

Gender & Offending

Sociology

The most consistent pattern in criminology, and the explanations offered for it.

The gap is large and durable; the explanation is not settled.

The pattern

Men are the large majority of known offenders.

The gap is widest for serious violence.

It holds across countries and periods.

Women's offending is more often property-related.

Women are a small share of the prison population.

Competing accounts

Differential socialisation and supervision.

Control theory: less opportunity, more constraint.

Chivalry thesis, weakly supported.

Masculinity as accomplished through crime.

Recording and charging practice differences.

Pathways from victimisation to offending.

Educational reference. The chivalry thesis has mixed support; sentencing differences vary by offence and jurisdiction.