Abstract

Background: Analysis of the relevance of the variables sex and gender to explain delinquency is a topic of growing interest in Criminology. This study tests a model of juvenile delinquency that integrates gender identity, the association with deviant peers, and a lack of attachment to conventional contexts. Method: We used a sample of 970 adolescents of both sexes, representative of the urban population, between 12 and 18 years, attending public schools in Galicia (Spain). Results: The results of path analysis confirm that: a) weak attachment to conventional contexts, and belonging to a deviant groups are precedents for deviation of adolescents of both sexes; b) these contexts also contribute to the development of gender identity; and c) gender identity affects the likelihood of deviation: femininity tends to reduce this behavior, and masculinity (in particular, negatively valued masculinity) contributes to increase it. Conclusions: These findings support the adequacy of including gender identity in the explanatory models of delinquency. They also suggest the need to reconsider the role of conventional settings in the socialization of masculinity and, therefore, in the genesis of adolescent delinquency of both sexes.

Keywords

Gender identity, juvenile delinquency, peer group, family/school attachment.