

Women's Pathways to Crime:
A taxonomy of common pathways among habitual women offenders

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Concerns over Gender and Classification methods in crime / corrections agencies

- 1. Standard research focuses on global male/female differences - oversimplifies women**
 - Mostly examines single variable differences; patterns mostly ignored
 - Develops global profile of "average" female offender;
 - How realistic or informative ?
- 2. Heterogeneity among women offenders rarely studied**
 - Do different women offenders follow different pathways to crime and incarceration?
 - What key differences or fault-lines separate different pathways?
 - How prevalent? How common?
- 3. THE ETHICAL CONCERN: The inertia of correctional institutional classifications;**
 - Most jails, prisons, parole, probation STILL rely on gender neutral classification and need assessments developed FOR MALES
 - Challenges emerged over a decade ago..... to risk/needs assessment regarding predictive validity, relevance, etc

Current issues regarding women's pathways and crime

- 1. Do specifically "gendered pathways" of women offenders exist?**
 - How many separate "pathways" exist?
 - Can they be reliably identified? (Using Quantitative methods)
 - What are their constituent elements (Events, dispositions, turning points; Social and cultural factors; etc)
- 2. What gender-specific risk need factors are critical for women?**
 - Are they predictively valid?
 - Are they more powerful predictors than gender neutral factors
- 3. Do standard gender-neutral theories apply to women?**
 - Do they explain women's pathways to crime?
 - Do standard theories need to be changed, revised or rejected?
- 4. What are treatment implications of pathways?**

INTER-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO WOMEN'S PATHWAYS

1. **Qualitative Research: Kathleen Daly's Feminist Pathways; Case studies of Owen, Bloom, Chesney-Lind, Richie, Belknap and others**
 - Insightful and compelling qualitative pathways
 - Mostly small sample qualitative studies: Holistic, person-centered
 - Most have still NOT been quantitatively identified, validated
2. **Developmental psychopathology - from infancy, adolescence, to adulthood**
 - Terrie Moffitt's Developmental Taxonomy (2 pathways)
3. **Criminal Career Research: Highly Quantitative Research**
 - Latent path analysis on criminal offense data
 - Several studies of women's criminal career pathways
4. **Taxonomic research on Women's Pathways - Mostly Cluster Analysis (10 to 15 studies 1960's - present)**
 - Diverse classification methods using social, psychological, biographical data
 - Several taxonomic studies on women offender bio-profiles
5. **Life Course Developmental studies (Bergman, Cairns, Sampson and Laub, Farrington, and others)**
 - Large N Longitudinal Cohort studies
 - Emphasis on males and Gender-Neutral theory and measures
 - Women's gender-responsive factors mostly omitted

Problems and Opportunities in a multi-disciplinary topic

1. **New conceptual approaches**
 - Moffitt's Developmental pathways
 - Life Course Criminology - Mental Illness "Course"
 - Sociological studies of "career pathways"
2. **New methods**
 - Sequence Analysis:
 - Event History and Survival analysis, Latent path models, Markov chains, State-Transition studies, etc
 - Cyclical processes - disease course studies / O-factoring
 - "Process Tracing" in case studies; N = 1 case studies
 - Data Collection:
 - Life Course Questionnaires, Experience sampling diaries, etc
3. **Problems - What IS a pathway? Different concepts**
 - Are we talking about the same concept?
 - Different disciplines use different methods, theories, conceptual definitions, measures
 - What are the key conceptual features of pathways?

What are pathways? Some conceptual features

1. **Holistic integrity: Person centered analysis is needed**
 - Person centered approach - "life unity" or "whole life" approaches - context is key, person-environment interactions must be retained
2. **Non-global - Need disaggregation into different pathways**
 - Diff. women follow different pathways - disaggregation is needed - "average" is misleading
3. **Theoretical focus - Developmental pathways in different life arenas**
 - Different disciplines examine kinds of pathways and emphasize different factors e.g.
 - Moffitt's - Biosocial focus - Social & genetic factors
 - Criminological pathways - Social, Psychological, cultural, elements
4. **Central narratives: Internal homogeneity: Well Trodden Pathways**
 - Exemplar profiles - a "typified" pathway "defines" a common pathway -
 - What elements, events, dispositions, are common on the pathway?
5. **Internal heterogeneity: People don't walk in "lockstep"**
 - "Lock step" does not occur - some heterogeneity is always present
6. **Temporal sequences & time units: Macro vs Micro studies**
 - Macro/Micro time structures - broad life stages v. short term changes and event sequences - cyclical events, life turning points etc.
 - Diverse designs from Large N Longitudinal cohorts...to N = 1 "within person" studies.

**Qualitative Research on Female Pathways -
Rich profiles, Replication is still needed**

1. CHALLENGES

- Small samples - How representative?
- Difficulty of Generalizing from case studies
- No knowledge of prevalence
- Danger of researcher bias (favored interpretations)
- Replication studies are needed - using larger samples

2. BENEFITS

- Compelling Case Narratives - Complex sequences
- Rich in causal & sequential detail
- Identifies many KEY factors for women
- New Theories/explanations "implicit" within each pathway narrative

WE DECIDED TO TEST PATHWAYS ON A LARGE FEMALE PRISON SAMPLE

**Consensus Gender Neutral Factors -
Predictors of Recidivism**

1. Criminal History (Early onset, Seriousness, Versatility, Overall amount)
2. Criminal Peers
3. Criminal Opportunity / High Risk Lifestyle
4. Anti-Social Personality
5. Criminal Thinking—e.g., Anti-Social Cognitions
6. Drug Abuse / Promiscuity—e.g., Early Onset
7. Work/Educational Failure—e.g., Low Social Capital
8. Family Risk Factors—e.g., Parenting Failure
9. Environmental Factors—e.g., Community, Stress

**4G instruments include most of these factors

Daly's Feminist Pathways

1. **Street-Women: Escape and survival**
 - Escape abuse, sexual victimization, runaways
 - Coping strategies may include drug dealing, prostitution, etc
 - May become stuck in this lifestyle, Massive loss of human/social capital
2. **Drug-connected women offenders**
 - Collaborate with domineering SO, close associates, family
 - Coopted into selling drugs, other crimes
3. **Harmed and Harming women**
 - Extreme child abuse/neglect - lifelong abuse
 - Multiple lifelong problems (school failure, delinquency, MH, hostile personality, aggressive.....etc)
4. **Battered Women - Violent abuse SO's**
 - Crimes quite unlikely except for violent Significant Other
 - Similar to "1", escapes and then commits minor crimes for survival
5. **Economic offenders - two categories**
 - Poor marginalized women (dealing with poverty), No MH probs
 - Women motivated by greed/social aspirations

Terrie Moffitt's Developmental Pathways

- 1. Adolescent Limited (AL) - Large numbers**
 - Normal upbringing, healthy children, OK School - Family Life OK
 - Adolescent affiliation with anti-social peers
 - Social learning, Mimics peers
 - Mostly Normative delinquency, Drugs, Sex
 - Desists from Delinquency by late teens (18)
- 2. Life Course Persistent (LCP) - Very few (< 2%)**
 - Extreme childhood problems, fearlessness, ADHD,
 - Parents driven to distraction, Ineffective parenting, Frustration
 - Problems at school, failure, disruptive, violent
 - Serious delinquency continues into adulthood
 - Neuro-Physiological origin, Personality problems, hostile, aggressive, mistrustful

Moffitt et al 2001; and others

Questions about Moffitt's dual developmental pathways and women

1. Do LCP's exist among women? (Moffitt et al 2001)
2. If YES, What are their characteristics? Are they the same as male LCP's
3. Do some AL's have more extended adult criminal careers? (Snares)
4. Are 2 pathways enough? (Piquero and Moffitt 2005 2005; Some studies say no!)

Potential consensus pathways in prior literature

- 1. Social Exclusion/Social Capital (Strain)** - "Triple Jeopardy" (Bloom & others)
 - Human & Social Capital Pathway/Social Exclusion (Salisbury and Van Voorhis - CJB 2009)
 - Daly' Economic Offenders - poor women
- 2. Social Learning/Moffitt's AL**
 - Moffitt's AL - Snares producing "cumulative disadvantage"
 - Sub-cultural offenders/Criminal Peers (Sociopathic?)
- 3. Moffitt's LCP Pathway - Serious and Chronic Offenders**
 - Widom's Primary Psychothic women....and others
 - Daly's Harmed & Harming Pathway
- 4. Victimization and Escape Pathways**
 - Runaways - sexual/physical abuse (Trauma) & Internalizing neurotic path
 - Daly's Battered women path - Adult victims, escape & retaliation
- 5. Relational Pathway - Feminist Theories**
 - Daly's Drug Connected and Relational pathways
 - Attachment and Relational theories
- 6. Normal - Situational Offenders - Low risk/Low Need**

2.2 Sample

1. From 2 California Women's Prisons during 2007-2008
2. 915 random selection from rosters of soon-to-be-released women prisoners
3. 715 had complete data - used in taxonomic analysis
 1. All had prior felonies
 2. Average 8-15 prior arrests
 3. Dominant offences - drug related

2.3 Gender-Responsive factors NIC/Van Voorhis Instrument

1. Trauma, victimization and abuse
 1. Childhood sexual abuse, Childhood physical abuse
 2. Adult sexual abuse, Adult physical abuse
 3. Housing Safety (v. violent/unsafe)
2. History of Mental illness,
 1. Current Depression/Anxiety,
 2. Current psychosis/suicide risk/ideation
3. Relationships:
 1. Support from Significant Other,
 2. Conflict with Significant Other,
 3. Dysfunctional relationship,
 4. Support v. Conflict from Family of Origin
4. Parenting issues
 1. Parenting Involvement
 2. Stress - Anxiety of parenting
5. Personal Factors:
 1. Anger/Hostility, Self Esteem, Self Efficacy,
 2. Employment/Financial (weakness) in Prison, Educ Strengths.

Salisbury and Van Voorhis (2009) "Gendered Pathways: A quantitative investigation" Criminal Justice and Behavior, v 36 (6), 541-566.

2.4 COMPAS Reentry Scales

1. Criminal History:
 1. Age of Onset, Adolescent Delinquency;
 2. Overall Criminal Involvement, Current Offence (s)
 3. Hist. of Non-Compliance, History of Violence,
 4. Prison Misconduct, Substance Abuse, Gang Affiliation.
2. Social/environmental:
 1. Housing Problems (unstable residence), Financial Problems
 2. Vocational/Educ History (adolescent, child), Family Support,
 3. Parental Family Crime,
 4. Social Environment (High crime area).
3. Psychosocial:
 1. Anti-social Attitudes, Anti-social Personality
 2. Antisocial peer relationships
 3. Low Self-Efficacy, Empathy
 4. Social Isolation vs. Social Support
 5. Life Goals/Aimlessness

2.5 Methods for pattern seeking and validation testing

- 1. Pattern Recognition and discovery**
 - Z-score transformation on all classification factors
 - Bootstrapped K-Means (1000 samples) - Several hierarchical levels examined (K = 3 through 10)
 - Cross-sample validation at each K level (McIntyre-Blashfield)
- 2. How many patterns? (3 thru 10 pathways)**
 - Used split sample MB at each K (3 - 10) level (Kappa Coefficient)
 - Examined stability/replication at all K levels of hierarchy (3 thru 10)
- 3. Pattern verification and testing - Internal Validity**
 - 8 level solution had highest Kappa (Contingency Coeff,
 - Internal validation: Ued McIntyre-Blashfield test at each level (3 thru10)
- 4. Structural features of 8 level pathways**
 - Discriminant Function analysis - "fault lines"
 - Graphic plots: Category Boundaries and Outliers
- 5. External validation - ANOVA's External Vars**

For method details see: Brennan T. et al (2008) Towards an explanatory typology of adolescent delinquents. J. of Quantitative Criminology. Vol 24, 2, 179-203

2.6 Results

1. Internal Validation: Reliability tests
2. External Validation: External variables
3. Structure of Pathway Typology - Discriminant Function Analysis
4. Links to prior Women's Pathways

Developing and Testing the pathways
 Bootstrapped Aggregation K-Means across multiple solutions

- How many pathways? 6 and 8 pathways strongly suggested by the analysis
 - Successive cross-verified K-means analyses produced stable solutions at 6 and 8 pathway levels
- **Internal Stability Test:**
 - Kappa Coefficients of 0.85 and 0.75 respectively at 6 and 8 pathways
- **Interpretability Tests**
 - Both levels were substantively meaningful, thus we examined continuity-stability from 6 to 8 levels
- **Cross level stability test**
 - 6 and 8 levels were strongly nested, (Contingency Coeff = .903 p < .000; Cramer's V = .86)
 - High continuity & overlap between 6 and 8 pathway solutions - Therefore we retain and interpret both!

Profiles 1 and 5: Normal Women - Low Risk, Non Violent, Well Functioning (?), Chronic Drugs

Category 1 (15.4%) Category 5 (11.3)

- **Main profile**
 - Lower risk/Lower Need - More Education/vocational resources - Less marginalized than all other female pathways
 - No housing problems - Mostly job ready - Safe Housing
 - Higher self efficacy - No apparent psychological issues
 - No abuse/victimization - Have social supports/OK families and SO
- **Main Problems**
 - Habitual drugs (.54) Mostly drug offences - Some property crime - All non-violent
 - Average 8 arrests - Mostly 1st time in Prison
 - Category 1: are Single parents (but well managed, apparently)

1. Possible Case Formulation / Explanation/Matches

1. Moffitt's AL with "Snares" explanations(Drugs, Single Parents)
2. Drug Addiction proneness (?)
3. Most standard theories (Gender Neutral) may be ruled out
4. Daly's economic pathway (?) - but less marginalized than most female offenders)

2. Treatment Goals - Discuss ? Treatment Plan - Discuss ?

Pathway 2: Older, marginalized, isolated - V.Hi Crim Hist, Socialized offenders - Lo Social Bonds - Addicted

V. Hi Criminal history (Ave. prior Arrests = 15)

- Habitual drugs - Hi. Trafficking - Prop. offences - Mult. Incarcerations
- Hi. History of Non-compliance - Many Prob and Par. Revocations

Social Exclusion/Extremely Marginalized

- Poor and marginalized, few skills, poor work history
- High crime neighborhood - Drug-Subculture - homelessness
- Socially isolated - Not parenting - Not married - Not working

Psychological profile:

- No evidence of MH problems or psychological issues
- No evidence of abuse
- BUT: V.Lo Self-efficacy - Aimless, few life goals

1. Possible Case Formulation / Explanation

1. Daly's Economic path - Strain theory (Economic Marginalization, crime pattern)
2. Lykken's Subcultural Socialized Offenders - Soc. Learning
3. Social Control explanation (Few pro-social bonds, social isolation)
4. Routine Activity theory (Street life, High opportunity, Hi. Trafficking)
5. Addiction Prone

2. Treatment Goals - Discuss ? Treatment Plan - Discuss ?

Pathway 3: Young Stressed Single Mothers - Marginalized - Socialized/Sub-cultural - Not Victimized - Criminal domineering SO - Low self efficacy

Criminal Pattern:

- 12 prior arrests - drugs , trafficking, property, non-violent

Social Exclusion

- Poor, low skills, low Educ - marginalized - Unstable/unsafe housing
- Unsupportive/Conflicted relationship - Children U18 - Hi stress
- No abuse as child or adult
- Hi Crim family - Criminal SO

Psychological profile

- No evidence of MH or Psych. Issues
- Low self efficacy - Extreme stress (parenting, SO, poverty)

1. Possible Case Formulation / Explanation

1. Social Learning/ Socialized Offender: Drug Subculture + SO + Family crime/drugs + crim. neighborhood
2. Daly's Economic path - Strain theory (Economic Marginalization)
3. Daly's Drug Connected Path (Criminal SO + Trafficking)
4. Daly's Relational Path (Strong Criminal SO + Lo self-efficacy)
5. Routine Activity theory (Street life, High opportunity, Hi. Trafficking)
6. Addiction Prone? + Few Prosocial Bonds (Social Control Theory)

2. Treatment Goals - Discuss ? Treatment Plan - Discuss ?

Group Exercise

- Discuss
 - 1. treatment goals (set these first)
 - 2. Treatment plans
- Select one or two of the following prototypes:
 - Normal/AL women (Pathways 1 or 5)
 - Victimized battered dug connected Pathway 4
 - Socialized Subcultural non-victimized (Pathway 2)
 - Harmed and Harming/LCP (Pathway 6)

Conclusions about links to prior pathways

1. Do "gendered" pathways exist
 - it would appear so! GR factors are critical in 6 out of the 8 profiles
2. Moffitt's Dual Taxonomy - AL and LCP - Analogues seem partially identified.
 - AL- Paths 1 and 5 have far less problems, more resources, no victimization/abuse - and are "snared" by the same problems Moffitt identified (single parenting, drugs)
 - LCP: This shares many key features with pathway 6, and to some degree 7 and may replicate Moffitt's LCP and Daly's Harmed and Harming
 - AL's do seem to extend into adulthood just in the way Moffitt suggests
 - Are two pathways enough? This research says "no" and identifies several other pathways of women offenders
3. Daly's pathways
 - These are all identified and thus supported
 - However, they tend to coalesce with other factors and collapse into each other (e.g. relational + drug connected + battered woman (See path 4)

Conclusions - Theoretical Issues

- Pathways are far more complex than expected
 - Multiple co-occurring causal components
 - Perhaps a result of the person centered approach and our sample
- Implications for theoretical integration
 - These holistic patterns suggest various theoretical combinations and hybridizations
 - Perhaps reflecting Hirschi's "side-by-side" and end-to-integration
- These diverse pathways may challenge the idea of "General Theories"
 - For example, Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) General Theory of Crime.
 - Path 6 supports most tenets of G/H General Theory exhibiting many key features specified by the theory e.g. abusive/inept criminal parents, unstable family, out-of-home placements, hostile and aggressive antisocial personality, habitual crime, etc.
 - However, path 6 and its analogue 7 apply only to a small % of this sample. Paths 1 and 5 challenge the "generality" of the theory with NONE of the required features.
