

FEMALE DELINQUENCY: GROWTH and RESPONSE

By

JENNIFER L. BIERDEMAN

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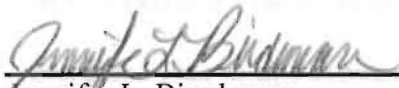
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Jennifer L. Bierdeman

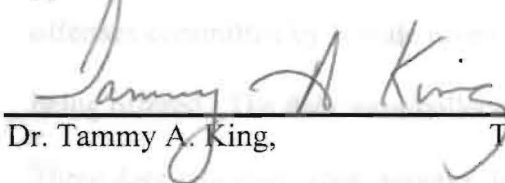
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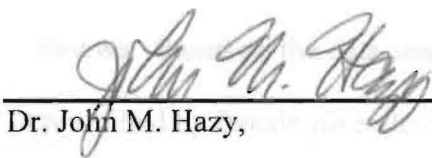
May 10, 2007
May 10, 2007

Approvals:


Dr. Tammy A. King,

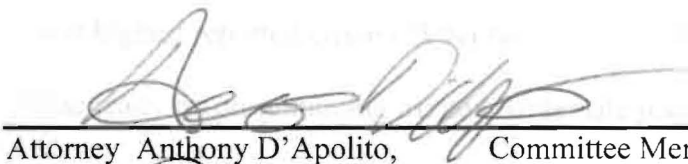
Thesis Advisor

May 10, 2007
May 10, 2007


Dr. John M. Hazy,

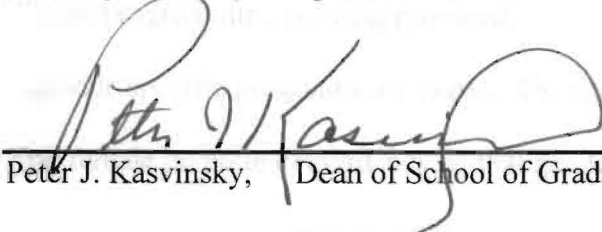
Committee Member

5/10/07
May 10, 2007


Attorney Anthony D'Apolito,

Committee Member

5-10-07
May 10, 2007


Peter J. Kasvinsky,

Dean of School of Graduate Studies & Research

5/10/07
May 10, 2007

ABSTRACT

There has been an overall increase of 16 percent in violent offenses committed by female juvenile delinquents between 1980 and 2003 (Snyder and Sickmund, 2006). In addition there has been a 522 percent increase in weapons violations. While the crime rate of juvenile males has been decreasing, the female crime rate has been on a steady increase. Due to this increase, more research is being conducted on female juvenile delinquency. With the increase of female juvenile delinquency, gender-specific programming has become an issue. This thesis focuses on the rise in violent delinquent offenses committed by female juvenile delinquents, as well as the programming currently being offered. The data were collected from a detention facility in northeastern Ohio. Three data sets were used: surveys, interviews with delinquent girls, and case file reviews. Based on the data analysis, the most common form of violent crime being committed by female juvenile delinquents is assault (30%). Domestic violence is the next highest reported crime (23 %) being committed by female juvenile delinquents. Practically no programming existed for female juvenile delinquents 10 years ago. Today, more programming is being provided, such as counseling and mentoring, however no gender-specific programming exists. Therefore, it is necessary to perform more research on female juvenile delinquency so that gender-specific programming may be created, implemented, and assessed so that the delinquency rate for violent offenses being committed by female juveniles begins to decline.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SIGNATURE PAGE	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
LIST OF TABLES	ix
CHAPTER 1	1-8
INTRODUCTION	
CHAPTER 2	9-24
HISTORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW	
CHAPTER III	25-26
METHODOLOGY	
CHAPTER IV	27-48
FINDINGS	
CHAPTER V	49-55
DISCUSSION	
REFERENCES	56-59
APPENDICIES	60-
A. Data collection sheet for detention center case files	
B. Interview Questions	
C. Intake/Probation/Diversion Survey	
D. Clergy and Juvenile Officers Survey	

E. Human Subjects Review Form

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	2
Overall Arrest Rate for Female Juvenile Delinquents	
Figure 2	3
Simple Assault Committed by Female Juvenile Delinquents	
Figure 3	3
Vandalism Committed by Female Juvenile Delinquents	
Figure 4	4
Weapon Offenses Committed by Female Juvenile Delinquents	
Figure 5	31
Current Grade of Female Juvenile Delinquents	
Figure 6	33
Zip Codes of Female Juvenile Delinquents	
Figure 7	34
Family Composition of Female Juvenile Delinquents	
Figure 8	41
Unique Problems Facing Female Juvenile Delinquents	

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	42
Female Juvenile Offenses	
Table 2	43
Programming for Female Juvenile Delinquents	
Table 3	44
Residency of Female Juvenile Delinquents	
Table 4	47
Professional Responses vs. Female Juvenile Responses	

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

According to Poe-Yamagata and Butts (1996) an estimated 570,100 female juvenile delinquents were arrested in 1993. Four years later the number increased significantly. Loper (2000) states “between 1993 and 1997, arrests of girls for drug abuse violations more than doubled (117% increase). Between 1993 and 1997, arrests of girls for offenses against family and children increased by 82%” (p.1). These delinquency rates have continued to increase over the past few years. Between 1980 and 2003 there has been an overall increase of 16 percent for female juveniles committing violent crimes. Female juvenile delinquents have had a 24 percent increase in forcible rape, a 16 percent increase in aggravated assault, a 30 percent increase in larceny-theft, a 32 percent increase in weapon offenses, a 30 percent increase in liquor law violations, and a 37 percent increase for disorderly conduct (Snyder and Sickmund, 2006). It has been stated by many researchers that violent crime offenses are on the rise for female juvenile delinquents. This is illustrated in Figure 1, Overall Arrest Rates for Female Juvenile Delinquents.

Figure 1

Overall Arrest Rate for Female Juvenile Delinquents

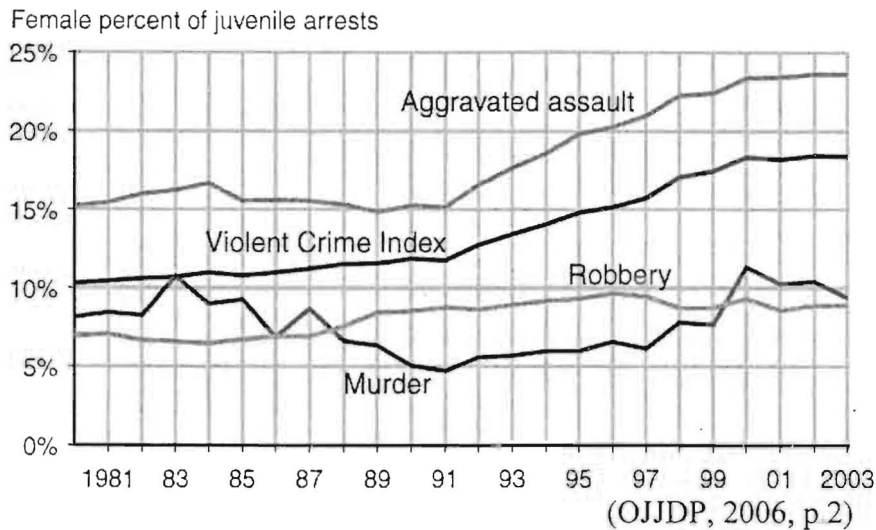


Figure 1 illustrates the percentage of violent crimes committed by female juvenile delinquents between 1980 and 2003. In 1980 the Violent Crime Index for female juvenile delinquents was 10 percent; whereas; in 2003 it had risen to 18 percent. Snyder and Sickmund (2006) suggest that the change occurred in the Violent Crime Index in regards to female juvenile delinquents between 1980 and 2003 due to the fact that the number of female juvenile arrests increased for both aggravated assault (15% to 24%) and simple assault (21% to 32%). The largest increase by offense type has been the rise in aggravated assault. This increase supports prior research findings that female juvenile delinquents are committing more violent crimes (OJJDP, 2006, p.2). In addition to the above mentioned crimes, arrest rates for other offenses have also been on the rise for female juvenile delinquents (see Figures 2, 3, 4).

Figure 2

Simple Assault Arrests for Female Juvenile Delinquents

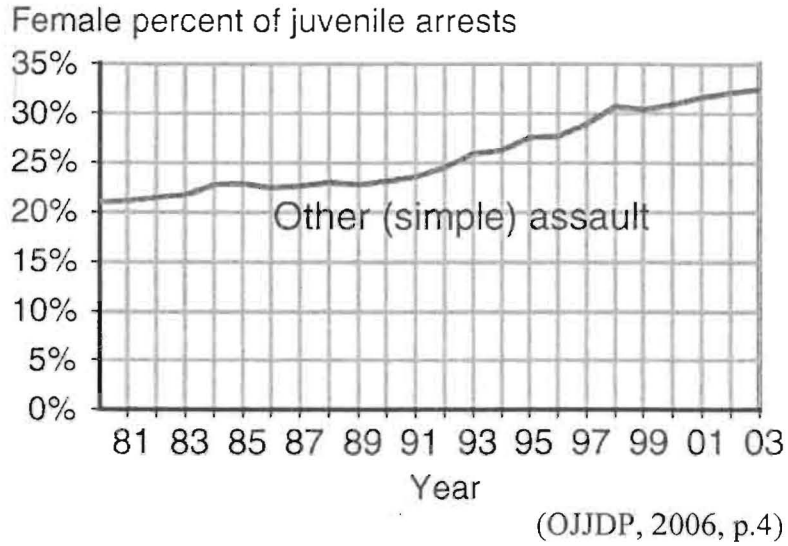


Figure 3

Arrests for Vandalism for Female Juvenile Delinquents

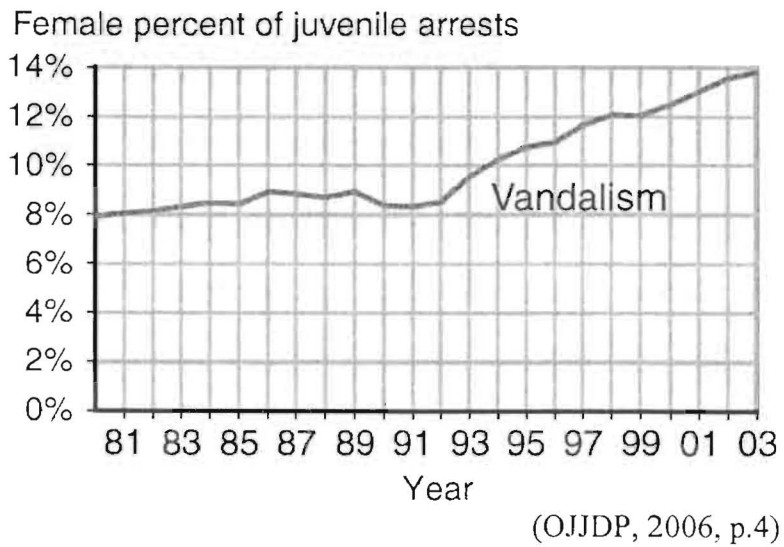
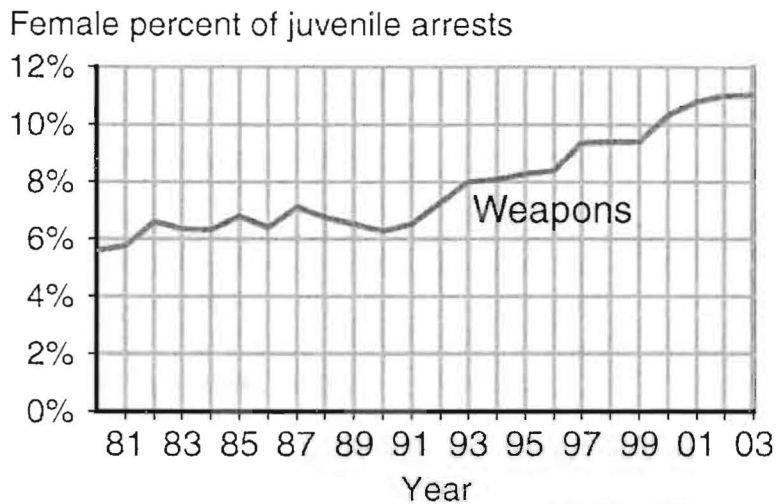


Figure 4

Weapon Violation Arrests for Female Juvenile Delinquents



(OJJDP, 2006, p.4)

The figures above illustrate the steady increase of arrests for simple assault, vandalism, and weapon offenses (OJJDP, 2006, p. 3). Between 1980 and 2003, there was an estimated 522 percent increase in female juveniles being arrested for weapons violations. In addition, there was 284 percent increase in arrests for simple assault and a 26 percent increase for vandalism (Snyder and Sickmund, 2006).

There have been no overall large decreases in female juvenile delinquency in over 20 years. However, the male juvenile population and adult male populations have seen a substantial amount of decrease. Between 1994 and 2003 there was an overall decrease in violent crimes by 16 percent for adult male offenders, and a 36 percent decrease for juvenile male offenders. Juvenile male offenders have also had a decrease of 43 percent for larceny-theft, a 42 percent decrease for weapons violations and a 36 percent decrease

for vandalism. Adult male offenders have had a 19 percent decrease in larceny-theft, an 18 percent decrease in all property crimes, and a 30 percent decrease in murder.

Whereas, between 1994 and 2003 there was an increase in violent crimes among adult female offenders as well as female juvenile offenders. Adult female offenders had a 17 percent increase in violent crimes between 1994 and 2003; they also had a 31 percent increase in simple assault and a 16 percent increase in vandalism. Female juvenile offenders have had a three percent decrease overall for violent crimes; however, they have had a 36 percent increase for simple assault, a 26 percent increase for liquor law violations, and a 46 percent increase for disorderly conduct between the years of 1994 and 2003 (Snyder and Sickmund, 2006)

While violent crimes are on a rise, a number of property offenses are also on the rise among female juvenile delinquents. "After a period of stability during the late 1980s, the female public order offense case rate tripled between 1991 and 2004" (OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book, 2007, p. 1). Public order offenses consist of obstruction of justice, disorderly conduct, weapons offenses, liquor law violations, and/or nonviolent sex offenses (OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book, 2007, p. 1). In addition, between 1985 and 1998, the case rate of female juvenile delinquency increased 168 percent (OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book, 2007). Case rates are the number of cases disposed per 1,000 juveniles (OJJDP, 1996, p.1).

The purpose of this research is to examine a possible explanation as to why there has been an increase in female juvenile delinquency. Many female delinquents have been given the opportunity to go to diversion programs prior to being detained, yet an increase continues in their delinquent behaviors. While both girls and boys may enter into

diversion programs, girls are at a disadvantage because many of the diversion programs are geared solely towards males and their problems and do not focus on unique female problems (Belenko, et al., 2004). If this is true, then this may be a reason why female delinquency is increasing. Therefore, this research will be reviewing programs/resources that are available to female delinquents to determine if gender based programming is readily available to female delinquents.

In this research project, juvenile diversion programs will be focused upon as well as the types of crimes female delinquents are committing for a select population. In order to fully understand the research being presented, it is important to know some basic definitions. First, one must understand the definition of a delinquent. Champion (2007) defines a delinquent as an “infant of not more than a specified age who has violated criminal laws or engages in disobedient, indecent, or immoral conduct, and is in need of treatment, rehabilitation, or supervision” (p.630). The definition of diversion is also imperative to understand. Champion (2001) states diversion is the “official halting or suspension of legal proceedings against criminal defendants after a recorded justice system entry, and possible referral of those persons to treatment or care programs administered by a non justice or private agency” (p.555). The last important concept to define is gender-specific. For the purpose of this research, gender-specific is defined as a program or resource which is uniquely designed to treat the problems that are distinctive to a particular gender whether they are male or female. Now that the terminology of this research has been reviewed, the next step is to understand how this research will increase the knowledge in the Criminal Justice discipline.

IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH TOPIC

Why is it important to research female juvenile delinquents and the programming that is available to them? One of the main reasons for this research is to provide a means of awareness of the drastic increase in crimes committed by female juvenile delinquents and some of the program options that they are being offered. One of the main issues in the Juvenile Justice System today is the fact that while the crime rate continues to decrease for juvenile males, **the crime rate for juvenile females is on a steady increase** (Kakar, et al., 2002). For many years, females were not committing a significant amount of serious crimes. As a result of this, the Juvenile Justice System would place the few females into programs geared towards males (Champion, 2001). However, with the steady increase of more serious crimes being committed by females, programs that are geared solely towards the female delinquent population are needed now more than ever.

By looking at the programs that are now accessible to these girls, and determining whether or not these programs are being utilized, it is believed that a better understanding of the problems female juvenile delinquents face will be brought to the forefront. Along with this is the hope that facilities and the Juvenile Justice System in general, will start utilizing different programs that are gender-specific to the female population. It is the hope of this researcher that by reviewing different programs and taking a critical look at them, better programs may be developed and implemented. The goal of these programs should be to focus solely on the issues that female juveniles face every day in their lives, and provide them with a means of dealing with their problems in a more productive manner. To better understand the issues these young females are facing, they were asked

questions and information from their case files provided were reviewed for this research project. The information obtained is presented in a later chapter.

SUMMARY

In the first section of the paper, the researcher presented the magnitude of the problem that the juvenile justice system as well as society is facing concerning female juvenile delinquents. Why this topic is important to study in the discipline of Criminal Justice was addressed. Chapter two will focus on the history of juvenile delinquency as well as the history of the juvenile justice system. It will also explain what juvenile diversion programs are. In this section a description of who is diverted into these programs will be given as well as presenting the main goals of juvenile diversion. Chapter three will present how the data for the research projects were collected. In Chapter four, the results of the study are presented. In the final chapter, a discussion of the results and their implications are presented. Also, continued in this chapter are the research limitations and recommendations for future research projects.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prior to the end of the 18th century, children who committed crimes were **viewed** as criminals and were lumped together with adult offenders. The same type of punishment that was handed out to an adult would also be given to a child who committed a similar act. In the early 1800s, this philosophy began to change as a result of the child-saving movement (Champion, 2001). The child savers' mission was simple, it was to provide a better life for children who were already delinquents or who were heading down that path. Their main objectives were to provide healthy living conditions, constructive work programs, and adult supervision for the children (Champion, 2001). Instead of only punishing delinquents, the new concept was to try and rehabilitate them. This shift helped to establish the New York House of Refuge. Champion (2001) states:

The New York House of Refuge was established in New York City in 1825 by the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism (Cahalan, 1986:101). Subsequently imitated in other communities, **houses of refuge** were institutions largely devoted to managing status offenders, such as runaways or incorrigible children. Compulsory education and other forms of training and assistance were provided to these children (p.12).

The government realized that by separating juveniles into a different class would increase the likelihood that they would receive the help that they needed. Parents **did not** always provide a stable lifestyle and were not always good role models for their children. This fact guided the government to adopt the philosophy, *parens patriae*, which enabled the state to act as the legal guardian of the juvenile and act as a parent or responsible party on the juvenile's behalf (Bartollas & Miller, 2001).

The best example of a parent not taking care of his/her child is the story of Mary Ellen Wilson. Mary Ellen Wilson was the first documented case of child abuse prosecution in the United States. Mary Ellen's story begins in 1864, the year she was born. Shortly after Mary Ellen's birth, her father Thomas passed away, causing his family to sink into financial disarray.

No longer able to stay at home and care for her infant daughter, Francis boarded Mary Ellen (a common practice at the time) with a woman named Mary Score. As Francis's economic situation deteriorated, she slipped further into poverty, falling behind in payments for and missing visits with her daughter. As a result, Mary Score turned two-year-old Mary Ellen over to the city's Department of Charities (American Humane website, 2006, pp.1-2).

Once with the department, Mary Ellen was placed with the McCormack family who claimed that Thomas McCormack was Mary Ellen's biological father. The department's lack of a follow-up into the McCormack's claim resulted in the pain and suffering of a young child for many years.

Mr. McCormack died shortly after receiving custody of Mary Ellen. Mary McCormack, Thomas's wife, remarried and moved away. Mary McCormack's neighbors started suspecting that she was abusing her daughter, Mary Ellen. One day Etta Wheeler, a missionary, was visiting a friend who was a tenant in Mary Ellen's new building. While visiting her friend, Ms. Wheeler was informed that a little girl's cries could be heard during all hours of the day and night. Ms. Wheeler gained entrance into Mary Ellen's apartment and found a tiny 10 year old Mary Ellen dressed in rags and covered with bruises and scars all over her body. Ms. Wheeler then left and sought legal help for the child.

At first Ms. Wheeler sought help from the local authorities but they did not follow through, so Ms. Wheeler then turned to Henry Bergh, the founder of the America Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Mr. Bergh contacted an attorney from his organization and requested legal papers for Mary Ellen's immediate removal from her home (American Humane website, 2006). Mary Ellen was removed and a trial followed against Mrs. McCormack, where Mary Ellen testified to the extent of her abuse. Taken from the American Humane website (2006) it states:

Mamma has been in the habit of whipping and beating me almost every day. She used to whip me with a twisted whip – a raw hide. The whip always left a black and blue mark on my body. I have now the black and blue marks on my head which were made by mamma, and also a cut on the left side of my forehead which was made by a pair of scissors. She struck me with the scissors and cut me; I have no recollection of ever having been kissed by any one—have never been kissed by mamma (p.3).

After all the evidence was presented, Mary McCormick was found guilty. Mary Ellen would eventually be placed into the custody of Ms. Wheeler's mother. Later she lived with Ms. Wheeler's sister after the death of their mother (American Humane website, 2006). Mary Ellen went on to live a happy and normal life. Shortly after Mary Ellen's case in 1874, the first juvenile court came into existence in Chicago, Illinois in 1899. This court will not only deal with criminalistic children, it will also address the needs of abused and neglected children.

Development of the Juvenile Court

The first juvenile court was established in Cook County, Illinois. The idea of a juvenile court originally stemmed from the Chicago Women's Club but was not taken

seriously until some members of Chicago Bar Association took notice. Jackson and Knepper (2003) state:

Although these women initially had the idea for the establishment of a juvenile court system, many legislators did not think it was constitutional until a few attorneys who were members of the Chicago Bar Association considered the idea. They then wrote the Illinois Juvenile Court Act, which was presented to and passed by the legislature in 1899 (p.10).

The purpose for having a juvenile court system was to assure juveniles would be treated separately from adults. Jensen and Rojek (1998) state, “the founders of the juvenile court envisioned it as the cornerstone of a comprehensive child care system. ‘It was designed to treat the youthful offender as a child primarily and only incidentally as a law violator’ (Finestone, 1976:45)” (p.42). The first juvenile court came about through the passage of the Illinois Juvenile Court Act of 1899. This act helped to define juvenile delinquency; as well as establish major provisions. Siegel, et al. (2006) state:

Delinquent children were those under the age of 16 who violated the law. Most important, the act established a court and probation program specifically for children. In addition, the legislation allowed children to be committed to institutions and reform programs under the control of the state. The key provisions of the act were these: A separate court was established for delinquent and neglected children; Special procedures were developed to govern the adjudication of juvenile matters; Children were to be separated from adults in courts and in institutional programs; Probation programs were to be developed to assist the court in making decisions in the best interests of the state and the child (p.372).

With the enactment of this piece of legislation many juvenile courts were created across the United States. In the beginning juvenile courts were not very different than they are today. Originally juvenile courts had jurisdiction over delinquent children, neglected children, and dependant children (Siegel, et al., 2006). Siegel, et al define a delinquent as a “juvenile who has been adjudicated by a judicial officer of a juvenile court as having committed a delinquent act” (p.545). A neglected child is a child who has been deprived

of food, shelter, health care, and love by a parent or a guardian. A dependant child is one who has been abandoned and is a ward of the state (Siegel, et al., 2006). In the first juvenile courts, children were not given the same constitutional rights as their adult counterparts. For instance, in juvenile court, attorneys for the juvenile were not required; hearsay evidence was admissible; a preponderance of the evidence was all the doubt that was needed to find a juvenile delinquent, and children were not allowed to appeal their convictions (Siegel, et al., 2006). Juvenile courts served their purpose of separating juveniles from adults but with that separation came different rules for juveniles to follow.

Even though the juvenile courts existed and were run somewhat like adult courts, juveniles were not afforded the same rights as those of adults, such as a right to an attorney, right to a jury trial, right to confront witnesses, and a right against self-incrimination. However, juveniles would soon earn many important rights in 1967 when the Supreme Court ruled on the case of *In Re Gault*. In this case, the court decided to place the child in a juvenile institute until he was 21 years old for making lewd and indecent remarks to his neighbor over the telephone (Bartollas & Miller, 2001).

According to the Supreme Court, the lower court abused the juvenile's constitutional rights. The Supreme Court heard the case and made the following ruling:

...the U.S. Supreme Court articulated the following rights for all juveniles: (1) the right to a notice of charges; (2) the right to counsel; (3) the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses; and (4) the right to invoke the privilege against self-incrimination. The petitioner, Gault, requested the Court to rule favorably on two additional rights sought: (1) the right to a transcript of the proceedings and (2) the right to appellate review. The Court elected not to rule on either of these rights (Champion, 2007, p.200).

This ruling would further set the standards that courts would have to follow when dealing with juveniles.

A year after the Gault ruling, Congress passed the Juvenile Delinquency Prevention and Control Act of 1968. This Act provided for the opportunity to develop programs for juveniles to deter them from committing crimes. Six years later Congress passed the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act of 1974. This Act provided for the development of three new programs for deterring delinquent behavior. The goal of the JJDP Act was to provide more funding for prevention programs. In order to receive the additional funding, states were required to release status offenders from detention facilities and separate juvenile from adults (Juvenile Justice FYI website, n.d.). The requirements of the JJDP Act are still being enforced today. The government refuses to fund programs or detention centers if status offenders are held in their centers.

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 would be amended and enhanced throughout the years. The Act was expanded to include funding for state plans. This section of the Act deals specifically with states receiving formula grants. In order for a state to receive a formula grant there are certain requirements that must be met, one of them being gender-specific programming. In section seven B, the Act states that the State Plan must be submitted with “a plan for providing needed gender-specific services for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency” (JJDP Act of 2002, p.16). The Act also details providing grants to states for projects that are geared towards preventing juvenile delinquency. In this section it states that a grant may be issued to a state for “programs that focus on the needs of young girls at-risk of delinquency or status offenses” (Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, 2003, p. 21). This is probably one of the most important Acts that exists within the Juvenile Justice System. It

allows opportunities for states to receive the money necessary in order to better themselves for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency.

Female Delinquency

The Juvenile Justice System, since its inception, dealt mainly with male offenders. Female delinquents were not common in the past. Even today in comparison to male delinquency, female offending are less likely. From 1997 to 2002 there has been an average of 94,370 male juvenile offenders placed in custody whereas, there was only an average of 14,567 female juvenile offenders placed in custody (OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book, 2002). Unfortunately, female juvenile delinquency rates have increased drastically. Research has shown that a large amount of this increase has due to females committing simple assaults. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (2005) defines simple assault as an “attack without a weapon resulting either in no injury, minor injury (for example, bruises, black eyes, cuts, scratches or swelling) or in undetermined injury requiring less than 2 days of hospitalization” (pp.5-6).

The U.S. Department of Justice (2005) states “between 1980 and 2003, the juvenile arrest rate for simple assault increased 102% for males and 269% for females” (p.1). Female delinquents commit all types of crimes. The following are crimes committed by female juvenile delinquents from most common to least common: disorderly conduct (37%), liquor law violations (30%), larceny-theft (30%), simple assault (26%), aggravated assault (16%), drug abuse violations (11%), offenses against family and children (9%), embezzlement (6%), forgery and counterfeiting (4%), driving under the influence (2%), fraud (2%), and prostitution (2%) (Snyder and Sickmund,

2006). In 2003, almost 2.3 million juveniles were arrested and 29 percent of those arrests were females (U.S. Department of Justice, 2005). The largest percent of violent crime committed by female delinquents was in the form of aggravated assault. Out of 61,490 juveniles arrested for aggravated assault, 24 percent (n=14,757) were female (U.S. Department of Justice, 2005). While arrest rates for juvenile males have been decreasing, female rates are increasing.

The U.S. Department of Justice (2005) states, "law enforcement agencies made 643,000 arrests of females under the age of 18 in 2003" (p.8). Some crimes committed by female delinquents have decreased since 1994 such as aggravated assault, larceny, burglary, vandalism, weapons, and motor vehicle theft. However, other crimes have seen an increase in female involvement. Between 1994 and 2003, simple assault has risen 36 percent, drug abuse violations have risen 56 percent, liquor law violations have increased 26 percent, driving under the influence has increased 83 percent, and disorderly conduct has increased 46 percent (U.S. Department of Justice, 2005). Research is showing that female juvenile delinquents are committing more violent crimes. Champion (2004) states "about 15 percent of all female arrestees in 2000 involved allegations of violent crimes" (pp.74-75). Champion (2004) states:

She's now 14 to 16 years old, although she may have started acting out a few years earlier. She's poor and has grown up in a neighborhood with a high crime rate. She's likely to belong to an ethnic minority group (50 percent of female juveniles in detention are black, 13 percent are Hispanic, and 34 percent are Caucasian). She's had a history of poor academic performance and may be a high school dropout. She's been a victim of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse or exploitation. She has used and abused drugs and/or alcohol. She has gone without attention for medical and mental health needs. She feels that life is oppressive and lacks hope for the future (p.74).

Additionally, the female delinquent will have been victimized in the past, either physically, sexually, and/or emotionally. Finally, she will hold the belief that everyone is “out to get her” and/or that “there is no hope” for her in the future (Champion, 2004).

Challenges Faced by Girls in Our Society

The stereotype of a female delinquent is a poor girl of minority descent, living in a crime infested neighborhood. But why do some of these girls live a delinquent life while others do not? Jackson and Knepper (2003) discuss the impact of social stressors. Teenage girls not only go through trying to fit into the stereo-type of a normal female, but they also have to deal with puberty. These two combined can cause a great deal of discomfort and confusion. It is at this point in a female’s life, where turning to the wrong people for advice, may lead the female into delinquency. While many females may be victims of trying to conform to the norm, others may be the opposite. If all these pressures and the impact of puberty have existed in the past, then why now are females more involved in delinquency? Jackson and Knepper (2003) explain that the girls who were committing crimes were just unnoticed in the past, which is not so in today’s society. They explain that in the past, “female offenders were invisible, not because they did not exist, but because it served the needs of a male-dominated society to ignore them and pretend that they exist rarely” (p.191).

In addition to dealing with the pressures of society’s image of females and puberty, many female juveniles are under pressure to have sex. Having sexual relations is a way for many girls to “fit in” and as a result of peer pressure, many females give in and have sex. This results in unwanted teenage pregnancies. In the United States, Ohio

was ranked 29th for teen birth rate in 1995. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2007) states, “this same year, the birth rate in the state was approximately 33 births per 1,000 young women ages 15-17” (p.1). Many girls who become pregnant are at the age when they enter high school. It has been the experience of this researcher that upon entering high school, females are often pressured into partaking in questionable acts in order to fit into their “clique” of choice. One way to fit in with the “popular” crowd is to have sex, which may lead to teen pregnancies. With the growth in teen pregnancies it is important to make sure that girls are better prepared for sexual relationships.

Another important issue relating to female juvenile delinquency is social class. The earlier profile of a female juvenile offender rarely mentioned race, but as stated above, the new profile does include race, specifically females who are minorities. Jackson and Knepper (2004) explain that prior research has shown that minorities, specifically African-Americans, are disproportionately represented in every part of the juvenile justice system. Due to research findings, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention provided more options for researching the issue of race. The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act was modified to require that states try and reduce the number of minorities they detain (Jackson and Knepper, 2004). The special needs of minorities and females are both addressed by OJJDP. Girls, especially those from minority groups, are facing many challenges which may be increasing their rate of delinquency. Others argue that females are not becoming more delinquent just more likely to be detained.

Programming to Assist Juvenile Female Offenders

Regardless if the incidents of female delinquency are increasing, the number of females being detained and involved in the Juvenile Justice System is growing. Girls are more likely to be given harsher sentences than their male counterparts. Kakar, et al. (2002) state:

Some studies report that adolescent women as compared to men of similar age and severity of crime are overrated in the justice system, and arrests of girls are more likely to occur for status offenses such as running away, incorrigibility, and so forth (S. Peters & S. Peters, 1998). Although their offenses are typically less violent, girls who break the law are sometimes treated more harshly than boys who commit the same type of crime (Davidson, 1982). For example, because there are fewer community-based services for girls, girls are twice as likely to be detained, with detention lasting five times longer than boys. In addition, girls are detained for less serious offenses (p.60).

There still seems to be a lack of understanding as to how to help these girls. Females deal with their problems differently than males. For instance if a man is upset or angry he may become aggressive, whereas a woman will most likely bury her feelings and keep them to herself. This at times may result in her hurting herself rather than taking out her aggression on others. Kakar, et al. (2002) states “existing literature reveals that when girls are angry, frightened, or unloved, they are more likely to strike inward. They may hurt themselves by abusing drugs, prostituting their bodies, starving, or even mutilating themselves” (p.61). While this observation of females is not new, it is still un-heartening and needs to be addressed. It is therefore imperative that programming specifically address females’ needs. It is important to realize the drastic increase of female delinquents, the types of crimes they are committing, and how they may deal with their issues; it is equally important to understand the programs that these girls are being offered.

While not many female juvenile delinquents are housed in detention centers, some are. Those that are housed are subjected to programming that is often outdated. Jackson and Knepper (2003) state that “the limited programs commonly consist of GED studies, vocational skills enrichment units, and little or no counseling. The vocational skills component of the programs may be limited to sewing and cooking. Computer training is rare” (p.200). Programming needs to focus on the unique ways females deal with anger and their social actions. While many programs are designed for males, it is important to realize that females are subjected to the programs as well.

Research states that female delinquents are more likely to be placed in diversion programs than male delinquents (Alder, 1984). Due to this, and the increase in female juvenile delinquency, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has increased its federal support to help develop gender-specific diversion programming (Bloom, et al., 2002). The OJJDP is offering their help but it is up to the states to put forth the effort to receive the funding. It requires a great deal of work for the states. They may have to develop new policies and assess the problems that female delinquents may be facing. Bloom, et al. (2002) state:

The common challenges facing states include: a growing number of female juvenile offenders committing more serious crimes and resulting in a greater number of juveniles in custody, a limited understanding of what works for girls, a demand for comprehensive needs assessments that identify gaps in the provision of services for girls, the need to develop and implement gender-specific services and programs designed to meet the unique needs of girls, and the competition for scarce resources in implementing these programs and policies (p.38).

A great deal of effort must go into developing and implementing new programs, which many not be fully realized by state and county juvenile agencies. The amount of time