

*Going Bad...Going Straight:
Exploring Gendered Pathways in
and out of the Youth Criminal
Justice System*

Shelley L. Brown
Gender and Crime Lab
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Gender and Crime Lab

- PhD
 - Natalie Jones, Jenelle Power (past)
 - Shannon Gottschall, Leigh Greiner (current)
- MA
 - Andrea Grieves, Katie Perkins, Leticia Gutierrez (co-supervision) (past)
 - Melissa Harris, Celia Geck, Aileen Harris (co-supervision) (current)
- Honour's
 - Current—Kayla Wanamaker, Krista Hembruff, Carlye Myers, Sam Grey , Katie Lovett

Volunteers/Research Assistants

- Karina Gagnier
- Nina Vitopoulos
- Robyn Henderson
- Lesleigh Pullman
- Jodi-Ann Aiken
- Brianne Dixon

Our Mission

- To advance our understanding of female criminal conduct to ultimately inform effective prevention and intervention strategies.

Our Guiding Principles

- Respect gender, race, ethnicity, and culture
- Incorporate multiple theoretical perspectives
- Utilize mixed methodology when possible
- Include male comparison groups
- Developmental stage matters—youth vs. adult

Four streams of research....

- Gendered pathways
- Gender and risk assessment
- Delinquency/positive psychology movement
- Young women/women offender corrections

Context

- Feminist criminological scholars posit that female pathways to delinquency are unique
 - *Feminist pathways model (Belknap, 2007; Daly, 1992)*
 - Key variables—childhood trauma, mental health, economic marginalization, addictions, coping
 - Qualitative methodologies dominate
- Traditional ‘gender neutral’ theories are inherently male-based theories
- Consequently, we need unique female approaches to intervene effectively

Gendered pathways stream—Study 1

- Perkins K. (2010). *Examining gender differences in typological membership using latent class analysis: A contribution to the gender specificity/neutrality debate*
- Methodology – archival, federally sentenced women and men in Canada, $N = 1,500$
- Analysis – latent class analysis
- Main results
 - 4 class solution for females
 - 2 class solution for males

Resultant latent classes

- Females
 - 1) ‘potential economic/other’ (36%)
 - 2) ‘poor coping/substance use/associates’ (28%)
 - 3) ‘mental health/coping problems’ (10.0%)
 - 4) ‘feminist pathway’ (27%)
- Males
 - 1) potential economic/other (41%)
 - 2) poor coping/substance use/associates (59%)

Gendered pathways stream: Study 2

- *Jones (2011). Is there truly a unique gendered pathway into crime for females?*
- Methodology – archival, Orbis partners, $N = 1,838$ probation youth from New York State (663 female)
- Analysis – multidimensional scaling—proximity scaling analysis
- Main results
 - Two dimensions for females
 - Two dimensions for males

Main Results

Female youth

- ***Gendered pathways***
 - “*abused, poverty-stricken young girl who engages in minor forms of offending*” (Jones, p .149)
- ***Traditional antisocial***
 - Impulsivity, criminal attitudes, violent offending

Male youth

- ***Mixed pathway***
 - Impulsivity, school suspensions, antisocial attitudes, poverty, child neglect, running away
- ***Traditional antisocial variable***
 - Antisocial peers, violence, poor parental supervision

Gendered pathways stream: The present

- *Gendered pathways to the Youth Criminal Justice System: Implications for risk assessment (SSHRC #410-2009-1020)*
- Research Objectives—
 - 1) to explore (retrospectively) how female and male pathways to the youth criminal justice system may be similar and/or different, and
 - 2) determine whether or not these pathways moderate the predictive accuracy of gender neutral risk tools (i.e., YLS/CMI) and a female specific risk/need tool (i.e., YASI-G)

Methodology

- Data collection – primary, multiple sites—secure custody, open custody, probation (Ottawa and Brampton), Center for Addiction and Mental Health (Toronto)
- Multiple sources – interview, questionnaires, file review
- Data collection stage
 - approximately 190 ‘justice-involved youth’ tested (~ 50 females)
 - Today’s results based on an N of 116

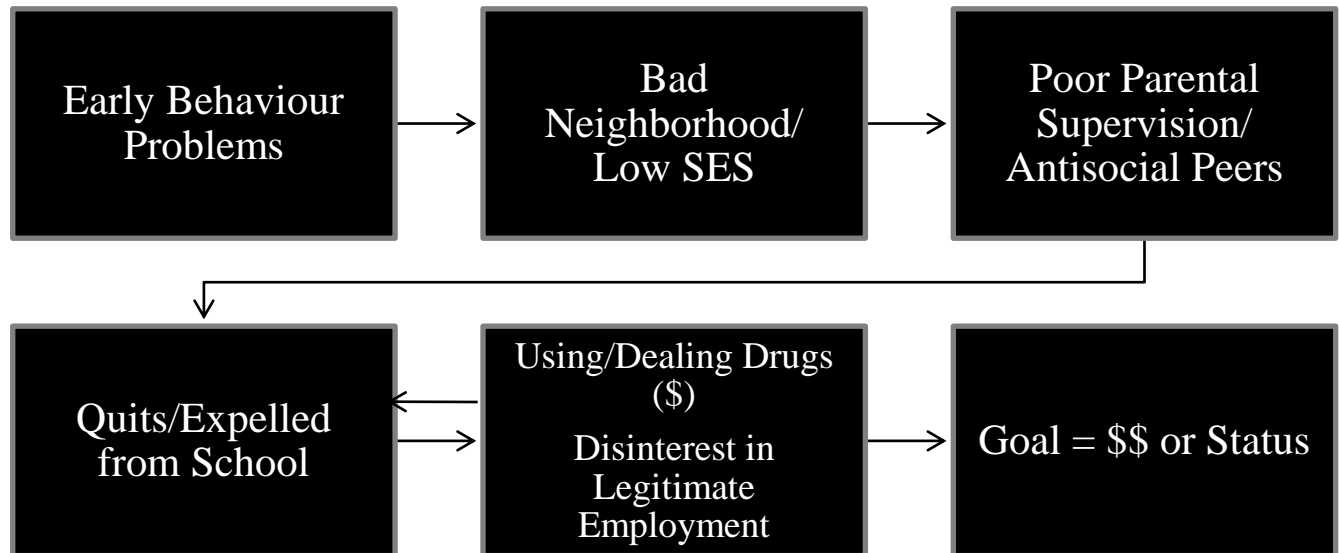
Gendered Pathways—Preliminary qualitative results (Greiner & Brown, 2011)

- From one of two closed custody facilities in Ontario
 - 6 Males
 - 16 to 20 years of age ($M = 18.1$)
 - 4 African American, 1 East Asian, and 1 Jamaican
 - 5 Females
 - 16 to 19 years of age ($M = 17.4$)
 - 4 Caucasian, 1 Middle-Eastern

Results

Pathway 1 – “Traditional Antisocial Pathway”

- 4 Males, 1 Female



Results

Traditional Antisocial Pathway (4 males and 1 female)

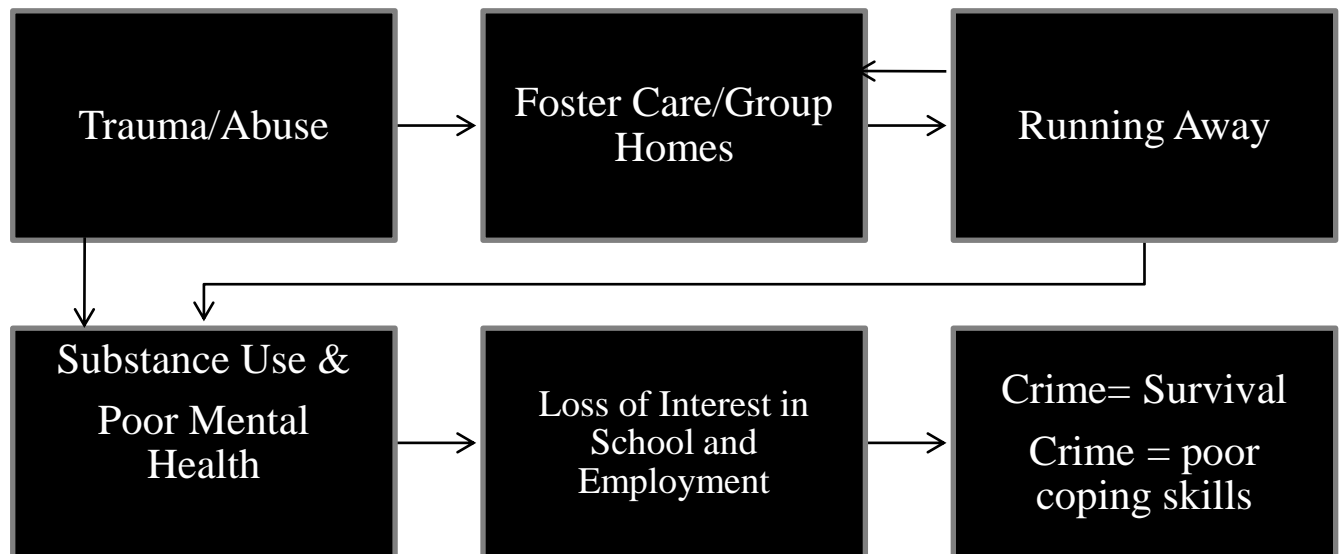
Case Example: *Male, 18 years old*

- High crime neighborhood— *“One to two shootings per month”*
- Poor Parental Monitoring— moved out @ 14 years old
- Education/Employment Problems—when not in school *“sold dope”*
- Criminal Attitudes—*“Police? Slimy!”*
- Reason given for criminal behaviour = \$\$
“You do what you gotta do”
“I’m a teenager, obviously I want money”

Results

Pathway 2-- “Trauma Pathway”

- 4 Females, 1 Male



Results

Trauma Pathway (4 females & 1 male)

Case Example: *Female, 17 years old*

- Physically abused as a child- Placed in foster care @ age 8
 - Moved to 28-29 foster homes
- History of running away- “50 or 60 times” and conflict with foster families—led to drug use:

“After I left the one foster home, I just quit everything and I just started smoking, like all sorts of weed and stuff.”
- Quit school- no fixed address- living in a shelter
- Self-harming behaviour/attempted suicide
- Crimes result of lack of impulse control/attention seeking- recent offence—uttering threats (while holding knife to own throat)

Preliminary Quantitative Results: Exploring Gender Differences by YLS/CMI domains

YLS/CMI domain	Cohen's D
criminal history	.07
family	.53
employment/education	.44
peers	.16
Substance abuse	.20
leisure	.07
personality	.42
attitudes	.19

Note. $N = 83$ male; 33 female; positive Cohen's D values associated with females scoring higher on a given domain

Preliminary Quantitative Results: Exploring Gender Differences by MAYSI Domains

YLS/CMI domain	Cohen's D
Alcohol/drug	.14
Anger/irritability	.31
Depressed/anxious	.67
Somatic complaints	.33
Suicide ideation	.91
Thought disturbances	Na
Trauma	.08

Note. $N = 61$ male; 28 female; positive Cohen's D values associated with females scoring higher on a given domain

Gender and Risk Assessment Stream (the past)

- *Jones (2011). Merging Theoretical Frameworks to Inform Risk Assessment for the Young Female Offender*
- *Grieves (2010). An Empirical Examination of Gender Neutral, Salient, and Specific Risk Factors for Male and Female Criminal Recidivism*

Where we are going....

- *Geck, C. (2011). A psychometric evaluation of the Youth Assessment Screening Inventory with justice-involved male offenders.*
- Prospective recidivism follow-up studies
 - Predictive validity of YASI & YASI-G
 - Construct gender informed typologies using qualitative and quantitative methods
 - Assess how typological membership moderates predictive validity of YLS/CMI, YASI, PCL:YV

Positive Psychology/Delinquency

- *Harris, M. (2011). An Exploration of Promotive and Protective Factors among Justice Involved Youth*
- *Strengths vs. promotive vs. protective factors*

Next SSHRC.... Pathways to desistance among serious adolescent offenders

- Examine how risk factors and positive attributes/strengths interact to produce desistance or persistence outcomes in youthful offenders and if results vary by gender and race
- Develop and validate a gender and ethnically informed desistance index.
- Mixed methodology/partnership with CAMH/merge current SSHRC with archival CAMH database
- Eliminate use of self-report questionnaires

Young Women/Women Offender Corrections

- *Power, J. (2011). Non-Suicidal Self-Injury in Federally Sentenced Women: Prevalence, Nature, Motivations, and Pathways*
- Power, Brown, & Usher (2011). "Non-Suicidal Self-Injury in Women Offenders: A Qualitative Study (Revise and Resubmit).
- Power, Brown & Usher (2011). Prevalence and Incidence of Non-Suicidal Self-Injury in Federally Sentenced Women (Submitted).

On going graduate thesis work

- Harris, A. (2011). Segregation and Gender (principal supervisor - -Kelley Blanchette)
- Gottschall, S. (2011). An Examination of the Moderating Effects of Sex, Gender and Power On the association between Mentoring Relationship Quality and Psychosocial Outcomes for Graduate Students.

Girls Delinquency Program Evaluation

- Grant Proposal- Girls Moving on Research Evaluation (G-MORE)
- Submitted to Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)
 - Co-investigators—Florida Department of Youth Corrections & University of Maine

In Summary

- Female offender focused research
- Mixed methods
- Statistical interests
- Multiple theories
- Mixed funding model—traditional SSHRC route coupled with non-SSHRC funding options—OJJDP
- Partnering—industry partners (Orbis Partners) and informal government partnerships (CSC); formal partnerships - CAMH
- Team approach

THANKS to...

- My Students
- SSHRC
- Agencies where we collect data/give us data
- Participants
- Questions?