

Gender, Youth Crime and Justice

4

Loraine Gelsthorpe and Gilly Sharpe

Introduction

In this chapter we focus on patterns of girls'¹ offending and responses to it, as well as historical and contemporary explanations for female juvenile delinquency. We argue that the regulation of acceptable gender-role behaviour has long been a key feature of the criminal justice system's response to offending by girls, and that such regulation is still in evidence in the rhetoric and practice of youth justice in the twenty-first century. We also examine changing perceptions of girls' behaviour and concomitant shifts in their social regulation. In particular, we analyse recurring moral panics regarding girls' behaviour, which seem to have shifted their focus in recent years – from girls' sexuality and 'status' offending, to their apparently increasing violence and alcohol use – and dwell on the resultant punitive turn towards girls and young women.

Whilst we should avoid taking the youth justice system's treatment of boys to be either the norm or acceptable, our chief concern in this chapter is to describe and reflect on policies and practices that particularly affect *girls*, first because girls have tended to be overlooked in youth justice discourse, and second due to the symbolic import of changes, within society in general and the youth justice system in particular, which have affected girls in recent years.

As a consequence of interventionist policies, girls are being increasingly drawn into the criminal justice system, with the consequential effects of a criminal

1. We use 'girls' throughout to refer to girls and young women aged 10–17 years.

record, in spite of limited evidence of their increased criminality in recent years. Measures which in the past served to divert the majority of girls from the criminal justice system altogether have been replaced by early intervention, as well as a sharp rise in the use of community penalties and a disproportionate increase in the number of girls – as compared with boys – in custody.

In part this may reflect the increasing visibility of girls, with the 'culture of the bedroom' (as a place for girls to meet, listen to music, talk and so on, see Frith, 1983) having been replaced by a construction of adolescence that revolves around out-of-home activities. Thus moral panics about girls and their changing behaviour have been fuelled by conspicuous consumption among the young, and leisure pursuits of 'pubbing and clubbing' which involve a more conspicuous street presence.

Traditional forms of regulating girls' social behaviour

Numerous historical sketches reveal both public and governmental concern about the behaviour of girls, and there have been frequent and vociferous claims that delinquent girls, like their older sisters, are 'worse' than boys (Carpenter, 1853). Whilst the youth justice system did not distinguish between girls and boys in terms of sentencing and services in its early development, we can discern different attitudes and perceptions with regard to girls and boys over time, which span policy, practice and academic discourses. These attitudes persist to the present day.

Analysis of the youth justice system and related institutions since their inception reveals the existence of a dual image of girls, who were thought simultaneously to be more vulnerable than boys and to need a lot of care, whilst their delinquent behaviour was seen as 'worse' than that of boys: offending girls were generally considered to be breaking not only the law, but also gender role expectations, with girls conforming to the stereotype of femininity most likely to be dealt with by means of the care system as opposed to the 'criminal justice system' (Gelsthorpe, 1989). Despite various nineteenth-century observations and claims that girls were more difficult to 'rescue' than boys, the main aim of the missions and societies for delinquent girls was not to straightforwardly punish them, but to instil good virtues, and to 'rouse a consciousness' in them. Mary Carpenter (1853: 83), inveterate critic of the nineteenth-century penal system adopted for juvenile delinquents, argued that practices whereby many juveniles were imprisoned were especially iniquitous when used for girls and that the system needed for girls was a 'wise and kind' one. Thus the voluntary sector, prominent in early developments in juvenile justice, played a distinctive role in regulating girls' behaviour in ways which reflected contemporary social, political and cultural norms and expectations (Cox, 2003). The reasons for girls' admission to residential care, continuing until well into the second half of the twentieth century, were predominantly to do with 'status offending': being beyond parental control, in

'moral danger', at risk of abuse, absconding, and so on. In residential homes, borstals and approved schools more generally, girls were thought in many cases to need medical treatment and emotional security which would divert their attention from sexual activities. Girls were thought to appreciate the value of a homely atmosphere (Cox, 2003; Gelsthorpe, 1989; 2005).

Later in the twentieth century, while the Criminal Justice Act of 1982 led to the revitalisation of detention centres for boys with the introduction of a 'short, sharp shock' type of regime, for example, the one such centre for girls was closed. Indeed in the White Paper, *Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public* (Home Office, 1990), which preceded the Criminal Justice Act 1991, the Conservative government suggested that the number of girls under the age of 18 years sentenced to custody by the courts was so small that the abolition of detention in a young offender institution for this group might be feasible. Apart from the very few who had committed especially serious offences and who could be dealt with by means of section 53 detention (sections 90–91 of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000), it was thought that the 150 or so girls sent to custody each year (compared with over 7,000 boys) could be dealt with quite adequately by the 'good, demanding and constructive community programmes for juvenile offenders who need intensive supervision' (Home Office, 1990: 45).

Prevailing beliefs as to what constituted suitable responses to delinquent girls throughout the twentieth century were determined largely by contemporary explanations of girls' offending, which are discussed later in this chapter. Walker (1962), for instance, clearly saw girls as 'less criminally inclined' than boys, as 'vulnerable' and 'at risk' of contamination from the more hardened delinquent boys in residential care. Such themes are echoed in other writings on girls' admission to the youth justice system and approved schools. Houghugh (1978: 57), studying disturbed juvenile delinquents in the 1970s, claimed that girls were 'more emotionally and socially immature' and 'stubborn and emotionally unstable'. Both Ackland's (1982) study of girls in care and Petrie's (1986) research on girls in residential care similarly describe the importance of the 'social care' model for girls, with an emphasis on addressing their assumed inadequate socialisation, rather than straightforward misbehaviour.

Thus youth justice system responses to girls and young women have been significantly influenced by broad socio-political and religious expectations of 'appropriate' female behaviour. Teachers, social workers, probation officers and voluntary sector workers have influenced decisions within the system by raising concerns about girls' sexuality and independence – their 'passionate and wilful' behaviour (Alder, 1998). Feminist research on girls has revealed that the role of girls' own families has been particularly important in policing girls' behaviour and sexuality (Cain, 1989). Double-standards have continually been applied with regard to girls' and boys' sexual behaviour – with girls being subject to scrutiny and social regulation in a way that boys have not been. Girls have perhaps also sometimes been viewed as uncontrollable, and worse than

boys simply because of unreasonably high expectations of their behaviour. At the same time they have been considered more psychiatrically disturbed than boys, which may well reflect the normal discourses of pathology in which women's behaviour is defined (Worrall, 1990).

It is perhaps precisely because of confused and conflicting perceptions of their behaviour that girls have tended to experience both the advantages and disadvantages of 'welfarism' to a greater extent than boys – on the grounds that they are 'at risk', in 'moral danger' and 'in need of protection'. The advantages have included diversion from the formal juvenile justice system, whilst the disadvantages have included sentence up-tariffing (Harris and Webb, 1987), in particular where girls' offending is contrary to conventional gender-role stereotypes, for example, violent offending, a trend which is particularly apparent today, as we discuss in more detail later in this chapter. Recent critiques of juvenile justice, including feminist critiques, have resulted in moves towards a more 'equitable justice' between girls and boys, but as a result of this we have witnessed a greater tendency to categorise girls' behaviour as *criminal* rather than merely *problematic*, and the resultant net-widening effect has meant that more girls and young women than hitherto are being brought within the remit of the criminal justice system (Worrall, 2001). Compulsory early intervention measures introduced by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and the concomitant demise of repeat cautioning and the conditional discharge, have contributed to the widening of the youth justice net (Goldson, 2000). Furthermore, voluntary 'prevention programmes' for girls 'at risk' of offending, such as Youth Inclusion and Support Panels and Youth Inclusion Programmes, may influence police or sentencing decisions should a girl subsequently be arrested. Perhaps of most concern, in view of current moral panics surrounding young women's consumption of alcohol and alleged increases in their rowdy and unfeminine behaviour, is the narrowing conception of what is considered to be socially acceptable youthful behaviour, with Anti-social Behaviour Orders being increasingly used as a tool to control and criminalise young people's lifestyles, language and even their dress.

Patterns of offending by girls and system responses

Historically, girls and women offend less than boys and men, and those females who do offend tend to start later, desist sooner, and commit less serious offences than their male counterparts. Eighty per cent of female offenders, compared with 55 per cent of males, have criminal 'careers' lasting less than a year (Home Office, 2003). Official statistics for England and Wales indicate that the peak age of recorded offending is 15 for females and 18 for males (Home Office, 2004). Female juvenile offending is largely restricted to relatively minor offences, with the gender gap amongst 10–17-year-olds being smallest for theft and handling stolen goods, and assault (Home Office, 2004).

Any attempts to analyse trends in either female youth offending or in the treatment of girls and young women by the criminal justice system are

hampered by significant difficulties interpreting the available 'evidence'. Variations within offence categories can distort the overall picture of female offending, for example 'violence against the person' can denote anything from murder to a playground fight, and small baseline numbers can mean that even small fluctuations may appear dramatic in percentage terms. Whilst recent data made available by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales indicate larger increases in recorded female juvenile offences (Youth Justice Board, 2004), there is no necessary corresponding increase in the number of *individual* delinquent girls. Moreover, the reliability of these different data is sometimes questionable. Yet, despite discrepancies in the data sources, the available evidence unanimously indicates a modest increase in female youth offending in recent decades.

This modest increase nevertheless appears to have generated substantial and disproportionate panic (Burman, 2004). Girls are becoming more violent and joining more gangs, we are told, as well as engaging in illegal drug-taking alongside boys. Home Office criminal statistics lend some support to some of these claims. During the 1990s, recorded juvenile crime increased at a faster rate among girls than boys, with notable increases in drug-related and violent crime (Home Office, 2003). The number of arrests of girls for violent offences more than doubled, and is thought to have increased by 250 per cent in the last quarter of the century (Rutter et al., 1998). However, it remains the case that males aged 15–17 are more than twice as likely as their female counterparts to be warned or convicted for theft or handling, and around four times as likely to be warned or convicted for violent offences (Home Office, 2004).

Whilst the 'official' picture of crime may be subject to the ways in which public fears and fantasies affect reporting rates, as well as the exigencies of organisational practice in the light of media influences, and changes in legislation and recording practices, findings from self-report studies may give a more accurate indication of the volume of youth crime committed. Nationally representative self-report surveys conducted in England and Wales by the Home Office have indicated that over half of males and almost one-third of females (aged 14–25) admitted committing at least one offence at some point in their lives, including one in four males and one in eight females during the previous year. Whilst property and violent offending were significantly more prevalent amongst males, the four most common offences were the same for both sexes: buying and selling stolen goods, fighting, shoplifting, and vandalism, and the majority of respondents had committed no more than one or two minor offences in their lives (Flood-Page et al., 2000; Graham and Bowling, 1995). Self-reports also suggest that at ages 12 and 13 there is little difference between males and females in either offending or in drug use or regular drinking (Flood-Page et al., 2000). After age 14, however, the gender difference becomes more marked. Taking all offences together, the male:female ratio increases from just above 1.4:1 at age 14–17 years, to 4:1 at 18–21 years, and 11:1 at 22–25 years (Graham and Bowling, 1995). In sum, girls continue to commit fewer, and on the whole less serious, offences than boys, and to present a lower level of risk of re-offending

(Home Office, 2003). It is notable also that crime is overwhelmingly a youth-related phenomenon for both boys and girls (Jamieson et al., 1999), and perhaps particularly so for girls and young women who, as the available evidence shows, grow – or mature – out of crime rather sooner than their male counterparts.

One key question, of course, is how far changing perceptions of behaviour, actual changes in behaviour and changes in society respectively have led to changes in the nature of criminal justice system responses to girls. Home Office data indicate that females of all ages are more likely than males to receive a caution or a Final Warning for indictable and summary offences (largely understandable on the basis of the seriousness of offences committed). Between 1994 and 2002, however, the proportion of offenders cautioned for indictable offences, as a proportion of all those cautioned or found guilty in court, fell. This was the case for males and females and for all age groups. The overall number of persons aged 10–17 found guilty in court rose between 1994 and 2002, from 33,800 to 42,400 for males and from 4,200 to 6,700 for females, representing rises of 25.4 per cent and 59.5 per cent for male and female young offenders respectively. However, recorded female crime amongst this age group *fell* over the period by 30.9 per cent (compared with a 25.1 per cent drop in boys' crime). Thus, there is a curious paradox here. Whilst the rate of diversion has fallen and the rate at which young offenders are found guilty in court has increased (and for girls more so than for boys), actual crime rates, at least as presented in the official statistics, appear to have fallen.

There are other complexities too. Criminal statistics are not disaggregated by age, gender and ethnicity combined, making ethnic monitoring for girls almost impossible. Nonetheless, several studies have found evidence of racial discrimination towards girls by the police, the courts and schools. African-Caribbean, and, in particular 'black other' girls, especially those aged 14 and 15, are up to six times more likely to be prosecuted than similarly placed white females (Feilzer and Hood, 2004). The way in which the police and other criminal justice professionals interact with black girls and young women may of course contribute to the way girls respond to them (Chigwada-Bailey, 2004), and perceptions of black girls' behaviour (which they themselves may consider to be simply sticking up for themselves) may affect their consequent likelihood of arrest. These values, and resultant behaviour, may contravene expectations of gender-appropriate (for which read white and middle-class) behaviour and thus influence system responses. Moreover, the available evidence suggests that girls have been disproportionately affected by recent (gender-blind) interventionist criminal justice policies.²

2. This does not seem to stem solely from initiatives introduced by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, however, since the trend of increasing female juvenile prosecutions, restrictions of police cautioning, and proportionately greater increases for girls than for boys in the use of supervision orders had already begun in the early 1990s (Home Office, 2003).

Explanations of girls' offending

Criminological theorising about female pathways into crime has been abundant, though often misconceived. Common explanations for girls' criminal behaviour have been well rehearsed and challenged elsewhere (Gelsthorpe, 1989; 2004). The trajectory of theories relating to girls and young women has been unusually conservative compared with those relating to males, however (Scraton, 1990; Smart, 1976), reflecting ideologically informed versions of biological determinism, cultural conceptions of psychological functioning, and social-structural expectations of behaviour.

Several studies of girls and young women in institutions in the 1960s and 1970s, for example, addressed the relationship between psychology and delinquency, pointing – with a common lack of critical reflection on the effects of institutionalisation – to high levels of emotional instability, poor self-image, and psychological disturbance in girls (Cowie et al., 1968; Hoghugh, 1978; Richardson, 1969). Others have attributed delinquency amongst girls to a kind of psychological 'acting out' because of family dysfunction (Blos, 1969), to sexual dysfunction (either being undersexualised or oversexualised) or to obstacles in positive affective relationships (Morris, 1964). Hoffman-Bustamante (1973), in particular, outlined a link between sex roles and girls' lesser participation in criminal activity, suggesting that girls are induced to be more passive and domesticated than boys, who are encouraged instead to be more ambitious, aggressive and extrovert.

There is a common thread in such theories relating to public/private space and social control, and it is perhaps in the direction of control theories that we find particularly useful insights regarding males' and females' differential involvement in crime. Hirschi's (1969) theoretical framework, revolving around attachment, commitment, involvement and belief, has prompted a number of ideas which reflect the differential socialisation of males and females. Focusing on 'deprived families' in Birmingham, Wilson (1980) noted that what differentiated delinquent and non-delinquent children was what she described as the exercise of 'chaperonage', and it is perhaps here that we can discern key differences affecting girls and boys. Hagan and colleagues (1985) came to the conclusion that delinquency was greater amongst males than females because females were more frequently subject to intense and diffuse family control in the private, domestic sphere.

There is empirical support for social control theory from contemporary self-report studies. Graham and Bowling (1995) report that girls were much more closely supervised than boys at the age of 14 to 15, however, gender itself remained an important variable in relation to involvement in crime after controlling for the influences of family, school and other relevant factors. As Graham and Bowling put it: 'among those males and females who are equally closely supervised at home and at school, who are equally attached to their school and their family and who have no delinquent peers, offending remains about twice as

common among males as females' (1995: 48). More recent explanations have focused on the broad features of women's and girls' lifestyles and social-structural positions, including women's vulnerabilities in relation to poverty, the stresses and strains that go along with childcare responsibilities, domestic violence and high levels of childhood victimisation (see Gelsthorpe, 2004 for an overview). Widom (1995), for instance, has argued that early exposure to crime as a bystander or victim in families or neighbourhoods can increase one's probability of becoming an offender. But generally the connections between adverse experiences (including histories of victimisation), lifestyle factors, young women's agency and pathways into crime remain under-theorised.

We can gain some important insights from work on desistance. Sampson and Laub's (1993) life-course approach focuses on the structural elements such as relationships, work, and changing location, which may be 'turning points' in a criminal career that can result in desistance. Structural issues are also emphasised in alternative theories such as differential association and social learning (Warr, 2002), strain (Agnew, 1997) and social bonding (Shover, 1996). The more human element of agency is emphasised in approaches focusing on identity change (Maruna, 2001), cognitive scripts, resilience and self-efficacy (Rumgay, 2004), the use of narratives (Bottoms et al., 2004; Maruna, 2001) and cognitive transformations (Giordano et al., 2002). One problem here, of course, is that many of these studies have focused exclusively on males and we do not know what the interplay of factors might be for females.

McIvor et al. (2004) ask whether or not desistance is different for girls, following signs from the various self-report studies that girls desist from crime sooner than boys. Jamieson et al. (1999) found both that a variety of social and cognitive factors may influence decisions to desist and that these factors may differ in their salience between males and females. In this Scottish study, young men tended to couch their explanations of desistance in broadly utilitarian terms, whereas young women more often alluded to the moral dimension of crime. Young women also often felt a profound sense of guilt or shame – in other words, a 'relational' dimension (see Gilligan, 1982). Practical considerations, such as looking after an infant, also had an influence. Thus both the structural and the social are in evidence. As previously indicated, most theories regarding girls' pathways into crime have revolved around the sexual/psychological and the pathological, rather than the structural and social. It remains a serious omission that, in spite of all that we know about the short length of girls' criminal careers, their early desistance and the youthful phenomenon of both male and female crime, explanatory accounts of female youth offending continue to focus on gender-based explanations of their behaviour, whilst boys' behaviour is more commonly conceived in terms of age, or youthful immaturity.

Recent theorising has introduced a new level of analysis, but it is arguable that broad changes in society and the role of women, girls and class are still not sufficiently accounted for. We can at least suggest, if not empirically prove, that reasons for the (small) increase in girls' offending, as well as reactions to it,

might include broad structural changes in society.³ There have been changes in family structures, relationships, attachments and social ties, including a loosening of social regulation via the family. Indeed evidence of a substantial increase in conduct problems amongst British adolescents during the past 25 years (Collishaw et al., 2004) may be explained largely by other significant social changes, including rampant materialism, the development of a global drugs market, and a more prolonged transition into adulthood and financial independence. Consequently, these social and cultural changes may help explain both changes in girls' behaviour – including their violent behaviour – and social reactions to it. The culture of risk (Hudson, 2003) is conceivably one that includes a heightened awareness and fear of crime – particularly crimes committed by those from whom society would not, in terms of gendered socio-cultural expectations, expect.

Violence, moral panic and criminalisation

As previously intimated, stories about girl gangs roaming the streets and randomly attacking innocent victims have been a recurring feature of newspaper headlines and magazines in recent years (see, for example, Kirsta, 2000; Thompson, 2001). Whilst there is *some* support for such claims, the stories are seemingly a distortion of the facts, in the light of our earlier discussion of offending patterns.

A recent self-report survey found that assaults committed by females are more likely to involve a victim they know well, and, somewhat surprisingly perhaps, the victim is more often male than female (Budd et al., 2005). Little is known about the actual nature and seriousness of girls' violent offending. It may be that assault by a girl is more likely to be in anger or self-defence, or against a police officer when arrested (due to physicality of the arrest act where there is a history of abuse, perhaps), or parents, relatives, or members of the public are more likely to bring violent acts committed by girls to the attention of the authorities. Rather than signalling the onset of moral decline amongst our youth, the figures denoting an increase in female juvenile violence seem instead to reflect an increase, in all jurisdictions, in young women charged for non-serious, non-sexual assault. However, it remains unclear whether such changes can be attributed to actual crime rates or to changing responses to girls' behaviour (Alder and Worrall, 2004; Batchelor and Burman, 2004).

Studies focusing on the meaning and context of violence in girls' lives have shown how violence is perceived by many girls and young women as 'normal' and routine, although it is rare for girls to use physical violence on a regular basis

3. We would also have to look at demographic changes, but our intention here is to sketch out the social context for offending.

(Phillips, 2003). Girls' aggression and fighting have consistently been found to centre on matters of sexuality (Lees, 1993), physical appearance (Batchelor et al., 2001), and the search for male attention (Artz, 2003). Fighting can result from the sexual policing of girls by other girls, as a means of defending one's sexual reputation or 'saving face' (Phillips, 2003). Violence between girls tends to arise in the context of close 'friendships' and interpersonal relationships, and 'falling out' can have seriously damaging consequences for girls' self-esteem (Batchelor et al., 2001). In terms of the manifestation of aggression and violence by girls, 'relational aggression' – verbal or non-verbal aggression which takes the form of name-calling or 'bitchiness', or the threat of withdrawal of relationship to control the behaviour of others – may be more characteristic of girls than boys (Crick and Grotpeter, 1995). This may partly explain the continuing belief amongst practitioners that girls are 'more difficult to work with' (Chesney-Lind and Belknap, 2004).

Despite many gender similarities, studies have identified key differences in violent school girls' and school boys' relationships with their mothers, fear and experience of physical and sexual abuse, social and interpersonal values and self-concept (in particular in relation to food consumption). Violent girls report significantly higher rates of both fear and experience of sexual assault, coercive sex with boyfriends, and physical assault in the home, than both non-violent girls and violent boys (Silverthorn and Frick, 1999). To represent violent girls simply as victims of circumstance over-simplifies the complexities of female violence, however. This 'rendering them harmless' (Allen, 1998) denies women and girls agency, and risks prioritising individual pathological explanations for violence (Phillips, 2003).

In the context of late modernity, Campbell's (1981) claim is significant that the loosening of social control on girls, who are spending more time out of the home and on the streets, increases the possibility of their becoming involved in delinquent subcultures, especially in urban, working-class areas. A more recent study of boys' and girls' experiences of violence in inner-city estates suggests that, contrary to assumptions that the street is a masculine space, girls – as well as boys – *do* indeed make use of outdoor spaces, often to relieve the pressures generated within over-crowded living spaces, and so they develop knowledge of, and are involved in, 'everyday violence and disorder' in a routinised way (Pearce, 2004: 143). These contextualised and nuanced understandings of violence thus challenge the popular notion that girls are getting 'worse' because they are more violent now than hitherto. Current perceptions of girls' apparent violent behaviour can perhaps be seen as an indication of prevailing societal concerns about morality: girls' purported violence is seen as a threat to the social order, just as during the last century their sexuality was the primary focus of attention (Chesney-Lind and Belknap, 2004). There is some suggestion that concerns about violent behaviour on the part of girls may have replaced the old concerns about girls' status offences – or perhaps that their previously assumed pathological sexuality has been re-categorised as intentioned violence, often fuelled by the consumption of 'unladylike' quantities of alcohol.

Incarceration and institutionalisation

Concern about the continuing shift from welfare to punishment in controlling girls' behaviour is underpinned by reference to the rate at which girls (compared with boys) are sentenced to immediate custody. The 2002 figures for girls aged 10–17 sentenced to custodial orders, for example, represent an increase of 365 per cent over the figures for 1993 (530 girls compared with 114; the increase for boys was 68 per cent). Interestingly, girls are most likely to be serving a custodial sentence for violence against the person, the nature and context of which are unknown. In many cases, as discussed earlier, such violence may involve either fights between peers, or assaults against authority figures, and there seems to be an increasing tendency amongst residential care staff to have recourse to the courts when young people 'lash out', arguably due to stress in the face of discontinuities in their care. Boys of the same age are more likely to be in custody for robbery and burglary (Home Office, 2004).

But beyond concerns about girls (and indeed boys) in custody we need to look at local authority care. Whilst long used as a repository for girls, the proportion of girls admitted to secure accommodation on 'welfare' grounds is increasing: girls made up 24 per cent of the secure children's home population in 2001, rising to 33 per cent in 2004. Most of the children placed in secure accommodation by social services departments on 'welfare' grounds are girls, especially those who have run away from home or institutional care repeatedly (which may be a survival strategy to escape abuse of course) (Goldson, 2002). The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales has aimed to expand provision for girls in this sphere precisely so as to avoid the use of prisons. In practice, however, mixed gender secure units and the mix of 'criminal' and 'welfare' cases make it almost impossible to meet individuals' needs, such that in practice it seems that all children in trouble in secure accommodation are being criminalised rather than treated as children in need of care (Goldson, 2002; O'Neill, 2001). Few would question the sound motives for the avoidance of prisons, but we ought also to question the use of local authority secure accommodation for them, and instead turn our minds (again) to effective diversion and community responses.

Concluding reflections

The changes we have described in this chapter appear to have fuelled the abandonment of traditional welfare-oriented approaches to girls' delinquency and their replacement by an increasing desire to criminalise, punish and lock up what Anne Worrall (2000) captures in her phrase the 'nasty little madams'. Indeed, efforts to control girls and young women's behaviour via a range of formal and informal routes that have stressed their special psychological and other needs, have come under close critical scrutiny, and have given way to more punitive responses. As Worrall puts it:

In the actuarial language that now dominates criminal justice, a group which hitherto has been assessed as too small and too low-risk to warrant attention is now being re-assessed and re-categorised. No longer 'at risk' and in 'moral danger' from the damaging behaviour of men, increasing numbers of young women are being assigned to the same categories as young men ('violent girls', 'drug-abusing girls', 'girl robbers', 'girl murderers' – 'girl rapists' even) and are being subjected to the same forms of management as young men. (2001: 86)

The moral panic generated by the small increase in girls' crime thus contributes to increasing criminalisation of, and punitiveness towards, them. These changes are of no little symbolic significance. It has long been argued that 'youth' is a social category which has the power to carry a deeper message about the state of society. The collective agonising about girls' violence thus perhaps symbolises regrets about the changing social order in late modernity.

References

- Ackland, J. (1982) *Girls in Care: A Case Study of Residential Treatment*. Aldershot: Gower.
- Agnew, R. (1997) 'Stability and Change in Crime Over the Life Course: a Strain Theory Explanation', in T. Thornberry (ed.) *Developmental Theories of Crime and Delinquency. Advances in Criminological Theory, Vol. 7*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books. pp. 101–32.
- Alder, C. (1998) "'Passionate and Wilful" Girls: Confronting Practices', *Women and Criminal Justice*, 9(4): 81–101.
- Alder, C. and Worrall, A. (2004) 'A Contemporary Crisis?', in C. Alder and A. Worrall, (eds) *Girls' Violence. Myths and Realities*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Allen, H. (1998), 'Rendering Them Harmless: the Professional Portrayal of Women Charged with Serious Violent Crimes', in K. Daly and L. Maher (eds) *Criminology at the Crossroads: Feminist Readings in Crime and Justice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Artz, S. (2003) 'To Die For: Violent Adolescent Girls' Search for Male Attention', in D. J. Pepler, K. C. Madsen, C. Webster and K. S. Levene (eds) *The Development and Treatment of Girlhood Aggression*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Batchelor, S. and Burman, M. (2004) 'Working with Girls and Young Women', in G. McIvor (ed.) *Women Who Offend*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Batchelor, S., Burman, M. and Brown, J. (2001) 'Discussing Violence: Let's Hear It From The Girls', *Probation Journal*, 48(2): 125–34.
- Blos, P. (1969) 'Preoedipal Factors in the Aetiology of Female Delinquency', *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Child*, 12: 229–49.
- Bottoms, A., Shapland, J., Costello, A., Holmes, D. and Muir, G. (2004) 'Towards Desistance: Theoretical Underpinnings for an Empirical Study', *Howard Journal*, 43(4): 368–89.
- Budd, T., Sharp, C. and Mayhew, P. (2005) *Offending in England and Wales: First Results from the 2003 Crime and Justice Survey*. Home Office Research Study 275. London: Home Office.
- Burman, M. (2004) 'Breaking the Mould. Patterns of Female Offending', in G. McIvor (ed.) *Women Who Offend*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

- Cain, M. (ed.) (1989) *Growing Up Good: Policing the Behaviour of Girls in Europe*. London: Sage.
- Campbell, A. (1981) *Girl Delinquents*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Carpenter, M. (1853) *Juvenile Delinquents: Social Evils, Their Causes and Their Cure*. London: Cash.
- Chesney-Lind, M. and Belknap, J. (2004) 'Trends in Delinquent Girls' Aggression and Violent Behavior. A Review of the Evidence', in M. Putallaz and K.L. Bierman (eds) *Aggression, Antisocial Behavior, and Violence among Girls: A Developmental Perspective*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Chigwada-Bailey, R. (2004) 'Black Women and the Criminal Justice System', in G. Mclvor (ed.) *Women Who Offend*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Collishaw, S., Maughan, B., Goodman, R. and Pickles, A. (2004) 'Time Trends in Adolescent Mental Health', *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 45(8): 1350–62.
- Cowie, J., Cowie, V. and Slater, E. (1968) *Delinquency in Girls*. London: Heinemann.
- Cox, P. (2003) *Gender, Justice and Welfare: Bad Girls in Britain, 1900–1950*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Crick, N.R. and Grotpeter, J.K. (1995) 'Relational Aggression, Gender, and Socio-Psychological Adjustment', *Child Development*, 66: 710–22.
- Feilzer, M. and Hood, R. (2004) *Differences or Discrimination? Minority Ethnic Young People in the Youth Justice System*. London: Youth Justice Board.
- Flood-Page, C., Campbell, S., Harrington, V. and Miller, J. (2000) *Youth Crime: Findings from the 1998/99 Youth Lifestyles Survey*. Home Office Research Study 209. London: HMSO.
- Frith, S. (1983) *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure and the Politics of Rock*. London: Constable.
- Gelsthorpe, L. (1989) *Sexism and the Female Offender*. Cambridge Studies in Criminology. Aldershot: Gower.
- Gelsthorpe, L. (2004) 'Female Offending: A Theoretical Overview', in G. Mclvor (ed.) *Women Who Offend*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Gelsthorpe, L. (2005) 'Girls in the Youth Justice System', in T. Bateman and J. Pitts (eds) *The RHP Companion to Youth Justice*. Dorset: Russell House Publishing.
- Gilligan, C. (1982) *In a Different Voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Giordano, P., Cernovich, S. and Rudolph, J. (2002) 'Gender, Crime, and Desistance: Toward a Theory of Cognitive Transformation', *American Journal of Sociology*, 107(4): 990–1064.
- Goldson, B. (2000) 'Wither Diversion: Interventionism and the New Youth Justice', in B. Goldson (ed.) *The New Youth Justice*. Dorset: Russell House Publishing.
- Goldson, B. (2002) *Vulnerable Inside: Children in Secure and Penal Settings*, London, The Children's Society.
- Graham, J. and Bowling, B. (1995) *Young People and Crime*. Home Office Research Study 145. London: HMSO.
- Hagan, J., Simpson, J. and Gillis, A. (1985) 'The Class Structure of Gender and Delinquency: Toward a Power–Control Theory of Common Delinquent Behavior', *American Journal of Sociology*, 90: 1151–78.
- Harris, R. and Webb, D. (1987) *Welfare, Power and Juvenile Justice*. London: Tavistock.
- Hirschi, T. (1969) *Causes of Delinquency*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hoffman-Bustamante, D. (1973) 'The Nature of Female Criminality', *Issues in Criminology*, 8: 17–36.
- Hoghugh, M. (1978) *Troubled and Troublesome: Coping with Severely Disordered Children*. London: Burnett.

- Home Office (1990) *Crime, Justice and Protecting the Public: The Government's Proposals for Legislation*. London: Home Office.
- Home Office (2003) *Statistics on Women and the Criminal Justice System: A Home Office Publication under Section 95 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991*. London: Home Office.
- Home Office (2004) *Criminal Statistics. England and Wales 2003*. London: Home Office.
- Hudson, B. (2003) *Justice in the Risk Society: Challenging and Re-affirming Justice in Late Modernity*. London: Sage.
- Jamieson, J., Mclvor, G. and Murray, C. (1999) *Understanding Offending Among Young People*. Edinburgh: The Stationery Office.
- Kirsta, A. (2000) 'In the Next Ten Seconds the Woman Walking Past is Going to Either ... A. Catch a Bus, B. Meet a Friend, C. Violently Attack You and Steal Your Credit Cards', *Nova*, July.
- Lees, S. (1993) *Sugar and Spice: Sexuality and Adolescent Girls*. London: Penguin.
- Maruna, S. (2001) *Making Good: How Ex-convicts Reform and Rebuild their Lives*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Mclvor, G., Murray, C. and Jamieson, J. (2004) 'Desistance from Crime: is it Different for Women and Girls?', in S. Maruna and R. Immarigeon (eds) *After Crime and Punishment: Pathways to Offender Reintegration*. Cullompton: Willan.
- Morris, R. (1964) 'Female Delinquency and Relational Problems', *Social Forces*, 43(1): 82–89.
- O'Neill, T. (2001) *Children in Secure Accommodation: A Gendered Exploration of Locked Institutional Care for Children in Trouble*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Pearce, J. (2004), 'Coming Out to Play? Young Women and Violence on the Street', in C. Alder, and A. Worrall (eds) *Girls' Violence. Myths and Realities*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Petrie, C. (1986) *The Nowhere Girls*. Aldershot: Gower.
- Phillips, C. (2003), 'Who's Who in the Pecking Order? Aggression and "Normal Violence" in the Lives of Girls and Boys', *British Journal of Criminology*, 43: 710–28.
- Richardson, H. (1969) *Adolescent Girls in Approved Schools*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Rumgay, J. (2004) 'Living with Paradox: Community Supervision of Women Offenders', in G. Mclvor (ed.) *Women Who Offend*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Rutter, M., Giller, H. and Hagell, A. (1998) *Antisocial Behaviour by Young People*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sampson, R. and Laub, J. (1993) *Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Scruton, P. (1990) 'Scientific Knowledge or Masculine Discourses? Challenging Patriarchy in Criminology', in L. Gelsthorpe and A. Morris (eds) *Feminist Perspectives in Criminology*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Shover, N. (1996) *Great Pretenders: Pursuits and Careers of Persistent Thieves*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Silverthorn, P. and Frick, P. (1999) 'Developmental Pathways to Antisocial Behavior: The Delayed-Onset Pathway in Girls', *Development and Psychopathology*, 11: 101–26.
- Smart, C. (1976) *Women, Crime and Criminology: A Feminist Critique*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Thompson, T. (2001) 'Girls Lead the Pack in New Gangland Violence', *The Observer*, 15 April.
- Walker, A. (1962) 'Special Problems of Delinquents and Maladjusted Girls', *Howard Journal of Penology and Crime Prevention*, 11: 26–36.

- Warr, M. (2002) *Companions in Crime: The Social Aspects of Criminal Conduct*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Widom, C. Spatz (1995) 'Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse: Later Criminal Consequences'. Research in Brief. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, US Department of Justice.
- Wilson, H. (1980) 'Parental Supervision: a Neglected Aspect of Delinquency', *British Journal of Criminology*, 20: 203–35.
- Worrall, A. (1990) *Offending Women: Female Lawbreakers and the Criminal Justice System*. London: Routledge.
- Worrall, A. (2000) 'Governing Bad Girls: Changing Constructions of Female Juvenile Delinquency', in J. Bridgeman and D. Monk (eds) *Feminist Perspectives on Child Law*. London: Cavendish Publishing.
- Worrall, A. (2001) 'Girls at Risk? Reflections on Changing Attitudes to Young Women's Offending', *Probation Journal*, 48(2): 86–92.
- Youth Justice Board (2004) *Youth Justice Annual Statistics 2003/04*. London: Youth Justice Board.

