a conclusion. It is possible that the qualitative aspects of the criminal behavior of males and females have always been similar. Longitudinal study is needed to ascertain whether this is a recent and developing phenomenon rather than a long standing condition.

Richards (1981), in her study of gender differences in the delinquency of middle-class youth, noted that socioeconomic status might be a critically delineating factor in differences in gender behavior. Richards found that the delinquent behavior of

middle-class girls and boys was very similar and noted that much of the research with respect to this subject has been conducted on samples of lower-class youths who may be socialized in a more traditional manner. This finding supports the need for further qualitative research regarding gender differences that includes the variable of socioeconomic status.

Parisi (1982), in her review of research pertaining to the qualitative aspects of crime noted that research has been less than comprehensive with respect to gender differences. Her review also noted that a lack of baseline data with respect to the characteristics of criminal incidents "prevents both trend analysis and statistical comparison of the nature of female crime versus male crime or female crime in an earlier period" (Parisi, 1982:126).

In a review of recent research on the subject of female crime, Lee Bowker identified a number of patterns that compliment and summarize the research pertaining to both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of delinquency:

- (1) female crime and delinquency increased steadily up to about 1975 and then began to decrease;
- (2) in the past several decades, offenses committed by young women have risen more rapidly than those committed by adult females;
- (3) in the same period, serious property crime has risen equally for female delinquents and adults, but violent crimes and other crimes have risen much more among female delinquents than women;
- (4) total female-male crime differentials have been decreasing throughout this period;
- (5) these decreases have been greater for adolescents than for adults;
- (6) what appears to be a large rise in female violent crime is inflated because of the small base statistics on which this rise is



calculated;

(7) in absolute terms, the increase in the number of violent crimes by males has been much greater than the increase by females;

(8) the significant change in female illegal behavior has been in property rather than violent offenses;

(9) at least with respect to delinquency, male-female differences are more in total frequencies of the offenses than in the patterns of offenses; and

(10) there is some evidence that females are playing more active roles in criminal and delinquent incidents than they did in earlier decades. (Bowker, 1978:21-22)

The Bowker review emphasizes that, although there is some evidence that female arrests for both violent and property crimes are increasing, the extent of this increase is not as noteworthy as some researchers such as Adler, Simon and Wilson would suggest. Furthermore, Bowker found that research has reinforced the commonly held belief that property crimes for females are increasing at a greater rate than violent crimes by females. The review also pointed out that, according to self-report studies, gender differences in criminal behavior may be more apparent in relation to the frequency of offense than the type of offense.

In short, Alder's contention that female crime is increasing may exaggerate changes in rates of crime. Increases in arrest rates may reflect less chivalrous treatment of female offenders on the part of the legal system while self-reported criminal behavior has remained relatively stable over the years. In terms of the type of crimes committed by girls and boys, the evidence supports the contention that both females and males continue to engage primarily in criminal behavior that has traditionally been associated with

each specific gender. Males remain responsible for the majority of violent crimes and females are more apt to be involved with property offenses than violent offenses such as assault.

### The Equal Opportunity Proposition

Adler's thesis culminates with the proposition that females, given opportunity comparable to that of males, will behave similarly to males. Integral to this proposition is her contention that the women's movement is evidence of changing social norms that will eventually result in equality between the sexes with respect to both legitimate and illegitimate roles in society. Two different types of approaches to exploring the relationship between changing social norms and increasing crime rates have been taken. In the first approach, researchers have assumed that the traditional social role of the female has been related to the lower rate of crime among females. The second, more conservative approach suggests that there is insufficient information upon which to base an assumed relationship. This second approach calls for more intensive examination of the qualitative and quantitative aspects of female and male criminal behavior. In this section, both empirical and theoretical research relevant to the proposition that equal opportunity will produce comparable behavior on the part

of females and males will be discussed.

As Figueira-McDonough and Selo (1980:334) have pointed out, the equal opportunity proposition of Adler may rest on a misleading correlation between an increase in the employment and emancipation of women and an increase in female crime.

The proportion of fraud among crimes committed by females might have increased together with an increase in white-collar jobs, but it does not follow that the white-collar female employees committed all or even most of the frauds. Two possible fallacies are joined here: that of equating correlation with cause, and the extrapolation from one level of analysis (aggregate) to another (individual)-the ecological fallacy. (Figueira-McDonough and Selo, 1980:334)

These writers argue that unless a causal link can be established between illegal and legal opportunity, the conclusions of Simon, Wilson and Adler may be erroneous. In other words, Figueira-McDonough and Selo dismiss the entire argument of Adler by simply pointing out that the crux of her argument, that opportunity and behavior are causally related, is most probably fallacious.

In terms of a proposed direct relationship between the women's liberation movement and female delinquency, Giordano and Cernkovich (1979) have taken a different tack than that proposed by Figueira-McDonough and Selo. These authors agree with Adler that it is feasible that opportunities for girls to be involved in delinquent activities may have increased in recent years by virtue of weakened traditional controls on the behavior of females and concomitant exposure to delinquent subcultures. Giordano and Cernkovich (1979:540) point out, however, that this liberated

behavior is not necessarily indicative of a liberated ideology that could lead to peer support for the participation of females in delinquent activities traditionally associated with boys. Giordano and Cernkovich use this distinction between behavior and ideology to explain why recent increases in female criminality have occurred primarily in property crimes rather than violent crimes.

In an explicit test of the relationship between feminist attitudes and delinquency, James and Thornton (1980:243) found that "favorable attitudes toward feminism inhibit involvement in property and aggressive offenses." This conclusion again suggests that positing a direct relationship between the women's movement and female delinquency may be misleading.

In a vein suggestive of Giordano and Cernkovich, Cloward and Piven (1979:656) have concluded that aggressive defiance is regulated by sex norms. These theorists suggest that the larger numbers of females who are service recipients in the mental health system can be attributed to the fact that this role is deemed sex appropriate behavior for females just as criminal behavior is accepted behavior for males. These authors speculate that changes in gender specific patterns of deviance may be altering in a manner that would permit less self-destructive tendencies on the part of women.

We think that whether people respond to stress at all is socially structured. How stress is experienced is mediated by features of historically specific social context in which people find themselves: by the interpretations they develop of the conditions they confront and by the assessment they make of the options in dealing with those conditions. (Cloward and

Piven, 1979:662)

The primary focus of this argument is that the social role assigned to the individual by virtue of gender is the principal determinant of the behavior of that individual in response to stress. Extrapolating from this set of propositions, it would seem logical that a lower rate of female participation in violent crimes would be an indicator that this type of behavior is, as yet, unacceptable feminine behavior.

Following a line of reasoning similar to Cloward and Piven, Anthony Harris reached a slightly different set of theoretical conclusions. In his reinterpretation of labeling theory, Harris (1977) suggests that criminal behavior is not functional deviant behavior for females. In his formulation of the labeling theory concept of primary deviance, Harris (1977:13) speculates that the roles assigned to women as mothers and caregivers are functional to the "institutional hegemony" of society. Within this framework, the reassignment of the minority male from the role of father and poverty level provider to prison, however, is not likely to disrupt the social fabric in which white males predominate. Harris appears to be suggesting that the social roles assigned to males and females reflect the aggregate needs of society and that the perceived choices of the individual to deviate from or meld into those roles is dependent on the need to maintain the social order.

Regardless of the theoretical orientation, the concept of social role appears to play a consistently important part in the construction of explanations of gender differences in criminal

behavior. As previously noted, psychologists have long acknowledged an insufficient understanding of the origins of gender specific behavior. Because of the problems inherent in operationalizing the concepts of female and male traits, much of the work in this area has been abstract in nature. Some researchers have, nevertheless, attempted to operationalize the concepts of feminine and masculine roles. Shover et al. (1979) are among those researchers who have conducted empirical tests of the relationship between gender roles and delinquency. In this study, boys and girls were first classified as having either feminine or masculine expectations by means of a Likert scale that assessed the strength of association of the individual to traditional gender roles. Individuals in the sample were then categorized according to their opportunity to engage in criminal activities, orientations toward attachment to "conventional others" and respect for the validity of the law. While the technique of assigning individuals to gender roles in this study may be questioned because of its reliance on stereotypical definitions of gender behavior, Shover et al. (1979:173,174) found that both boys and girls with feminine expectations reported less involvement in property offenses. Another finding from the study indicates that, for girls, a reduction in feminine orientation may be related to increased involvement in aggressive delinquency. This finding did not hold true for boys. Shover et al. (1979:174) concluded that a small increase in female involvement in both property and aggressive crimes could be predicted as feminine role expectations change.

Due to the small amount of variation explained by the variables used in the study, however, these authors qualified their prediction by emphasizing that the size of the change could be minimal.

The work of Shover et al. (1979) illustrates one of the directions that research is taking in attempting to identify the nature of the relationship between gender roles and the participation of the individual in criminal activities. One of the obvious difficulties with this type of research is the operationalization of variables that can be used to classify individuals along a continuum of femininity and masculinity. As numerous psychologists (Pleck, 1981; Schaffer, 1981; Seward and Seward, 1980) have pointed out, the boundaries of gender roles may be considerably less distinct than indicated by these studies. The range of acceptable behavior that is available to both boys and girls makes comparisons between male and female behavior difficult. With this in mind, some researchers (e.g., Parisi, 1982; Giordano, 1978; Leonard, 1982) have suggested that there is a basic need to develop baseline data with respect to the qualitative aspects of female and male criminal behavior in order to determine what, if any, differences are apparent in the behavior of boys and girls who do engage in criminal activities.

Giordano and Cernkovich (1979:143) were among the first to call for the development of more "comprehensive baseline data from which research and theory construction can proceed." This direction for future research is based on the recognition that

etiological explanations such as those offered by Adler may reflect stereotypic views of female deviance rather than the actual behavior of boys and girls. As Giallombardo (1980:79) has pointed out, it is entirely possible that expanded gender roles for both males and females may result in the deemphasization of violence for both females and males rather than the acquisition of male behavior patterns by females. The questions raised by Giordano, Cernkovich and Giallombardo reinforce the need for research to explore issues pertaining to the behavior of females and males prior to asserting that there is a relationship between gender roles and criminality.

In summary, there appear to be two, general theoretical approaches to exploring the potential relationship between the women's liberation movement and female criminality. In the first of these, researchers from a variety of theoretical backgrounds have assumed that there is some sort of stereotypic relationship between gender roles and criminal behavior. Some individuals using this approach suggest that gender roles, which previously inhibited the participation of females in criminal activities, are altering such that both the emotional and situational opportunities for females to become engaged in delinquent activities may be expanding. Others using this approach suggest that changing gender roles may result in different types of behavior for both males and females.

The second approach to the subject is more conservative in that it suggests that existing knowledge is such that the relationship between gender and criminal behavior is unclear at this time. In



the second approach, researchers have recommended further examination of the motivational and situational context in which both females and males commit crimes. This approach implies that predictions with respect to any supposed relationship between women's liberation and female criminality may be premature and stereotypic in nature without a better understanding of the empirical relationship between gender and crime.

### Summary

As mentioned in the above discussion, Adler's theory regarding gender differences in criminal behavior is a derivative of opportunity theory that relies on three, interrelated assumptions. The first of these much debated assumptions states that socialized roles are the primary determinants of gender specific behavior. With this simple statement, Adler implies that changing socialization practices should result in comparable behavior on the part of females and males in both the legitimate and illegitimate spheres of society. As pointed out in a review of the relevant literature, Adler's argument ignores the potential interaction between gender specific socialization practices, inherent factors and sociological constructs such as race and social class. The failure to account for these factors in her theory is a serious weakness in Adler's argument.

Adler's second assumption is closely related to the first and posits that social norms pertaining to gender specific behavior are changing. As evidence of this phenomena, Adler points to increases in the employment of women and the amount of crime committed by women. Support for this portion of Adler's theoretical adaptation comes primarily from research utilizing official statistics because longitudinal study is possible using this approach. Substantial numbers of studies have, however, attempted to refute these findings which are most frequently based only on arrest rates. Through the use of self-report data, researchers have consistently shown that substantial, quantitative differences between female and male delinquency exist. Self-report studies have also demonstrated that, although the amount of crime committed by females is greater than that indicated by official statistics, the overall frequency and seriousness of female delinquency still remains less than that of males. Other researchers have also questioned Adler's contention that there has been a marked increase in the participation of females in non-traditional crimes of aggression.

The third fundamental assumption of Adler is that equal opportunity will produce comparable types of criminal behavior for females and males. This last portion of Adler's argument has a more theoretical bent and empirical research in this area has not been extensive. Adler bases her claim on the premise that there is a direct relationship between the women's liberation movement and its effect on society and an increase in the amount and type of crime committed by females. Two basic types of approaches can be taken

in understanding this claim of Adler's. Some researchers have suggested that, although the female role may be changing in this society, there is little or no evidence that these changes will result in the adoption of masculine behavior by females. In the other approach, researchers have suggested that there is insufficient evidence to support a direct link between the emancipation of women in this society and criminal behavior. In this second approach, further research to determine the nature of the differences in female and male criminal behavior is recommended.

It is the last, more fundamental approach which advocates examination of gender differences in the qualitative aspects of criminal behavior that is the crux of the present research. Adler's theory suggests that, while overall rates of crime may still reflect gender differences, the behavior of females and males involved in similar types of crime should be comparable. In addition to the examination of gender differences in the quantity of delinquency, examination of gender differences in the qualitative aspects of theft and assault is a primary focus of this study. The specific hypotheses pertaining to this topic are listed in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER III

### THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

#### Introduction

As this is a secondary analysis of previous research, there are some problems particular to this type of study. This chapter includes a discussion of those problems as well as a description of the design of the present study. The specific topics to be discussed in this chapter are: the research from which this study was derived, the sample, the variables used, the problems associated with secondary analysis, and the analysis of the data. At the conclusion of the chapter, a list of the hypotheses to be tested will be provided.

#### The Original Study

The data used in this study were taken from a larger study of youths and their experiences within the network of programs available to youths in the two Boston communities of East Boston

and Allston-Brighton. The intent of the original study that was conducted in 1978 was to identify patterns of association between youths and community programs based on the characteristics of the youths, the characteristics of the programs serving them and the types of experiences of the youths in the programs (Morash, 1979). Nearly 600 youths with a wide range of self-reported and official delinquency were interviewed for the study.

Measures of delinquency and individual and peer group characteristics were obtained through structured interview procedures. The youths were paid ten dollars to take part in interviews ranging from one to three hours in length. Self-reported delinquency measures were obtained with an adaptation of Gold's (1970) scale which measures both the frequency and the seriousness of the delinquent act. The scale was validated by Gold and was designed to include offenses which were identified as those that youths were least likely to lie about. In addition, offenses in which a youth reported contact with the legal system were crosschecked against police and court records. The original study found a high correlation between the self-reported offenses of youths and official records of those offenses. The version of the Gold scale that was used in the Morash study eliminated items referring to status offenses.

### Secondary Analysis

As the present study is a secondary analysis, it is appropriate to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this type of research. As pointed out by Babbie (1973:362), secondary analysis is a boon to both the individual researcher and the field in general. The field is enhanced by multiple examinations of a data set which are beyond the interests or time constraints of the original researcher. It is also a less time consuming and expensive form of research that allows inexperienced or independent researchers to examine topics of a broader nature than conditions would normally permit. These advantages of secondary analysis allow the novice researcher to develop analytic and interpretive skills that would be beyond the scope of a more narrowly focused study (Ageton, 1974:83,84).

Equally obvious, however, are the disadvantages of secondary analysis. As Williamson, Karp, and Dalphin (1977:156) discussed, the researcher must accept the limitations of the original design. This has the potential for creating problems in terms of both understanding the nature of the original data and applying that data to new theoretical constructs. The Morash study from which the present study was derived offers few problems with respect to this type of disadvantage. The self-report delinquency scale used in the Morash study was a shortened version of the Gold scale that was developed in 1970. In addition to being a relatively standard

tool, complete documentation as to how the measurement was used was available to this researcher. The raw data which consists of the youth's verbatim responses to all items in the Gold scale were also available. Appropriate sociodemographic variables (e.g. the Hollingshead scale for socioeconomic class, 1958) were measured in the study and a complete description of the study was available.

An examination of the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of delinquency was not, however, the original intent of the Morash study. There was a minor limitation in the present study as a result of these divergent goals. Measure of the frequency of a delinquent act was limited in the original study to a maximum, for each type of offense, of two incidents. This means that differentiation between the sexes with respect to this variable may be less pronounced than indicated by other research. Responses to the qualitative variables are, however, categorized according to a great range of options for the subjects. Grouping these responses in a manner appropriate for analysis is easily accomplished due to the numerous categories used.

In summary, the data available from the Morash study are appropriate for the purposes of the present study. The available data and the theoretical intent of this study mesh well. A standard tool was used to measure delinquency and appropriate sociodemographic variables were measured. Extensive data with respect to the qualitative dimension of delinquency will permit tests of Adler's argument that female criminal behavior is approaching that of males.

### The Hypotheses

As previously mentioned, the hypotheses can be divided into the two general categories of the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of delinquency. In this section, the research hypotheses pertaining to each of these categories will be listed. There is broad research support for the quantitative hypotheses. The qualitative hypotheses, however, are derived from Adler's adaptation of opportunity theory and have controversial and contradictory research support. The specific hypotheses are as follows:

#### Quantitative:

1. Males will report more frequent involvement than females in both theft and assault.
2. Males will report more serious involvement than females in both theft and assault.

#### Qualitative:

1. Females and males who report involvement in an assaultive act will report;
  - a. a similar range of victims,
  - b. comparable levels of premeditation,
  - c. similar reasons for commission of the



offense,

d. similar use of weapons in the commission of the offense,

e. similar types of injury to the victim,

f. similar physical surroundings for the act,

g. similar patterns of assistance from others in the commission of the offense.

2. Females and males who report involvement in a theft will report;

a. similar items stolen,

b. comparable worth of the items stolen,

c. stealing from similar types of places,

d. similar methods of stealing,

e. similar types of individuals as victims,

f. similar reasons for stealing,

g. similar patterns of assistance from others in the commission of the offense,

h. similar use of the items stolen.

The methods used in the analysis of the data that were collected to test these hypotheses will be discussed latter in this chapter.

### The Sample

The sample used in this study is a subgroup of the 588 youths that were interviewed in the original study. The original sample

was drawn from school, police and court records. The subjects used in this study were drawn from the 429 working class youths in the original study and the actual sample used in the present study consists of 197 youths. Data for only those working class youths between the ages of fourteen and seventeen were examined in order to limit the age range to a more homogenous group and to minimize the confounding effect of socioeconomic class. The age group was selected for several reasons. As Wolfgang and Sellin (1964: 253) noted, the upper limit of this age group represents the age at which youths commonly leave the jurisdiction of juvenile courts. In addition, this is the juvenile age bracket most frequently associated with delinquent behavior (Wolfgang and Sellin, 1964).

A random sampling procedure was utilized in order to adjust for overrepresentation in the original study of youths who had been involved directly with the juvenile justice system. The Morash study attempted to include all youths who had been arrested by the police during the past six months, who had been in juvenile court during the past year or who were under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (MDYS). The Morash Study also included a random sample of youths who had no contact with the juvenile justice system. In order to adjust for this overrepresentation of youths with juvenile justice system involvement, a random sample of the appropriate number of youths for each of these groups having contact with the legal system was selected from the original sample of 14 to 17 year old, working class youths.

The proportion of youths randomly sampled from the group of youths having contact with the system was calculated using 1980 U.S. Census data. To determine this proportion, it was first necessary to estimate the actual population of youths who had previous contact with the system. The number of respondents interviewed and the rate of response represented by this number were available from the Morash Study (1979:A-4) for each of the three subgroups of youths who had contact with the system in each of the two communities. In the East Boston community, the response rates were 65% for the police contact group, 55.8% for the court contact group and 16.7% for the MDYS group. In the Allston-Brighton area, the response rates were 47.9% for the police contact group, 50.7% for the court contact group and 5.9% for the MDYS group. In the East Boston portion of the sample, 42 youths had contact with the police, 41 youths had contact with the courts and 6 youths were under MDYS jurisdiction. The comparable numbers in the Allston-Brighton portion of the sample were 54, 34 and 4 respectively. Using these figures, it was estimated that approximately 422 youths in these two communities had been involved with the legal system. According to 1980 U.S. Census data, there were 3,702 youths between the ages of 14 and 17 in these two communities. The 422 youths involved with the juvenile justice system represented 11.4% of the total youth population for the area and this was the proportion that was used in randomly selecting respondents from the group of officially delinquent youths. The subjects included in the present study were, thus, randomly

selected from two, mutually exclusive strata. Of the 197 respondents in the sample, 181 subjects were drawn from the group of subjects having no contact with the juvenile justice system and 16 subjects were selected from the officially delinquent group.

### The Analyses

As previously mentioned, self-report data regarding the offenses of theft and assault were examined in this study. The data regarding these offenses was collected by means of an instrument developed by Martin Gold (1970). In an extensive interview, each subject was questioned in detail about involvement in a wide variety of delinquent activities. The complete questionnaire with respect to both theft and assault can be found in Appendix A.

The general category of theft includes the two, mutually exclusive items of theft and auto theft. The general category of assault includes three, mutually exclusive types of offenses; assault, threatened assault and gang fighting. Each of these items and a composite for each general category were examined in the study. A maximum of two incidents for each of the specific items could be recorded for a single respondent.

The dependent variables in this study were classified as either quantitative or qualitative variables within each of the five offense types. The quantitative measures refer to the

frequency and seriousness of involvement in assault and theft. The primary measure of frequency was a count of youths reporting no involvement, one involvement, or two or more involvements with each type of offense. Chi-square analyses were used to compare females and males with respect to their involvement in each of these delinquent activities.

Three measures of seriousness were utilized: (1) a count of the trivial and serious offenses of the respondent by each specific offense examined, (2) a count of the trivial and serious offenses by the general offense categories of theft and assault, and, (3) a composite score for the degree of seriousness of involvement by offense category. For a complete listing of the instructions to the coder to use in determining whether an incident should be classified as trivial or non-trivial, refer to Appendix B. The composite score consisted of a total of the seriousness weights attached to each incident reported by a subject. The weighting system utilized in the study was developed by Wolfgang and Sellin (1964) and takes into account both the seriousness and frequency of an offense. Trivial incidents were excluded from this weighting system in keeping with the original design of the system by Wolfgang and Sellin. Chi-square analyses were again used to compare females and males with respect to their trivial or serious involvement with the offenses considered in the study. A series of t-tests were used to compare the responses of females and males with respect to the composite score of seriousness.

In order to control for the overall Type I error resulting

from testing multiple hypotheses that might be interdependent, the Bonferroni procedure was used (Kerlinger, 1973:389). This technique adjusts the alpha level when multiple tests of significance are conducted such that a higher level of significance is required in order to identify a significant relationship. Thus, tests do not show significance due to the increased chances in the multiple test situation. The Bonferroni procedure was utilized with respect to each of the four sets of chi-square tests or t-tests pertaining to the quantitative analyses described above. In keeping with accepted practice in the social sciences, the overall level of significance was set at .05 for each analysis. Tests showing a level of significance at .01 or less are noted as appropriate.

The qualitative measures used in this study identify the motivational, physical and social context in which the theft or assault took place. Measures of the following specific items were utilized:

1. the reasons for the commission of the offense
2. characteristics of the victim of the offense
3. the extent of premeditation
4. the weapons used in the commission of the offense
5. the extent of injury to the victim
6. the physical surroundings in which the

incident took place

7. the patterns of assistance from others in the commission of the offense
8. the type of item(s) stolen
9. the approximate worth of the stolen item(s)
10. the methods of stealing
11. the use of the stolen item(s)

Because of the nominal level of these variables and the wide range of responses available within each of these items, it was not possible to conduct meaningful tests of hypotheses with respect to these items ( see Appendix B for examples of the responses available to the subject with respect to these qualitative items). Due to these limitations, these data were considered in raw form as descriptive information with which patterns of qualitative differences could be assessed. These data are presented in tabular form in Chapter IV.

As the focus of the present study is gender differences, sex was the independent variable in the analysis. Preliminary analysis of the data indicated that there were no discernable variations in gender patterns when race was controlled. Based on this finding, it was concluded that race did not confound the effect of sex and no analyses are presented with race as a control variable.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

#### Introduction

Chapter 4 begins with a brief description of the general characteristics of the subjects of the study. The racial composition of the sample will be addressed in particular. The chapter also contains findings related to the quantitative and qualitative hypotheses specified in preceding chapters.

#### Characteristics of the Respondents

Of the 197 respondents in the study, 116 were females and 81 were males. As previously mentioned, the respondents selected for this study were 14 to 17 years of age and of working class backgrounds in order to increase the homogeneity of the sample. Approximately 81% (160) of the sample was white, 12.8% (25) was black and 6.2% (12) were classified as of some race other than white or black. These proportions correspond roughly to the racial composition of the communities as reported in the 1980 U.S. Census Report and support the contention that the sample is generally



representative of the population in the area. It was the original intent of this study to control for race when analyzing the data pertaining to both the qualitative and quantitative hypotheses. Preliminary analysis, however, showed only insignificant differences in the patterns of delinquency involvement when controlling for race. In keeping with this finding and because of the small number of black youths in the sample (25), no further analysis of the data with respect to the racial composition of the sample was conducted.

#### Gender Differences in the Quantity and Seriousness of Delinquency

The data pertaining to both the overall quantity of delinquency and the seriousness of delinquency support the quantitative hypotheses which stated that boys would be more frequently and more seriously delinquent. As can be seen in Table 1 which presents summary data for all reported incidents of theft and assault, a consistently higher proportion of boys than girls noted involvement in each of the types of offenses considered in this study. These differences in the percentages of boys and girls reporting a particular type of offense range from a low of 5.8% with respect to car theft to a high of 19.9% with respect to gang fighting. As can be seen in Table 1, chi-square tests indicate that these differences are statistically significant with respect

Table 1

A Comparison of the Proportions of Boys and Girls  
Reporting Involvement in Five Types of Offenses\*

Offense	<u>Females (n=116)</u>		<u>Males (n=81)</u>		$\chi^2$
	Involvement	No Involvement	Involvement	No Involvement	
Theft	42(36.2%)	74(63.8%)	46(56.8%)	35(43.2%)	8.175**
Car theft	9( 7.8%)	107(92.2%)	11(13.6%)	70(86.4%)	1.772
Threatened assault	43(37.1%)	73(62.9%)	35(43.2%)	46(56.8%)	.752
Assault	28(24.1%)	88(75.9%)	29(35.8%)	52(64.2%)	3.156
Gang fighting	27(23.3%)	89(76.7%)	35(43.2%)	46(56.8%)	8.787**

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 because of errors in rounding.

\*\*  $p \leq .05$  using the Bonferroni procedure; for all tests,  $df = 1$

to both theft and gang fighting. Both girls and boys reported theft and threatened assault as their most frequent offense.

The findings reported in Table 2 provide further support for the contention that boys report more frequent and serious delinquency than girls. This table clearly demonstrates that, although girls were slightly more likely than boys to be involved in trivial types of incidents, boys were more apt to report serious involvement than girls and much less likely than girls to report no delinquent involvement. These gender differences were consistent for the offenses of theft and assault as well as the aggregate category of all offenses. As can be seen in Table 2, these differences were statistically significant at a level less than or equal to a probability of .01. Although it would appear as though delinquent activity is more commonplace than abstinence from such activities for both boys and girls, Table 2 indicates that the boys exhibited more frequent and serious involvement than the girls.

Table 3 presents a breakdown of the information provided in Table 2 by the individual offense and the exact number of delinquent incidents with which a respondent was involved. The small cell sizes in a large proportion of the table may account for the lack of statistically significant differences. A number of trends are apparent and they indicate support for the findings in the second table. Boys were much less likely than girls to have reported no involvement in the specific offenses of theft, car theft, assault, threatened assault and gang fighting. These differences are most striking for the offenses of theft

Table 2

A Comparison of the Level of Delinquent Involvement  
by Offense Category and Gender of Respondent\*

Type of Offense	<u>Level of Involvement</u>				$\chi^2$
	None	Trivial Only	Some Serious	Very Serious	
TOTAL					
Females (n=116)	42(36.2%)	19(16.4%)	27(22.2%)	28(25.2%)	21.879** (df=3)
Males (n=81)	13(16.0%)	6( 7.4%)	18(23.3%)	44(53.3%)	
ASSAULT					
Females (n=116)	54(46.6%)	25(21.5%)	20(17.2%)	17(14.7%)	20.716** (df=3)
Males (n=81)	26(32.1%)	6( 7.4%)	17(21.0%)	32(39.4%)	
THEFT					
Females (n=116)	70(60.3%)	16(13.8%)	20(17.2%)	10( 8.7%)	15.890** (df=3)
Males (n=81)	32(39.5%)	7( 8.6%)	21(25.9%)	21(25.9%)	

\*Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding errors.

\*\*p  $\leq .01$  using the Bonferroni procedure

(respectively 43.2% and 63.8%) and gang fighting (respectively 56.8% and 76.7%) In terms of trivial offenses, girls were slightly more likely to be involved than boys. The obvious shift in the pattern of gender differences that is demonstrated in Table 3 occurs at the point indicating participation in one serious incident. While comparable numbers of females and males indicated involvement in two trivial incidents, in every type of offense, higher proportions of boys than girls indicated involvement in one or more serious incident. These differences are most apparent with respect to female and male involvement in the maximum number of two serious incidents of theft and assault. Approximately 17% of the boys versus 6% of the girls indicated participation in two serious incidents of theft. Similarly, 13.6% of the males and 3.4% of the females reported involvement in two serious incidents of assault.

Rather than using the dichotomy of trivial or serious delinquency as in the previous tables, Table 4 presents the data pertaining to seriousness as measured by Martin Gold's (1970) scale. The Gold scale takes into account both the frequency of delinquency and the seriousness of each offense. Seriousness is related to weights derived from the Wolfgang-Sellin scale. Each reported incident of theft, car theft, assault, threatened assault and gang fighting was assigned a weight based on the respondent's description of the incident. Table 4 presents the sum of these individual scores by the general offense categories of theft and assault. In each instance, the mean score for males was higher than that for females and the t-tests pertaining to these findings

**Table 3**  
**A Comparison of Degree of Delinquent Involvement by Type of Offense and Gender of Respondent**

Type of Offense	Degree of Involvement *					TOTAL	X <sup>2</sup>
	No Involvement	One Trivial Incident	Two Trivial Incidents	One Serious Incident	One Trivial Incident and One Serious Incident	Two Serious Incidents	
<b>THEFT</b>							
Females	74(63.8%)	12(10.3%)	3( 2.6%)	15(12.9%)	5( 4.3%)	7( 6.0%)	14.807 (df=5)
Males	35(43.2%)	8( 9.9%)	0( 0.0%)	19(23.5%)	5( 6.2%)	14(17.3%)	81(100.0%)
<b>CAR THEFT</b>							
Females	107(92.2%)	2( 1.7%)	0( 0.0%)	5( 4.3%)	0( 0.0%)	2( 1.7%)	9.642 (df=5)
Males	70(86.4%)	0( 0.0%)	0( 0.0%)	8( 9.9%)	0( 0.0%)	3( 3.7%)	81(100.0%)
<b>ASSAULT</b>							
Females	88(75.9%)	5( 4.3%)	2( 1.7%)	16(13.8%)	1( 0.9%)	4( 3.4%)	10.642 (df=5)
Males	52(64.2%)	1( 1.2%)	1( 1.2%)	15(18.5%)	1( 1.2%)	11(13.6%)	81(100.0%)
<b>THREATENED ASSAULT</b>							
Females	72(62.1%)	24(20.7%)	15(12.9%)	3( 2.6%)	1( 0.9%)	1( 0.9%)	19.700 (df=5)
Males	46(56.8%)	11(13.6%)	10(12.3%)	5( 6.2%)	5( 6.2%)	4( 4.9%)	81(100.0%)
<b>GANG FIGHTING</b>							
Females	89(76.7%)	6( 5.2%)	0( 0.0%)	14(12.1%)	0( 0.0%)	7( 6.0%)	4.552 (df=5)
Males	46(56.8%)	0( 0.0%)	0( 0.0%)	26(32.1%)	2( 2.5%)	7( 8.6%)	81(100.0%)

\* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding errors.

Table 4

## Seriousness of Offense Category by Sex

Category	n	mean	s*	df	t=Value
All thefts					
Females	116	.7155	1.427	195	2.46**
Males	81	1.1975	1.304	195	
All assaults					
Females	116	1.3017	2.094	195	2.78**
Males	81	2.3457	3.171	195	
Total seriousness score					
Females	116	2.0172	2.677	195	3.18**
Males	81	3.5432	4.062	195	

\*pooled variance estimate

\*\*p ( $\alpha$ )  $\leq$  .05 using the Bonferroni procedure.

were significant.

### Qualitative Differences in Offenses of Theft

Tables 5 to 11 present information pertaining to respondents who indicated they had committed an offense of theft or car theft. It was possible for a single respondent to describe a maximum of two offenses for each of these offenses. The reader should note that the offenses of theft and car theft are mutually exclusive

Table 5 shows the range of items that respondents reported stealing. Gender variations in the patterns of items stolen can be seen in this table. In general, it appears that boys reported a greater range of items stolen than girls. Money and apparel are the items stolen most frequently by both boys and girls, but girls reported these items at a higher rate than boys. Typical examples of apparel items were jewelry and clothes and the amount of cash that was stolen was most frequently less than ten dollars. Striking differences between girls and boys can be seen in the theft of tools and food. Of all of the thefts reported by boys, 13.4% of the items stolen were tools and 16.5% were food items. For girls, these percentages were respectively 3.5% and 5.2%.

The location at which the thefts took place is reported in Table 6. Again, it is generally apparent that the range of locations is greater for boys than for girls. Approximately 86% of all thefts reported by girls occurred either in a store or in the



Table 5

Theft: A Comparison of Type of Item Stolen  
by Sex of Respondent\*

Type of Item	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Money	16	( 27.6%)	13	( 19.4%)
Apparel	21	( 36.2%)	11	( 16.5%)
Food	3	( 5.2%)	11	( 16.5%)
Fun things	5	( 8.6%)	6	( 9.0%)
Tools	2	( 3.5%)	9	( 13.4%)
Radio, tv, stereo	3	( 5.2%)	5	( 7.5%)
Cigarettes	2	( 3.5%)	2	( 3.0%)
Weapon	1	( 1.7%)	3	( 4.4%)
Bike/bike parts	0	( 0.0%)	3	( 4.4%)
Drugs	0	( 0.0%)	2	( 3.0%)
Alcohol	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.5%)
Car parts	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.5%)
Decorative items	1	( 1.7%)	0	( 0.0%)
Other	4	( 6.9%)	0	( 0.0%)
TOTAL:	58 (100.0%)**		67 (100.0%)**	

\* The general category of "theft" excludes car theft.

\*\* Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 6

Theft: A Comparison of the Location of the Theft  
by Sex of Respondent \*

Location of Theft	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Store	21	( 36.8%)	21	( 31.8%)
Respondent's home	28	( 49.1%)	8	( 12.1%)
Street	1	( 1.8%)	12	( 18.2%)
School	3	( 5.3%)	7	( 10.6%)
Outside a house	1	( 1.8%)	2	( 3.0%)
Office/industrial place	0	( 0.0%)	3	( 4.6%)
Private home of unknown owner	0	( 0.0%)	3	( 4.6%)
Public institution	1	( 1.8%)	1	( 1.5%)
Home of known adult	0	( 0.0%)	2	( 3.0%)
Employer	1	( 1.8%)	0	( 0.0%)
Field/farm	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.5%)
Park	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.5%)
Home of known peer	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.5%)
Other	1	( 1.8%)	4	( 6.1%)
TOTAL:	57	(100.0%)**	66	(100.0%)

\*The general category of "theft" excludes car theft.

\*\*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

respondent's home. For boys' offenses, the percentage of thefts in a store or the home was approximately 44%. Although comparable numbers of the thefts by boys and the thefts by girls were from a store, there are few other noticeable similarities between the thefts of girls and boys. Girls' thefts were over four times more likely than boys' thefts to be from their own home. On the other hand, boys' stealing occurred much more frequently in public places such as in a park or at a recreation center and residences other than their own homes.

Table 7 describes the cost of the item stolen as estimated by the respondent. For both boys and girls, most of the reported thefts were of items ranging from ten dollars to two-hundred and fifty dollars. The reader should note that this range of between ten and two-hundred and fifty dollars is perhaps too broad to demonstrate any differences between boys and girls. For instance, the theft of a scarf or a CB radio would both be classified in this category despite the fact that the the cost of such items is obviously quite different. Although a slightly higher percentage of the girls' stealing involved an item worth less than ten dollars, this difference was not statistically significant when a chi-square test comparing the less than ten dollar category to the over ten dollar catetgory was conducted.

When girls stole, they knew the owner of the item that was stolen approximately 95% of the time, but boys knew the owner of the item in 65% of the thefts in which they participated. Table 8 shows that in more than half of the thefts by girls, the owner of

Table 7

Theft: A Comparison of the Cost of the Item Stolen  
by Sex of Respondent \*

Estimated Cost	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Under \$10	36	( 63.2%)	32	( 48.5%)
\$10-250	19	( 33.3%)	29	( 44.0%)
\$251-2000	0	( 0.0%)	5	( 7.6%)
\$2,001-9,000	1	( 1.8%)	0	( 0.0%)
\$30,001-80,000	1	( 1.8%)	0	( 0.0%)
TOTAL:	57	(100.0%)**	66	(100.0%)**

\*The general category of "theft" excludes car theft.

\*\*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 8

Theft: A Comparison of the Owner of the Stolen Item  
by Sex of Respondent\*

Owner of Item	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Store	19	( 35.2%)	18	( 42.9%)
Relatives (mother, father, sister, brother, cousin)	29	( 53.7%)	10	( 23.8%)
Peers or adults known to respondent	2	( 3.7%)	11	( 26.2%)
Property (school, private or public property)	4	( 7.4%)	3	( 7.1%)
TOTAL:	54	(100.0%)	42**	(100.0%)

\*The general category of "theft" excludes car theft.

\*\*One missing case.

the item was a relative. Table 8 also shows, however, that this was the case much less frequently with boys' thefts (23.8%). Of particular interest in this table, is the finding that boys' thefts are much more likely than girls' thefts to be from their peers or adults known to the youths. Thefts by both boys and girls indicate comparable and minimal numbers of thefts of public property.

Table 9 demonstrates gender differences in the way the theft was committed. Girls' thefts were twice as likely as boys' thefts (24.6% to 10.6%) to be explained with the statement that an object was borrowed and the incidents reported by the boys were twice as likely as those reported by the girls (25.8% to 10.6%) to be explained as having occurred because the item was readily available. Comparable levels of shoplifting and burglary with no breaking and entering were indicated for both boys' and girls' thefts. With respect to the more serious offenses of forceable robbery, breaking and entering and car larceny, boys' offenses were more likely to be of this type than were offenses by girls.

Table 10 reports the motivations mentioned by the boys and girls who committed one or more offenses of theft. For offenses committed by either girls or boys, the most frequently mentioned reason was self-gratification (respectively 46.1% and 39.1%) and the second most frequently mentioned reason was need (respectively 32.9% and 25.0%). Typical examples of responses that were classified as self-gratification are that the item was taken because the respondent "wanted it" or "for the hell of it." The motivation of need was indicated by comments such as "needed a gift

Table 9

Theft: A Comparison of the Method of Stealing  
by Sex of Respondent \*

	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Shoplifting	21	( 36.8%)	16	( 24.2%)
Opportunity (e.g., object unattended, object outside a house, etc.)	6	( 10.6%)	17	( 25.8%)
Borrowed from relative	14	( 24.6%)	7	( 10.6%)
Burglary (no breaking and entering)	8	( 14.0%)	11	( 16.7%)
Forceable robbery	2	( 3.5%)	3	( 4.6%)
Breaking and entering	0	( 0.0%)	4	( 6.1%)
Car larceny	0	( 0.0%)	4	( 6.1%)
Other	6	( 10.5%)	4	( 6.1%)
TOTAL:	57	(100.0%)	66	(100.0%)**

\*The general category of "theft" excludes car theft.

\*\*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

for a friend" and "needed new clothes." In describing their offenses, boys were, however, much more likely than girls to report opportunity as a reason for their theft (14.1% to 1.3%). An example of this type of motivation would be a comment from a youth that indicated the reason for the theft was that the object was readily available rather than secure in the owner's possession.

Both girls and boys reported comparable use of the stolen items. Table 11 shows that in approximately 73% of the thefts by girls and 68% of the thefts by boys, the youths themselves had used the stolen item(s). In similar proportions of the male and female incidents, the youth also indicated that he or she had returned the stolen item to the owner or had been caught with the item in his or her possession (13.9% and 16.1%). Selling or trading the stolen item was reported for more of the boys' offenses than the girls' offenses (12.3% to 1.8%).

Despite the fact that there were 187 individuals in the study, there were only 25 reported incidents of car theft. Fourteen of these incidents were attributed to males and eleven of the incidents were attributed to females. For the most part, girls and boys who had committed an offense of car theft reported similar patterns of behavior with respect to the offense. In terms of the motivation for the act, both female and male incidents (58.9% and 52.9% respectively) indicated that self-gratification was the primary reason. In incidents of car theft, the youths typically reported that the motivation for the act was "for kicks." Similar proportions of those females and males who stole cars reported

Table 10

Theft: A Comparison of the Motivation to Steal  
by Sex of Respondent\*

Motivation	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Self gratification	35	( 46.1%)	36	( 39.1%)
Need	25	( 32.9%)	23	( 25.0%)
Opportunity	1	( 1.3%)	13	( 14.1%)
Peer esteem	2	( 2.6%)	3	( 3.3%)
Thrill	3	( 4.0%)	1	( 1.1%)
Social pressure	3	( 4.0%)	1	( 1.1%)
Moral justification	2	( 2.6%)	2	( 2.2%)
To steal	0	( 0.0%)	2	( 2.2%)
Revenge	1	( 1.3%)	1	( 1.1%)
"Just wanted to borrow it"	1	( 1.3%)	1	( 1.1%)
Bored	1	( 1.3%)	0	( 0.0%)
To avoid unpleasant situation	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.1%)
Self esteem	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.1%)
To sell	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.1%)
Self defense	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.1%)
Other	2	( 2.6%)	5	( 5.4%)
TOTAL:	76	(100.0%)	92	(100.0%)**

\*The general category of "theft" excludes car theft.

\*\*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.



Table 11

Theft: A Comparison of the Use of the Stolen Item  
by Sex of Respondent \*

Type of Use	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Respondent used it	41	( 73.2%)	44	( 67.7%)
Returned it	9	( 16.1%)	9	( 13.9%)
Sold or traded it	1	( 1.8%)	8	( 12.3%)
Gave it to uninvolved party	2	( 3.6%)	1	( 1.5%)
Destroyed or discarded it	1	( 1.8%)	2	( 3.1%)
Another involved party used it	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.5%)
Other	2	( 3.6%)	0	( 0.0%)
TOTAL:	56	(100.0%)**	65	(100.0%)

\*The general category of "theft" excludes car theft.

\*\*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

knowing the owner of the vehicle (72.7% and 64.3% respectively) and the owner was most commonly a relative or friend. The location of the automobile when it was stolen did not differ greatly between males and females. Similarly, in 60% of the incidents involving boys and 60% of the incidents involving girls, it was reported that the stolen vehicle was returned to the owner.

Despite the fact that the numbers of youths involved in the theft of an automobile is extremely small, an interesting pattern can be discerned in Table 12 which describes the method by which the vehicle was stolen by the youth. Approximately 73% of the females who stole cars reported they either had the key to the car or found the key in the ignition. The same circumstances occurred in only 28.6% of the incidents reported by the males and boys were more likely to have "popped the ignition" to start the car or to have stolen the key to the vehicle.

#### Qualitative Differences in the Assaultive Offenses

This section describes the patterns related to gender that were identified in conjunction with the qualitative variables pertaining to assaultive offenses. Discussion of the offenses of assault, threatened assault and gang fighting are included and, again, the reader should note that a maximum of two offenses in each of these offense categories could be recorded for a single respondent.

Table 12

Car Theft: A Comparison of Method of Stealing  
by Sex by Respondent

Method	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Had key	6	( 54.6%)	4	( 28.6%)
Stole key	1	( 9.1%)	3	( 21.4%)
Jumped ignition wires	0	( 0.0%)	3	( 21.4%)
Key in ignition	2	( 18.2%)	0	( 0.0%)
Other	2	( 18.2%)	4	( 28.6%)
TOTAL:	11	(100.0%)*	14	(100.0%)

\*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 13 shows the victims of the assaults that were reported by respondents. Most girls reported that peers they knew from school or the street were the typical victims of their assaults. These individuals were not considered by the girls to be their friends. Males were much less likely than females to report the assault of a relative (respectively 4.8% and 31.4%). Although boys, too, reported relatively frequent assaults against peers they knew, they were much more likely than girls to report assaulting friends or peer strangers (respectively 66.6% and 14.3%).

Tables 14 and 15 show few differences between assaults by females or males in terms of the method of the assault or the motivation for the assault. Approximately three-quarters of both the females and the males who were assaultive reported having assaulted their victims with their hands or some other portion of their bodies. Objects such as "a stick" were used in 20% of the female assaults and 16.7% of the male assaults. The types of reasons for the assaultive behavior that were reported by the respondents were also similar for the females and males. As can be seen in Table 15, for the majority of assaults by both girls and boys, the youth reported that the assault was either vengeful or inadvertently provoked. An example of a vengeful or retaliatory comment is, "She knocked me down." Inadvertent or unintentional provocation was indicated by comments such as, "I was sitting in her seat and didn't know it was hers," or "the kid was trying to take away my girlfriend." As in the case of theft, the range of the reasons cited by the boys was greater than the range mentioned

Table 13

Assault: A Comparison of the Victim of Assault  
by Sex of Respondent

Victim	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Known peer/enemy	18	( 51.4%)	10	( 23.8%)
Peer friend	3	( 8.6%)	14	( 33.3%)
Peer stranger	2	( 5.7%)	14	( 33.3%)
Relatives	11	( 31.4%)	2	( 4.8%)
Known adult/unknown adult	0	( 0.0%)	2	( 4.8%)
Other	1	( 2.9%)	0	( 0.0%)
TOTAL:	35	(100.0%)	42	(100.0%)

Table 14

Assault: A Comparison of Method of Assault  
by Sex of Respondent

Method	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
With hands	26	( 74.3%)	33	( 78.6%)
With an object	7	( 20.0%)	7	( 16.7%)
With a weapon (gun, knife)	0	( 0.0%)	2	( 4.8%)
Other	2	( 5.7%)	0	( 0.0%)
TOTAL:	35	(100.0%)	42	(100.0%)*

\*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 15

Assault: A Comparison of the Motivation for the Assault  
by Sex of Respondent

Motivation	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Revenge	23	( 41.1%)	21	( 31.3%)
Unintended	18	( 32.1%)	17	( 25.4%)
Conflict	4	( 7.1%)	8	( 11.9%)
Power	5	( 8.8%)	2	( 3.0%)
Moral reason	3	( 5.4%)	3	( 4.5%)
Self defense	1	( 1.8%)	4	( 6.0%)
Racial	1	( 1.8%)	2	( 3.0%)
Social pressure	0	( 0.0%)	2	( 3.0%)
Peer esteem	1	( 1.8%)	1	( 1.5%)
Self gratification	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.5%)
Drunk or high	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.5%)
No reason	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.5%)
Self esteem	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.5%)
Bored	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.5%)
Need	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.5%)
To steal	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.5%)
TOTAL:	56	(100.0%)*	67	(100.0%)*

\*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

by the girls.

Boys were more likely than girls to report that they were alone at the time of an assault (31% to 8.6%), but boys and girls reported comparable levels of premeditation prior to the assault. In 54.8% of the assaults committed by males and 58.8% of the assaults committed by females, the youths reported that the incident occurred with little or no premeditation. In approximately 12% of the incidents reported by both males and females, the respondents indicated they had thought about committing the offense for a period of time between two minutes and 30 minutes prior to the assault. In approximately 33% of the male incidents and 29% of the female incidents, the youths had considered the offense for a period of time between a half hour and a half day.

As can be seen in Table 16, however, the extent of the injury inflicted on the victim of the assault varied between boys and girls. In approximately 59% of the female incidents and 31% of the male incidents, the youths reported only slight or no injury to the victim. In approximately 32% of the female cases and 40% of the male cases, the assault left a mark on the victim or required only minor care for injuries such as a blackeye or bloody nose. Boys were four times more likely than girls (26.2% to 5.9%), however, to have been involved in an assault that resulted in major medical care for the victim such as stitches or setting a broken arm.

In terms of the location of the assaultive incident, females and males did not appear to differ significantly. As shown in

Table 16

Assault: A Comparison of the Extent of Injury  
by Sex of the Respondent

Extent of Injury	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Slight or not at all	20	( 58.8%)	13	( 31.0%)
Left a mark	4	( 11.8%)	7	( 16.7%)
Required minor care	7	( 20.6%)	10	( 23.8%)
Required major care	2	( 5.9%)	11	( 26.2%)
Inappropriate response	1	( 2.9%)	1	( 2.4%)
TOTAL:	34	(100.0%)	42	(100.0%)*

\*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 17

Assault: A Comparison of Where the Assault Occurred  
by Sex of Respondent

Location	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
On the street	16	( 45.7%)	18	( 42.8%)
Residence	10	( 28.6%)	6	( 14.3%)
School	5	( 14.3%)	5	( 11.9%)
Public place*	2	( 5.7%)	6	( 14.3%)
Other	2	( 5.7%)	7	( 16.7%)
TOTAL:	35	(100.0%)	42	(100.0%)

\*The category of "public place" excludes all incidents that occurred in school or on the street.



Table 17, the most frequent location for an assaultive incident for both boys and girls was the street (42.8% and 45.7%). Girls were slightly more likely than boys to have assaulted their victims in a private residence and boys were slightly more likely than girls to have committed their assaults in some type of public place such as a recreation center.

Table 18 compares male and female incidents by who the victim of the assault was. Males were more likely than females (31.5% to 18%) to classify their victims as friends about their own age and females were more likely than males to classify their victims as peers who were not friends (42.6% to 24.1%). In female and male incidents of assault, girls were also almost twice as likely as boys to threaten to assault their relatives and boys were much more apt to threaten individuals of approximately their own age whom they did not know.

Tables 19 and 20 demonstrate that females and males exhibited similar patterns in terms of type of threat and the amount of premeditation that occurred prior to the threat. In the majority of both the female and male incidents of threat, the youths said they would harm their victims with their fists (76.7% for the females and 70.4% for the males). Both boys and girls also threatened to kill their victims in about 13% of the incidents. There was little or no premeditation prior to the incident in approximately 51% of the incidents for the girls and approximately 44% for the boys. Table 20 also shows similar proportions of boys and girls considered their threats for periods of time longer than

Table 18

Threatened Assault: A Comparison of the Victim  
of Threatened Assault by Sex of Respondent

Victim	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Peer known to respondent	26	( 42.6%)	13	( 24.1%)
Peer friend	11	( 18.0%)	17	( 31.5%)
Relatives	14	( 23.0%)	7	( 13.0%)
Unknown peer	1	( 1.6%)	10	( 18.5%)
Teacher	4	( 6.6%)	2	( 3.7%)
Adult known to respondent	2	( 3.3%)	1	( 1.9%)
Unknown adult	0	( 0.0%)	2	( 3.7%)
Boyfriend/girlfriend	1	( 1.6%)	0	( 0.0%)
Other	2	( 3.3%)	2	( 3.7%)
TOTAL:	61	(100.0%)	54	(100.0%)*

\*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 19

Threatened Assault: A Comparison of Type of Threat  
by Sex of Respondent

Type of Threat	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
To use fists	46	( 76.7%)	38	( 70.4%)
To use an object	1	( 1.7%)	3	( 5.6%)
To use a weapon	1	( 1.7%)	2	( 3.7%)
To damage property	1	( 1.7%)	2	( 3.7%)
To kill	8	( 13.3%)	7	( 13.0%)
Other	3	( 5.0%)	2	( 3.7%)
TOTAL:	60	(100.0%)*	54	(100.0%)*

\*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 20

Threatened Assault: A Comparison of the Amount  
of Premeditation by Sex of Respondent

Premeditation	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Less than a minute	31	( 50.8%)	24	(44.4%)
2-30 minutes	11	( 18.0%)	6	( 11.1%)
Up to ½ day	1	( 1.6%)	3	( 5.6%)
½ day to 1 day	5	( 8.2%)	2	( 3.7%)
The day before	2	( 3.3%)	7	( 13.0%)
More than the day before	10	( 16.4%)	9	( 16.7%)
Unspecified amount of time	1	( 1.6%)	3	( 5.6%)
TOTAL:	61	(100.0%)*	54	(100.0%)*

\*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

a minute before the threat occurred.

In a higher percentage of the girls' incidents than the boys' incidents, it was reported that there were other individuals present at the time the threat occurred. The males mentioned they were alone at the time the threat occurred in 50% of the incidents that were described and the females said none of their friends were present only 36.7% of the time.

Table 21, again, shows that a similar range of reasons were given by females and males for their threatening behavior. The reader should note that a respondent could give up to two reasons for each incident that was reported. Most of the boys and girls attributed their actions to revenge or stated that the threat was inadvertently provoked. For example, one boy stated that the victim "had hit his sister for the fun of it... and, so he told him (the victim) that he would break his hand if he did it again." In about twice as many of the male incidents as the female incidents, the respondent indicated that the threat was morally justified (12.4% to 5.5%). About twice as many girls as boys, however, mentioned that their threat was the result of a conflict between themselves and the victim (19.8% to 9.6%). An example of this type of reason is that the victim was purportedly "spreading rumors about me (the respondent) and a boy."

Table 22 shows some variation by sex in the place where the threatened assault occurred. Approximately 61% of the male incidents purportedly occurred on the street compared to 36% of the incidents reported by the females. Comparable percentages of the

Table 21

**Threatened Assault: A Comparison of the Motivation  
for the Threat by Sex of Respondent**

<b>Motivation</b>	<u><b>Female</b></u>		<u><b>Male</b></u>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Revenge	28	( 30.8%)	32	( 39.5%)
Unintended	31	( 34.1%)	23	( 28.4%)
Conflict	18	( 19.8%)	7	( 8.6%)
Moral justification	5	( 5.5%)	10	( 12.4%)
Peer esteem	1	( 1.1%)	2	( 2.5%)
To avoid unpleasant situation	1	( 1.1%)	1	( 1.2%)
Self gratification	1	( 1.1%)	1	( 1.2%)
Anger	2	( 2.2%)	0	( 0.0%)
Racial	0	( 0.0%)	2	( 2.5%)
Power	2	( 2.2%)	0	( 0.0%)
Self defense	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.2%)
No particular reason	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.2%)
Social pressure	1	( 1.1%)	0	( 0.0%)
Bored	0	( 0.0%)	1	( 1.2%)
Other	1	( 1.1%)	0	( 0.0%)
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>(100.0%)*</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>(100.0%)*</b>

\*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 22

Threatened Assault: A Comparison of Where  
the Threat Occurred by Sex of Respondent

Location	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
On the street	22	( 36.1%)	33	( 61.1%)
Residence	20	( 32.8%)	5	( 9.3%)
School	12	( 19.7%)	8	( 14.8%)
Public place*	4	( 6.6%)	4	( 7.4%)
Other	3	( 4.9%)	4	( 7.4%)
TOTAL:	61	(100.0%)**	54	(100.0%)

\*The category of "public place" excludes all incidents that occurred in school or on the street.

\*\*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

male and female incidents took place in public places, but females were more likely than boys to be involved in an incident in their own home or the home of a friend or relative (respectively 32.8% and 9.3%).

Of the 33 females and 44 males who reported having participated in gang fighting, approximately 58% of the females and 48% of the males reported that the incident took place on a public street. Table 23 shows that girls were three times more likely to be involved in incidents at school (15.2% to 4.5%) and boys were over twice as likely to be involved in fights at a public place of recreation (31.8% to 12.1%). Table 24 reports comparable numbers of participants in the gang fight for boys and girls with the most frequent number being 7 to 10.

The data also shows that the percentages of female and male incidents in which injury was reported were similar (respectively 45.5% and 42.4%). The extent of the reported injury for the female and male incidents was also comparable. Serious injury was reported in only a few of the incidents and most frequently only minor injuries such as a sore stomach were reported to have been inflicted by the respondent.

Table 25 shows the reasons that were cited by the respondents for their involvement in the gang fight. Females were much more likely than males to report that insults had precipitated the fight (61.8% to 18.2%) and males more frequently stated that the respondent himself or some other individual was picked on or attacked (52.3% to 20.5%). An example of this type of situation as

**Table 23**

**Gang Fighting: A Comparison of Where the Fight Occurred  
by Sex of Respondent**

<b>Location</b>	<b><u>Female</u></b>		<b><u>Male</u></b>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Public street	19	(57.6%)	21	(47.7%)
Public place of recreation	4	(12.1%)	14	(31.8%)
School	5	(15.2%)	2	(4.5%)
Commercial place of recreation	2	(6.1%)	4	(9.1%)
Private home	1	(3.0%)	2	(4.5%)
Other commercial property	1	(3.0%)	0	(0.0%)
Other	1	(3.0%)	1	(2.3%)
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>(100.0%)</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>(100.0%)*</b>

\*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

**Table 24**

**Gang Fighting: A Comparison of Number of Participants  
in the Fight by Sex of Respondent**

<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b><u>Female</u></b>		<b><u>Male</u></b>	
	<b>n</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>(%)</b>
1	1	(2.9%)	0	(0.0%)
2-3	3	(8.8%)	2	(4.6%)
4-6	7	(20.6%)	10	(22.7%)
7-10	11	(32.4%)	17	(38.6%)
11-20	5	(14.7%)	8	(18.2%)
More than 20	7	(20.6%)	7	(15.9%)
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>(100.0%)</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>(100.0%)</b>



Table 25

Gang Fighting: A Comparison of Motivation  
for the Fight by Sex by Respondent

Motivation	<u>Female</u>		<u>Male</u>	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
Insults/name calling	21	( 61.8%)	8	( 18.2%)
Somebody jumped or picked on someone else	6	( 17.6%)	18	( 40.9%)
Respondent was jumped/ ambushed	1	( 2.9%)	5	( 11.4%)
In connection with a sports' event	0	( 0.0%)	4	( 9.1%)
Racial	2	( 5.9%)	2	( 4.6%)
To have a fight	1	( 2.9%)	2	( 4.6%)
Rivalry over boyfriend/ girlfriend	0	( 0.0%)	3	( 6.8%)
Other	3	( 8.8%)	2	( 4.6%)
TOTAL:	34	(100.0%)*	44	(100.0%)*

\*Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

described by a female is that the fight started with someone pushing her down the stairs at a movie theater. The girl's boyfriend, who was known as the "Hulk," did not like that type of behavior and initiated the fight. In general, the variety of reasons cited by the males was greater than that for the females.

### A Comparison of Two Cases

Aggregated data such as that reported above is clear and concise in terms of hypothesis testing, but loses some of its descriptive power with respect to the individuals that are of interest. In this section, a comparison of the responses of two youths will be presented in order to illustrate some of the gender differences by offense that were apparent at the aggregate levels of this analysis.

The two youths selected for this portion of the study reported extensive delinquent histories in terms of their involvement with the incidents of assault and theft. In keeping with the predominance of whites in the sample, both the boy and girl examined here were white. The girl was fifteen years of age and reported two incidents of serious theft, one incident of assault that was classified as serious, one minor incident of threatened assault and one serious incident of gang fighting. The boy was sixteen years of age and reported a single incident of serious

theft, two incidents of serious assaultive behavior, two minor incidents of threatened assault and one incident of car theft. At the surface level, the incidents reported by the girl and boy appear to be of a comparable degree of seriousness. The girl reported involvement in five incidents of which four were classified as serious in nature. The boy reported six incidents and four of those were categorized as serious.

In terms of the qualitative aspects of the incidents reported by the girl and boy, however, the similarities are less apparent and sex-typical behavior begins to emerge. The theft incident reported by the male consisted of a larceny from a car in which both money and a CB radio were taken. Both of the thefts reported by the girl were shoplifting incidents in which apparel was stolen. In one incident, the girl slipped a pair of gloves into her bag and, in the other incident, she put a necklace in her pocket. The boy, on the other hand, forceably opened the door of a car with a coat hanger in order to steal the items mentioned above. In both the incident in which the girl stole the gloves and the incident in which the boy stole the money and the CB radio, the items were valued between ten and two-hundred and fifty dollars. It is probable, however, that the actual cost of the items stolen by the boy was greater than the cost of the item stolen by the girl. The girl reported that she personally used the items she stole and the boy stated that he was caught by the police. The boy further stated that he intended to sell the radio in order to "get some money" and the girl reported that she had taken the items because

she "liked them and didn't have the money to buy them."

Both the girl and the boy reported involvement in serious acts of assault. The boy reported two such incidents and the girl reported a single incident. The boy claimed to have been provoked in both incidents. In one incident, he was angered by someone calling him a "faggot" and the other incident was precipitated by the victim hitting the boy "over the head with a tray." In the incident reported by the girl, she stated that another girl had "stuck out her foot and tripped her." In both of the assaults reported by the boy, the victims required medical care. One victim needed stiches and the other was treated for a broken nose. In the assault by the girl, the victim's nose was bloodied. In both the incidents by the boy and the girl, other individuals were present and tried "to break it up." Little or no premeditation was reported by either the boy or the girl.

Both the boy and the girl also reported incidents of threatened assault. In the case of the girl, the threat was directed toward a girlfriend who had "talked about" the respondent and "stole her umbrella." The boy reported that he had threatened to "punch out the lights" of a peer on two separate occasions. In the first incident, he threatened another youth who had "called the cops because we (the respondent and friends) were calling him a name," and, in the second situation, he threatened a boy because he had called him a "faggot." Both the boy and the girl reported that they had considered making the threat for a period of time longer than a few minutes. The girl and the boy were also with other

youths from their regular group of friends when the incidents occurred.

The girl also reported one incident of gang fighting and the boy reported a single incident of car theft. In the case of the gang fight, the girl stated that she had been involved in a fight that included approximately eight of her friends. The fight was precipitated by her group "yelling things at a group of girls" from another part of the city. The female respondent reported that she chipped another girl's tooth and broke her nose. In the boy's car theft incident, he reported that he had broken into and started the car with a screwdriver. His stated reason for stealing the car was that, "He didn't want to walk home because it was too late and too far, so he took a car." The boy reported that he kept the car for approximately one hour and then parked it on the street.

As previously mentioned, the delinquent activities of the boy and the girl that are described here are of a similar degree of seriousness, amount and variety. Qualitatively, however, the incidents reported by the girl and the boy appear to differ slightly. In keeping with sexual stereotypes, the incidents of the girl appear to be of a less severe nature than those of the boy in terms of the extent of injury, the nature of the threatened assault and the method of stealing. The boy appears to have been responding to his environment in an aggressive fashion (e.g. his breaking into the car, stealing a car, and responding to name calling) and the girl appears to have taken a more passive role of reacting to the situation (e.g. her shoplifting and assaultive

response to an act of physical violence against her). Although on the surface it appears as though these two youths were comparably delinquent, examination of the qualitative aspects of the individual incidents in which the girl and the boy were involved indicates strong support for the quantitative and qualitative findings reported previously.

### Summary

The data described in this chapter firmly support the quantitative hypotheses listed in Chapter 3. Males reported more frequent and serious involvement in the crimes of theft and assault. When the unit of analysis was shifted from the youth to the incident, however, confirmation of the qualitative hypotheses was less secure. In terms of the qualitative aspects of the delinquency, both boys and girls exhibited behaviors that have traditionally been associated with their respective sex. The following chapter will further discuss the implications of these findings.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Introduction

The findings of this study firmly support the quantitative hypotheses which state that boys would be expected to report more frequent and serious involvement than girls in the offenses of theft and assault. The results pertaining to the qualitative hypotheses were, however, less unequivocal. The findings pertaining to each general set of hypotheses will be discussed in this chapter from both a theoretical and practical orientation. Prior to this discussion, the limitations of the study will be examined.

#### The Limitations of the Study

The most important limitation of this study relates to the element of time. Adler's thesis is predicated on the supposition that opportunities for females in both the legitimate and

illegitimate spheres have been increasing over time. This ideally implies a longitudinal study which is beyond the scope of this study and somewhat limits the conclusions that can be drawn in relation to Adler's propositions. It is not possible, given this limitation, to cite direct evidence to refute or support Adler's claim that female crime rates are increasing. Despite this limitation, however, it is possible to examine the individual characteristics of the particular offense for gender differences in both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the crime. Although this does not permit a full test of Adler's theoretical position, the findings reported here suggest that, at minimum, differences between females and males with respect to the quantity and type of crime continue to exist.

### The Major Findings

As previously mentioned, the males in the sample did report more frequent and serious involvement in the delinquent activities of theft and assault as predicted in the major hypotheses. Although this finding was statistically significant at only the aggregate level of offense category, a similar pattern was apparent for the specific offenses of theft, car theft, assault, threatened assault and gang fighting. This general finding that the boys were more delinquent than the girls is far from surprising. Studies using either self-report data or official statistics have long and



consistently documented this pattern. The failure of the data from this study to statistically confirm a comparable pattern for each individual offense is most probably due to the small cell sizes in that particular analysis.

Other findings of interest with respect to gender differences in the quantitative aspects of crime are the similarity between boys and girls in the general pattern of the types of crime they committed and the overall rate of involvement in delinquent activities that they exhibited. Neither sex appeared to have a monopoly on any individual type of crime and, although there were obvious differences in the overall rate of crime committed by gender, the rank order from the most frequently to the least frequently committed crime was approximately the same for both boys and girls. Similarly, as Figueira-McDonough and Selo (1980) have pointed out, involvement in some form of delinquency appears to have been the norm for both boys and girls. Girls were overrepresented in comparison to boys in the number of trivial offenses in which they participated. Despite the fact that the boys and the girls reported different levels of seriousness in their involvement in delinquent activities, however, the majority of both the boys and the girls reported some level of involvement in the offenses of theft and assault.

Examination of the qualitative aspects of the reported incidents of theft indicated some variation between boys and girls with respect to the type of item stolen, the place in which the theft occurred, the use of the stolen item and the method of

stealing. The range of the type of stolen item was greater for boys than girls and stereotypical items such as tools were reported more frequently in the boys' incidents than the girls' incidents. These findings illustrate that both the boys and the girls displayed behavior in their thefts that has been traditionally associated with their respective genders and may be related to the roles to which each sex has been socialized. The girls' incidents of theft were also less likely than the boys' incidents to occur in the street or a public place such as a recreation center and more likely than the boys' to have a victim that was known to the offender.

Gender typical behavior was noticeable in the method of stealing, the use of the stolen item and the victim of the theft. In over 60% of the incidents reported by the girls, the method of stealing was either shoplifting or "borrowing" from a relative. These same methods were reported in only about 35% of the incidents involving boys. Similarly, the boys' incidents were twice as likely as the girls's incidents to have involved burglary, forceable robbery, breaking and entering or car larceny. In terms of the use of the stolen item, similar patterns for girls and boys were apparent with the exception of the incidents in which the stolen item was sold or traded. Selling or trading the stolen item occurred in 12.8% of the incidents involving boys and in only 1.8% of the incidents involving the girls.

The number of reported incidents of car theft by youths in the sample was small which makes comparison by gender more difficult.

With the exception of the method used to start the stolen vehicle, the findings indicate few differences between the sexes with respect to this type of crime. Stealing the key to the car or "jumping the ignition wires" was reported more frequently in the boys' incidents than the girls' incidents. This last finding may indicate that boys have a greater opportunity to learn the skill of hot wiring a car rather than that the boys and girls were behaving in a stereotypical fashion.

Stereotypical behavior was, however, observable in the incidents of assault reported by the youths in the sample. The extent of the injury inflicted by the offender, the frequency of the offender knowing the victim and the place in which the assault occurred varied according to the sex of the perpetrator and were, in general, representative of commonly held stereotypes of the sex of the perpetrator. The incidents of the girls were more apt to occur in a residence, to involve less harm to the victim and to involve a victim known to the offender. The incidents of the boys more frequently occurred on the street or in a public place, caused more physical harm to the victim and more frequently involved persons who were strangers to the offender. Although there was great variation in the range of responses for both boys and girls, boys' incidents were more apt than girls' incidents to have been an act of aggression precipitated by the boys themselves and girls' assaults were more apt than boys' assaults to have begun with an insult to the girl regarding her reputation or a comment indicating that the girl was not fulfilling the role expected of a female.

The reader should note, however, that the individual designated as the victim in a incident may be so labeled depending on the sex of the offender. For example, an incident involving a girl was twice as likely as an incident involving a boy to designate a known peer or an enemy who was a peer as the victim of the incident. A friend who was a peer, on the other hand, was almost four more times as likely to be designated the victim of the offense in a boy's incident. These differences may reflect gender differences in the use of language rather than true differences in the victim of the assault. For example, the individual classified as a "known peer" by a female may be routinely categorized as a friend by a male. The imprecise nature of the language used to differentiate the victim of the assault may have, in this case, demonstrated gender differences in the use of concepts and words rather than variations between the sexes with respect to the individual who was the victim of an assault.

The data regarding threatened assault indicated that the behavior of boys and girls were remarkably similar with respect to the qualitative aspects of this type of crime. The reported incidents of threatened assault indicated that the boys and girls made similar types of threats, thought about the threat for comparable amounts of time before the incident, and had similar motivations for the threat. In the incidents reported by the girls, however, the place in which the threat occurred was more likely than in the incidents reported by the boys to be in a private home and in the company of peers other than the victim of

the threat.

With respect to the delinquent activity of gang fighting, gender differences are of a more subtle nature. In the incidents reported by both the boys and the girls, comparable numbers of participants in the gang fight and comparable levels of injury were reported. The girls' and the boys' incidents varied, however, with respect to the place in which the gang fight occurred and the perceived motivation for the fight. The incidents reported by the girls were over three times as likely as the incidents reported by the boys to have taken place in school and the boys' incidents were almost three times as likely as the girls' incidents to have taken place in a public place of recreation. The reader should note that this finding may indicate that the girls attended school more frequently than the boys or that the incidents reported by the girls that occurred in school would not have been classified by the boys as gang fighting rather than demonstrating actual gender differences in the place in which a gang fight occurred. Similarly, insults or name calling were more frequently mentioned as the motivation for the gang fight in girls' incidents and a physical attack was mentioned most frequently in the incidents involving the boys. As it is possible that insults could easily have preceded a physical attack, these gender differences in the motivation for a gang fight might be representative of gender specific, semantic differences in viewing this type of situation rather than gender differences in what actually took place prior to the fight.

Despite these possible semantic differences between boys and girls, however, the data indicate that substantial differences exist with respect to both the quantitative and the qualitative aspects of the delinquent behavior exhibited by the boys and the girls in the sample. Although some involvement with delinquency appears to have been the norm for both boys and girls in the sample, the incidents reported by the girls were more apt to be of a trivial nature than the incidents reported by the boys. The finding that the boys consistently reported more serious and frequent involvement in delinquent activities holds true for all of the offenses examined in this study although the rank order from the most frequent offense to the least frequent offense is very similar for boys and girls. These findings mirror prior research regarding gender differences in delinquency (Hindelang, 1979; Giordano and Cernkovich, 1979; Steffensmeier and Steffensmeier, 1981).

Contrary to the qualitative hypotheses derived from Adler's adaptation of opportunity theory, sex-typical behavior in the qualitative aspects of the offense categories of both assault and theft was apparent. Behavior that has been traditionally associated with a particular sex was observed in the situational and motivational aspects of theft, car theft, assault, threatened assault and gang fighting. For example, the delinquent activities reported by the boys were more likely than those reported by the girls to have taken place in a street setting and to have involved a victim previously unknown to the perpetrator. Similarly, gender

stereotypical behavior was also apparent in the type of item stolen by the girls and the boys and the motivation in girls' and boys' incidents of assault. These findings with respect to the qualitative aspects of delinquent activities clearly indicate, contrary to Adler's contention, that the behavior patterns demonstrated by boys and girls were very different and appeared to follow patterns that have been traditionally associated with each of the sexes. The next section of this chapter will focus on the theoretical implications of both the quantitative and qualitative findings of the study.

### The Generalizability of the Study

The findings of the present study have a number of theoretical and methodological implications for future research in the area of gender differences in delinquency. Prior to addressing the nature of these implications, however, it is appropriate that the limitations of the generalizability of the study be evaluated.

In assessing the degree to which the findings of the present research would be applicable to other populations of delinquent youths, it is necessary to note that the sample of youths examined in this study was drawn from two working class communities in Boston. In this study, unlike the original research from which this study was derived, no separate analysis by community was conducted as the focus of the research was gender differences

rather than community differences in delinquency. The unique characteristics of the two communities represented in the present research, however, may affect the generalizability of the results of the study.

According to the Morash study (1979), one of these communities, East Boston, would be classified as "communal" in the typology developed by Spergel (1976). This community is "primarily white and working class" and "is characterized by strong ethnic, kinship and primary group ties (Morash, 1979:6)." In addition, population mobility is low, official delinquency rates are low, and the community is geographically separated from the rest of Boston by water ways which make it accessible only by bridge or tunnel (Morash, 1979).

The second community, Allston-Brighton, would be classified in the Spergel (1976) typology as a pluralist community due its mixture of racial and ethnic groups, socioeconomic classes and the high mobility of its population (Morash, 1979:7). In addition to being more heterogeneous in social composition, the official rates of delinquency in Allston-Brighton are higher than in East Boston (Morash, 1979).

The unique nature of the two, urban communities examined in this study may somewhat limit the generalizability of the results of the research. Replication of the study in a smaller city or rural setting could yield significantly different results. Similarly, replication in an urban setting that did not include a homogeneous population such as that found in East Boston could



produce very different findings. These potential differences indicate a need for further research which controls for the characteristics of the community from which the sample is drawn in order to identify the extent to which socialization patterns and sex roles may be associated with sex specific patterns of behavior in delinquency. If, as Richards (1981) has suggested, gender specific behavior is related to social class, the findings of this study may only apply to other urban communities with similar ethnic, social class and geographic characteristics. Future research regarding the potential interactions between race, community, social class and the qualitative aspects of delinquency would also be relevant to understanding the extent to which the findings of the present study are generalizable.

### The Theoretical and Methodological Implications of the Findings

In this section of the chapter, both the theoretical and methodological implications of the present study will be discussed. The first portion of the section will focus on the theoretical implications and the latter portion of the section will address methodological concerns which are relevant to understanding previous research in the area of gender differences and planning for future research.

As previously mentioned, the hypotheses which are tested in

the present study are derived from Adler's (1975) adaptation of opportunity theory. In her highly publicized work, Adler reached the conclusion that, as a result of changing sexual norms in our society, both the legitimate and illegitimate behavior of females will begin to approximate the behavior of males. Three assumptions are critical to this conclusion of Adler's. The first of these assumptions is that the social norms which provide the basis for gender specific behavior are almost totally the product of environmental causes. The basic contention of the second assumption is that the norms governing the behavior of females are changing. The last assumption that is integral to Adler's thesis suggests that other conditions such as race and social class have less impact on norms governing females than their sex. Each of these interrelated assumptions is critical to Adler's argument and each has been a source of controversy in the recent literature regarding gender differences in delinquency.

According to Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) original interpretation of opportunity theory, both psychological and sociological factors were construed as affecting the opportunity for the individual to engage in criminal activities. Adler's (1975) adaptation of opportunity theory, however, emphasizes the sociological rather than the psychological origins of opportunity. In using this approach, Adler has ignored both theoretical work and empirical evidence which suggests that the etiology of criminal behavior is not unidimensional and that gender role socialization is a complex phenomenon affected by both sociological and

psychological factors.

Adler contends that her thesis is supported by recent increases in female crime which have coincided with the onset and continuing advancement of the womens' movement for equality in this society. Numerous individuals (e.g. Steffensmeier and Steffensmeier, 1981; Parisi, 1982; Richards, 1981; Datesman and Scarpitti, 1980) have attempted to refute this contention of Adler's by showing that perceived increases in female crime rates may be attributable to changes in the reaction of society to criminal activity by females, that misleading statistical analyses frequently fail to consider the consistently large gap between female and male crime rates, and that the crime rates of females and males may vary according to social class and race.

The present research also supports the contention that the variable of sex may still be the best predictor of criminal behavior that is available (Hindelang, 1979). Gender typical behavior was apparent at both the quantitative and qualitative levels of analysis in the present study which controlled for social class and age. The delinquent activities of the girls in the sample were less serious, less frequent, less aggressive and less "street oriented" than the delinquent activities of the boys regardless of whether the activities were assault or theft. These findings suggest that Adler's contention that equal opportunity will produce comparable behavior may be erroneous or that equal opportunity is not yet an actual condition such that female and male behavior can be compared on this dimension.

Regardless of which of these explanations for apparent gender differences is appropriate, however, the fact that differences do exist suggests that future research should concentrate on the origins of these differences in order to more fully incorporate the sex variable into criminological theory. Documenting purported changes in female crime rates as Adler has directed will do little to advance understanding of why the differences existed in the first place or why changes, if any, may be occurring.

Research regarding the etiology of gender differences in criminality is sparse and frequently a matter of conjecture rather than empirical research. Most of the research in this area has, however, attempted to integrate sociological and psychological constructs. Akers et al. (1979), in a test of the effect of social learning on substance abuse by juveniles, concluded that social learning concepts could be meaningfully operationalized and applied to the examination of other areas of deviant behavior. Although this particular research did not focus on gender differences, the success of the research in identifying the relative influence of variables such as peer group association, parental reaction and imitation on the extent of substance use and abuse indicates that this is a possibly fruitful arena for future research.

Similarly, research by Simons et al. (1980) demonstrated the efficacy of considering both sociological and psychological variables in seeking to identify the origins of gender differences in criminal behavior. Simons et al. (1980:51) found that males "were much more likely than females to have friends who were

supportive of delinquent behavior" and "that females are less exposed to the factors associated with deviance than are males." These findings imply a need for research to consider the extent to which individual or societal constraints contribute to these apparent differences.

At a broader theoretical level, the discussions of Cloward and Piven (1979) and Harris (1977) regarding the functionality of criminal deviance to females and males also support a need for an integrated theoretical approach which includes the gender variable. Harris suggests that criminal behavior by females is not functional for society and Cloward and Piven contend that female criminal behavior conflicts with the socialization received by females in this society. Although these authors appear at surface level to be coming from opposing theoretical stances, empirical testing of either viewpoint would necessarily entail the examination of both sociological and psychological constructs with respect to gender behavior in order to ascertain the efficacy of either explanation.

Adler, in her effort to explain purported changes in the relative criminality of females and males, has failed to consider the growing body of knowledge that is attempting to incorporate gender into criminological theory. By ignoring the possible interaction between sociological variables such as social class and race and individual idiosyncracies, Adler has weakened her argument that the women's movement has had a powerful impact on both the legitimate and illegitimate behavior of females and focused research efforts on the extent of differences in female and male

criminality rather than the causes of criminal deviance in either females or males.

The present research has focused on the portion of Adler's argument which suggests that, given equal opportunity, the delinquent behavior of females will approximate that of males. The findings suggest that this phenomenon is not as simple as Adler contends. The qualitative aspects of delinquency, regardless of whether the delinquent activity involved theft or assault, appear to be different for females and males. These findings suggest that factors other than opportunity may be impinging on the behavior of females or that opportunity may be a complex construct consisting of both situational context and psychological predisposition.

The methodological implications of the present research are as important as the theoretical implications described above. A large number of the studies reviewed in this document utilized self-report techniques in the collection of data. This indicates that raw data regarding the qualitative dimension of delinquency may have been available to the researchers using this method of data collection. In reporting their findings, however, the researchers who utilized these techniques almost exclusively used aggregate analysis and ignored the qualitative aspects of the available data.

As was demonstrated in the section of the present study that qualitatively compared a delinquent boy and a delinquent girl, aggregate level analysis may, however, obscure real differences in behavior patterns that are not readily apparent without analysis at

the individual level. It is entirely possible that some of the similarities and differences between boys and girls that are identified by researchers using only aggregate level analysis may disappear or be modified if an examination of the qualitative dimension of delinquency were to be conducted. Methodologically, this implies a need for caution in generalizing from prior research and designing future research regarding gender differences in delinquency.

### Conclusions

Analysis of data pertaining to both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the delinquent activities of theft and assault indicates support for the commonly held belief that boys are more frequently and seriously delinquent than girls, but did not support Adler's prediction that girls and boys who are involved with delinquent activities will behave similarly. These findings suggest that Adler's contention that females and males will behave similarly providing that females have the same opportunities as males is, at best, premature and, at worst, an oversimplification of the relationship between gender and delinquency. Adler's adaptation of opportunity theory to an explanation of gender differences in delinquency fails to take into account the potential for interaction between socialization, social class and community. This critical problem in Adler's argument suggests that future

research should emphasize the etiology of gender differences rather than changes in gender differences. The findings of the study further support a need for future research to include both quantitative and qualitative analysis of self-report data in order to avoid obscuring gender differences that might not be apparent at an aggregate level of analysis.



APPENDIX A

SAMPLE INTERVIEW

4th 86 4th 96

THREATENED TO HURT OR INJURE SOMEONE

YOUTH CODE NUMBER OF FC  
INCIDENTS

FOR THE MOST RECENT TIME, AND THEN FOR THE NEXT MOST RECENT TIME.

1. The (last/time before you last) did this, who was this other person?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What did you threaten to do? (PROBE FOR WEAPON)

\_\_\_\_\_

3. How long beforehand had you decided to do this?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What lead up to this?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Did you ask for or take anything belonging to him/her?

1 Yes 2 No (GO TO 6)

IF YES, COMPLETE THIS FORM, THEN FOLLOW UP WITH THEFT FORM, FORM 56.

HURT OR INJURED SOMEONE ON PURPOSE

FOR THE MOST RECENT TIME, AND THEN FOR THE NEXT MOST RECENT TIME

1. Thinking about the (last/next to last) time you did this, who did you to this to? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How long beforehand had you decided to do this? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What led up to this? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How did you injure (him/her)? (PROBE FOR WEAPON) \_\_\_\_\_
5. How badly did you injure (him/her)? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where was this? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Was anyone else there? 1 Yes (GO TO 7a-b) 2 No (GO TO 8)

7a. Were they 1 adults  
2 kids in your regular group  
3 other kids

7b. Did they take part or only watch?  
1 took part  
2 watched

8. Did you take anything from (him/her)? 1 Yes 2 No

IF YES, COMPLETE THIS FORM, THEN FOLLOW UP WITH THEFT FORM, FORM 56.

9. When did this happen? YEAR: MONTH:

BOOK 1 I IN A FIGHT WHERE A BUNCH OF YOUR FRIENDS WERE  
AGAINST ANOTHER BUNCH

YOUTH CODE

NUMBER OF  
INCIDENTS

6

FOR THE MOST RECENT TIME, AND THEN FOR THE NEXT MOST RECENT TIME

1. Where did this happen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How many of your friends were involved? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What led up to the fight? (PROBE: How did it start?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Did you hurt anyone during this fight? 1 Yes 2 No (GO TO 5)  
How badly did you hurt this person?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. When did this happen? YEAR: MONTH:

6. Where did this happen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Were you with anyone? 1 Yes 2 No (GO TO 8)
  - 7a. Were they 1 adults?  
2 kids in your regular group?  
3 other kids?
  - 7b. Did they take part or only watch?  
1 took part  
2 watched
8. When did this happen? YEAR: MONTH:

TOOK S

FOR THE

1. Thi  
you

2. How  
1  
5

3 Whe:

4 At t  
1 y  
4a.

5 How

Were

7 What

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9 What

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3 so

9 otl

Item 40

Item 52

TOOK SOMETHING NOT BELONGING TO YOU

YOUTH CODE NUMBER OF FORM  
INCIDENTS

56

FOR THE MOST RECENT TIME, AND THEN FOR THE NEXT MOST RECENT TIME

1. Thinking of the (next/most? recent time you took something, what did you take? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How much would you say it was worth?
 

1 under \$10	2 \$10-250	3 \$251-2000	4 2001-9000
5 \$9001-30000	6 \$30001-80000	7 over 80000	
- 3 Where were you when you did this? (PROBE: What kind of place was it?)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 At the time that you took it, did you know who it belonged to?
  - 1 yes      2-no GO TO Q. 5
  - 4a. To whom? (RELATIONSHIP, NOT NAME)
- 5 How did you take it? \_\_\_\_\_

Were you with anyone? 1 Yes 2 No (GO TO 8)

- 6a Were they
  - 1 adults?
  - 2 kids in your regular group?
  - 3 other kids?

- 6b Did they take part or only watch?
  - 1 took part
  - 2 watched

- 7 What led up to your taking it? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 When did this happen?      Year:      Month:
- 9 What did you do with the \_\_\_\_\_? (MORE THAN ONE MAY BE CHECKED)
 

1 used it	4 destroyed or discarded it
2 another involved party used it	5 gave it to uninvolved party
3 sold or traded it	8 don't know
- 9 other (SPECIFY) \_\_\_\_\_

TOOK A C  
CAR WAS

FOR THE

1. Did

la.

(IF

lb.

2. How  
Did

3. When

4. V

5. W

6. W  
d

7. H

8. W

W

TOOK A CAR WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE OWNER (EVEN IF THE CAR WAS RENTED)

YOUTH CODE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS FORM

66

FOR THE MOST RECENT TIME, AND THEN FOR THE NEXT MOST RECENT TIME

1. Did you know at the time who owned the car? 1 Yes 2 No (GO TO 2)

1a. Whose car was it?

(IF MEMBERS OF HOUSEHOLD)

1b. Did you think they would disapprove if they had known?

1 Yes 2 No

2. How did you manage to take the car? (PROBE: Did you break into it? Did you start it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Where was the car when you took it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Were you with anyone? 1 Yes 2 No (GO TO 5)

4a. Were they 1 adults?  
2 kids in your regular group?  
3 other kids?

4b. Did they take part or only watch?  
1 took part  
2 watched

5. What led up to your taking the car? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What did you do with it after you got it? (PROBE: How far away did you drive it? Where did you go with it?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. How long did you keep it? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What did you finally do with it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

When did this happen? YEAR:

MONTH:



## **APPENDIX B**

### **SAMPLE CODING FORMAT**

Card 1:  
(Item 37)

50

Q4. Were you with anyone?

1. YES

5. NO

9. NA

(Item 38)

51

Who

1 - adults

2 - kids in your group of friends

3. other kids

4. Blank

5. Combination

(Item 39)

52

Did they take part

1 took part

2 just watched

3 blank

4 N/A

F1.0 (Item 40) CARD 1:53

TRIVIAL - NONTRIVIAL NATURE OF INCIDENT #56 (Most Recent)

Incident is trivial if:

(1) R borrowed trivial property for so brief a period of time that its owner was unaware that it had been taken; OR

(2) R took trivial property from a close relative; OR

(3) Property was trivial and found in public place

2.0 (Item 41  
Item 42)

54-55

56-57

Q1. Thinking of the (next/most recent) time you took something, what did you take?

Code first two mentions.

01. Money

02. Things to wear: clothes, accessories, jewelry, cosmetics

03. Things to have fun with

04. Possible weapons: guns, knives

05. Things to eat and drink

06. Alcoholic beverage

07. To smoke

08. Tools and/or work supplies

09. Decorative

10. Car parts

11. Gasoline; oil

12. Containers with deposit value

13. Bicycle; bicycle parts

14. Drugs, including marijuana

15. Radio, TV, stereo

16. Moped, minibike

97. Other

17. Car

96. Blank

98. DK

99. NA

F1.C (Item 43) Card 1:58

Q2. How much would you say it was worth?

1. Under \$10
2. \$10-250
3. \$251-2000
4. \$2001-9000
5. \$9001-30,000
6. \$30,001-80,000
7. Over \$80,000
8. DK
9. NA

F2.C (Item 44)

59-60

Q3. Where were you when you did this?

- |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. From a car</li> <li>15. Employer</li> <li>96. Blank</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>01. R's home; relative's home</li> <li>02. Home of adult known to R</li> <li>03. Home of peer known to R</li> <li>04. Private home, occupant not known to R</li> <li>05. Private home, NA where</li> <li>06. Store or other commercial establishment</li> <li>07. Industrial establishment or office</li> <li>08. School</li> <li>09. Other public institution</li> <li>10. On the street, or a highway</li> <li>11. Open field, farm, orchard, woods, yard</li> <li>12. Outside house</li> <li>13. Park</li> <li>97. Other</li> <li>98. DK</li> <li>99. NA</li> <li>00. Inap, coded 3-5 or 9 in col. 15</li> </ol> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

F1.O (Item 45)

61

Q4. At the time that you took it, did you know who it belonged to?

1. YES
5. NO
6. Blank
9. NA

F2.0 (Item 46) Card 1:62-63

Q4a. To whom?

- |                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 01. Mother                 | 20. Sister(s)             |
| 02. Stepmother             | 21. Stepsister(s)         |
| 03. Foster mother          | 22. Foster sister(s)      |
| 04. Father                 | 23. Brother(s)            |
| 05. Stepfather             | 24. Stepbrother(s)        |
| 06. Foster father          | 25. Foster brother(s)     |
| 07. "Parents"              | 26. Cousin                |
| 08. Step-parents           | 27. Niece/nephew          |
| 09. Foster parents         | 28. Other peer relative   |
| 10. Aunt/uncle             | 29. Peer friend           |
| 11. Grandparent(s)         | 30. Peer R knows          |
| 12. Other adult relative   | 31. Peer stranger         |
| 13. Adult friend(s)        | 32. Peer, NA relationship |
| 14. Adult R knows          | 33. Enemy                 |
| 15. Adult stranger         | 34. "Knew who they were"  |
| 16. Adult, NA relationship | 35. Teacher               |
- 
- |                                 |
|---------------------------------|
| 40. School property             |
| 41. Other public property       |
| 42. Other private property      |
| 43. Store; retail establishment |
| 95. Not answered                |
| 96. Blank                       |
| 97. Other                       |
| 98. DK                          |
| 99. NA                          |

F2.0 (Item 47)

64-65

Q5. How did you take it?

- |                                                                                                                   |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 01. Shoplifting                                                                                                   |           |
| 02. Burglary from a building, no breaking and entering; includes R's home                                         |           |
| 03. Theft from a building, breaking and entering                                                                  |           |
| 04. Larceny from a car                                                                                            |           |
| 05. Larceny, other                                                                                                |           |
| 06. Robbery from a person, no force used; purse snatching; pocket picking                                         |           |
| 07. Forceful robbery, no weapon used                                                                              |           |
| 08. Armed robbery                                                                                                 |           |
| 09. Owner left object unattended in public place (except 02) or R given object and later told owner it was "lost" |           |
| 10. Theft from sidewalk outside bldg., house                                                                      | 96. Blank |
| 11. Opportunity                                                                                                   | 97. Other |
| 12. Borrowed, took, from relative's room                                                                          | 98. DK    |
|                                                                                                                   | 99. NA    |

Card 1:  
3F1.0 (Item 48)

66

Q5. Were you with anyone?

- 1. YES
- 5. NO
- 6. Blank
- 9. NA

67

Who     1 - adults  
         2 - kids in your regular group  
         3 - other kids  
         4 - Blank

5 - Combination

68

Did they take part?  
      1 took part  
      2 just watched  
      3 blank  
      4 N/A

2F2.0 (Item 49  
      Item 50)

69-70  
71-72

Q1. What led up to your taking it?

Code first two mentions.

See page 2, items 2-3  
for additional codes

- 01. Self-gratification; pleasure-seeking
- 02. Curiosity: for the thrill of it; for kicks
- 03. Boredom; messing around
- 04. Utilitarian need
- 05. R did it to avoid pain, punishment, unpleasant situation, personal harm or injury
- 06. R was inadvertently or unintentionally provoked in some way or NA whether provocation was intentional
- 07. Mood, rage, anger: R was just angry, in a bad mood
- 08. Retaliation; revenge
- 09. R's act was the result of conflict, argument, disagreement or fight; NA source of conflict
- 10. Social pressure or influence: response suggests that R was influenced by others (peer or adult) or by social norms
- 11. Peer esteem (heroics): response suggests that R did it to show off; to impress somebody, exhibit bravery; to prove he wasn't afraid to do it
- 12. Mastery, self-esteem: response suggests that R did it to prove to himself that he could do it
- 13. Power, domination: response suggests that R did it to assert his power/control over someone else, or to dominate someone else
- 14. Moral justification: R's act is justifiable in terms of generally accepted moral values; R did it to protect or help someone else
- 15. Political/ideological justification: R justifies his act on the grounds of political/social/economic ideology, belief, or principle
- 97. Other
- 98. DK
- 99. NA

Card 1:

1.1.1

F1.0 (Item 51)

73

Q9. What did you do with the ?

1. R USED IT
2. ANOTHER INVOLVED PARTY USED IT
3. SOLD OR TRADED IT
4. DESTROYED OR DISCARDED IT
5. R GAVE IT TO UNINVOLVED PARTY
6. R returned it to owner; R was caught and gave it back
7. Other
8. More than one checked
9. DK, NA

F1.0 (Item 52) CARD1:74

TRIVIAL - NONTRIVIAL NATURE OF INCIDENT #56 (Second Most Recent)

Incident is trivial if:

- (1) R borrowed trivial property for so brief a period of time that its owner was unaware that it had been taken; OR
- (2) R took trivial property from a close relation; OR
- (3) Property was trivial and found in public place

2F2.0 (Item 53  
Item 54)

75-76  
77-78

Q1. Thinking of the (next/most recent) time you took something, what did you take?

Code first two mentions.

01. Money
02. Things to wear: clothes, accessories, jewelry, cosmetics
03. Things to have fun with
04. Possible weapons: guns, knives
05. Things to eat and drink
06. Alcoholic beverage
07. To smoke
08. Tools and/or work supplies
09. Decorative items
10. Car parts, motorcycle parts
11. Gasoline; oil
12. Containers with deposit value
13. Bicycle; bicycle parts
14. Drugs, including marijuana
15. Radio, TV, Stereo
16. Moped, minibike
97. Other
98. DK
99. NA

17. Car

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