

Conformist and deviant women in criminological perspective - which of them are more problematic?

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The paper presents some arguments against a relatively widespread (and nearly generally accepted) thesis that women in contemporary criminology have been overlooked in the eyes of men. Yet, even a quick glance at some most important theories shows an entirely opposite picture. Women - as it seems - have always played an extremely important role, sometimes even a crucial role in criminological concepts, although not exclusively as deviant, delinquent or criminal females. Women appear to be relatively often an important criminogenic and anti-criminogenic factor in the explanation of causes of criminal behaviour and criminality of (male and female) offenders. The problem of contemporary criminological theories does not lie therefore in their presumptive disregard of female crime, but rather in their failure to not have sufficiently explained female conformity (that means, harmonisation with societal/ institutional expectations or social roles). This finding is extremely paradoxical, because it seems that men have been in general rather more afraid of a normal (i.e. conformist) woman than of an abnormal or "deviant" female. For the latter, they have all the time disposed of mechanisms and instruments (based on "objective" scientific knowledge, derived from psychological, sociological, philosophical, psychiatric and last, but not least, criminological findings) for proactive or reactive (formal and informal) control. These mechanisms were obviously effective enough, even to the degree to take female conformist behaviour as something self-evident and a kind of natural (biologically programmed) fact.

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