

## Female Deviance and Criminality

### 1. Little attention in course readings, data, hypotheses on the deviance of women

- a. Some gender bias, but not major reason
- b. reason for neglect is phenomenon of female deviance itself

Using official crime statistics (Crime Index, Type I - serious; Type II, less serious; UCR - Uniform Crime Reports; NCS - national crime survey of population reporting victimization)

- 1. relatively fewer female deviants than men (quantity)
  - percentage of serious crime increasing
  - confined to property crimes
  - percentage for violent crimes hardly fluctuates
- 2. women less frequently incarcerated for similar offenses
- 3. different types of offenses
  - victimless, offenses suffer greatest harm, drug use
  - alcohol, mental illness, suicide, limited number,
  - generally self destructive
- 4. less serious offenses: within offender/victim crimes, larceny
  - v. assault, murder, arson, within larceny: less money taken

### II. Explanations for female deviance

- a. earliest explanations, pathological (biology - Lombroso, psychoanalytic- Freud)
- b. differential association and socialization
  - Sutherland, Cressey, taught to avoid risks and subjected to differential social organization
  - subjected to increased informal social control
- c. structural explanation: differential opportunities
  - rates of female crime increasing
  - parallel increase of women in workforce - out of home, more public, less secluded/ privatized
  - increase in property crime associated with opportunities in workforce (clerical workers)
  - cross cultural data show female crime associated with other forms of gender equality

III. All explanations accept truth of claim that women engage in deviance less frequently than men; challenges to this view

- a. Otto Pollock, *Criminality of Women*, gender linked to structure of opportunities which conceals crime in home
- b. When noticed, female deviance receive more lenient treatment, thus some support for thinking there is more rule violation that is not labeled as deviant.

IV. Suzanna Kaysen, **Girl, Interrupted.** discussion.

V. Conclusion of course

- a. Study of difference is study of identity and conformity
- b. Study of stigmatized differences tells us about social norms, expectations, morality.
- c. Study of why some people violate norms tells us how other conform, reveals basis of social order.
- d. The processes of acquiring, maintaining, protecting identities are shared by deviant and conforming members of society.
- e. Identity and deviance are socially constructed; produced by social transactions and organizations, varying across time and space. They are real, not easily changed, products of power (organization, resources, interests, values).
- f. Recognition of the fact of social construction demands inquiry into the processes of that construction, there is something to be observed and explained.

*"Our sense of being a person can come from being drawn into a wider social unit; our sense of selfhood can arise through the little ways in which we resist the pull. Our status is backed by the solid building of the world, while our sense of personal identity often resides in the cracks."*

*Erving Goffman, Asylums*

NOTE: Additional newspaper articles on privatization on server.