

Ideological Delinquency: Gender Differences Among Israeli Youth During the Withdrawal From the Gaza Strip

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Mally Shechory¹ and Avital Laufer²

Abstract

This study aims to examine the factors that channel boys and girls toward committing illegal activity. The measures examined include social control factors (belief, commitment, attachment, and involvement) and ideological religious worldviews. The study examines 262 Israeli adolescents who have taken part in illegal and legal activities during the resistance to the Gaza evacuation. Findings suggest that illegal activity levels are greater among boys than girls, whereas ideological obligation and commitment are greater among girls than boys. Involvement with friends positively predicts ideological obligation among boys, which in turn is related to increased likelihood of illegal activity. Among girls, lower commitment and lower belief as well as greater ideological obligation are predictive of illegal activity.

Keywords

ideological delinquency, gender differences, Gaza disengagement

Introduction

Crime patterns and trends indicate that youth violence has become a serious public issue that affects families, peers, communities, and victims (e.g., Haynie, Steffensmeier, & Bell, 2007). Gender appears to be one of the variables that most frequently correlates to delinquency and violence (Daly, 1994; Haynie et al., 2007; Mears, Ploeger, & Warr,

¹Bar-Ilan University and Ariel University Center of Samaria, Israel

²University St. Kiryat Itzhak Rabin, Netanya, Israel

Corresponding Author:

Mally Shechory, Department of Criminology, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan 52900, Israel

E-mail: mally@bezeqint.net

1998; Piquero, Gover, MacDonald, & Piquero, 2005). Studies consistently have found that females of all ages and from all ethnic and racial groups commit less violent offenses compared with males, with the exception of a handful of peculiarly female offense types (Steffensmeier & Allan, 1996).

Most studies on delinquency deal with the motivation for criminal delinquency among men (Nagel & Johnson, 1994). Lately, however, with the advent of the women's rights movement, the rise of feminist scholarship, and the marked increase in female criminality in recent decades (Simon & Ahn-Redding, 2005), the long-standing neglect of female criminality is being reversed and there is a growing body of research on women offenders and women in prisons (e.g., Komarovskaya, Loper, & Warren, 2007; Morash & Schram, 2002; Morton, 2003; Pollock, 2002; Roberts, 2002; Verona & Carbonell, 2000).

Most studies that dealt with female criminality attempted to explain the reasons for the low incidence of women's crimes compared to those of men by focusing on socialization processes (Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2004; Heidensohn, 1995; Hirschi, 1969), differences in ethical judgments (e.g., see Gilligan, 1982), biological differences, psychological differences, etc.

The current study expands on these studies by examining gender differences according to the principles of the social control theory (Hirschi, 1969). This study also examines a fairly neglected issue in gender criminology, that of ideological delinquency.

Social control theory is regarded as one of the major contributors to the understanding of juvenile delinquency. It refers to different types of criminal delinquency, claiming that most criminal activity begins during adolescence (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1995; Hirschi, 1969). According to this theory, most people are conformists because of the social control imposed on them by four social control factors: commitment, involvement, belief, and attachment. The stronger and more positive these factors are, the more conformist is the individual's behavior; the weaker they are, or in their absence, the more liable the individual is to turn to criminal behavior.

Commitment refers to the extent of the individual's investment in adhering to rules and norms and to the individual's assessment of the loss incurred by the breach thereof. Involvement refers to participation in conventional activity such as studies, work, and hobbies. It may be examined in terms of activity with parents, peer groups, and in school. Belief refers to the individual's acceptance or nonacceptance of social norms, laws, and conventions. Attachment indicates the strength of an individual's connection to the accepted social system. Most researchers regard positive social bonds as a function of previous experience in the various socialization systems, such as parents, peer groups, school, and community (Fagan & Pabon, 1990; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1995; Kraft & Pianta, 2000; Reid, Patterson, & Snyder, 2002; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003).

Hirschi argued that the social control dimensions are interrelated but that they may also have an independent influence on youth delinquency (Costello & Vowell, 1999). Empirical studies are generally supportive of the theory (e.g., see Chapple, McQuillan, & Berdahi, 2005; Costello & Vowell, 1999; Wiatrowski, Griswold, & Roberts, 1981);

however, they refer to criminal juvenile delinquency and not criminality based on religious-ideology causes.

Previous studies on the connection between religiosity and social control dealt primarily with the question of whether religious people commit less crime compared to irreligious people, while examining the assumption that religious belief may serve as a shield against involvement in criminal delinquency (e.g., Benda, 1995, 1997; Cochran, Wood, & Arneklev, 1994; Johanson, Joon Jang, Larson, & De Li, 2001). Research findings and conclusions were inconsistent and contradictory (e.g., Benda, 1997; Johanson, De Li, & McCullough, 2000). Nevertheless, some research findings showed that the relationship between religiosity and adolescent deviance becomes nonsignificant after controlling for family and peer variables in multivariate models and that the effects of religiosity on deviance are mediated by social control and social learning variables (Bahr, Hawks, & Wang, 1993; Benda, 1995; Burkett & Warren, 1987; Elifson, Peterson, & Hadaway, 1983; Evans, Cullen, Danaway, & Burton, 1995).

These studies, however, did not examine delinquency that derives specifically from the offender's religious commitment. Although we are witness to terrible crimes committed in the name of religion and ideology, the number of studies conducted on ideology—or religion-based delinquency—is very limited (e.g., Constantelos, 2004; Kimhi & Even, 2004; Post, 2000), and they primarily focus on political terrorism, altruistic suicide, martyrdom among political offenders (e.g., Constantelos, 2004; Kimhi & Even, 2004; Post, 2000), and on female suicide bombers in the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict (Israeli, 2004; Ness, 2005; Schweitzer, 2006; Tzoreff, 2006; Victor, 2003). To the best of our knowledge, no studies have been conducted on gender-based differences in ideological delinquency among youth. A study conducted by Shechory and Laufer (2008) found that in the case of ideological delinquency, when the offender's activity is fed by the ideology he was raised on and is supported by the parents' ideological views, the factors that influence extreme criminal behavior are involvement with friends and the absence of belief in the formal legal system. However, in this previous study, no gender differences were examined.

There are some indications that boys and girls are affected differently by political and religious ideologies and moral issues. For example, boys tend to commit to ideological and political issues earlier than girls (Archer, 1989; Goossens, 2001).

Gilligan (1982) emphasized the distinct gender-based socialization processes that lead to a different moral perception. According to Gilligan, males tend to construe morality in more utilitarian terms, whereas females are guided by the primacy of human relationships and by the obligation to care for and to avoid harming others. Thus, females are socialized in such a way that they are more constrained by moral evaluations of behavior than are males.

As for religiosity, studies examining gender differences report that women tend to be more religious than men and tend to perceive religiosity as an intrinsic orientation (i.e., as the aim itself) rather than an extrinsic one (i.e., as a means to some other aim; Donahue, 1985; Milevsky & Levitt, 2004). Therefore, these gender differences in

political ideology and religiosity will be examined in the current study, in addition to their relationships with the four social control variables.

The Gaza Disengagement Plan

The decision to implement the Disengagement Plan was taken by the Israeli government in February 2005. The Disengagement Plan called for the evacuation of the Jewish population and the forces of the Israeli army from the Gaza Strip as well as evacuation of Jewish residents from several settlements in Samaria. The government's decision aroused stringent opposition among the residents of these regions. The period of time from the day the decision was taken until the settlements were evacuated in September 2005 was marked by media reports, both in Israel and abroad, of continuous antidisengagement protests. Opposition to the plan's implementation was characterized by intensive adolescent involvement in both legal activity (rallies, demonstrations, open letters of protest, persuasion, etc.) and illegal activity (blocking main traffic arteries, unauthorized demonstrations, resistance to the security forces during the evacuation process itself, arrests, refusal to cooperate with the legal authorities, etc.). Most teenagers who participated in antidisengagement activity came from a religious Zionist background. The motivation that drove them to oppose the disengagement and participate in antidisengagement activity was both religious and ideological (Shechory & Laufer, 2008; Susskind et al., 2005). From a religious aspect, this group views holding on to every part of the Promised Land as a religious obligation, and evacuation of the settlements was therefore perceived as a sin. Moreover, this group is committed to the right-wing ideologies that regard the retention of Gaza, Judea, and Samaria as a means of maintaining Israel's security. Therefore, the evacuation of settlements is also regarded as a security risk for the existence of the State of Israel.

The aim of the current study is threefold: to examine gender differences in youth involvement in illegal ideological activity, to assess gender differences in ideological motivation and social control measures, and to examine whether ideological and social control variables have a different association with boys' and girls' illegal ideology-based activity. As previously mentioned, research on ideology-based juvenile delinquency is extremely rare. Therefore, the present study will serve to expand existing knowledge on the subject of ideological delinquency in general and in particular on gender-based differences that exist in ideological delinquency during adolescence. It is highly important to obtain a deeper understanding of the foundation that leads to delinquency based on religion or political ideology and to the spread of delinquent and/or terrorist activity driven by religious or political ideologies in which adolescents may also become involved.

Method

Participants

The study involved 262 adolescents from 56 communities in Judea and Samaria: 88 boys (33.6%) and 174 girls (66.4%). It uses a targeted sample whereby research

assistants visited entertainment, leisure, and other places and events (youth movement meetings, rallies) where adolescents residing in Judea and Samaria gather. The research assistants asked adolescents who were involved in antidisengagement activity to volunteer to take part in the study. As all were minors, each received a written information page for his or her own and his or her parents' information, with an explanation and a request to participate in the study, and which also clarified that the questionnaires were for research purposes only.

Some 20 adolescents refused to participate in the study, suspecting that the study aimed to serve the needs of Israel's security services (ISS). The sample included only those adolescents who actively participated in antievacuation-related activity. We have no information on the differences between the adolescents who refused to take part in the study and those who did. Their refusal to participate may be due to their extensive involvement in illegal activity.

All participants in the study took an active part in antidisengagement activity. Of the entire sample, 64 boys and 99 girls participated in both legal and illegal activity, whereas 24 boys and 75 girls participated only in legal activity. These differences constituted the study's main distribution between youth that took part in both legal and illegal activity (the ideologically delinquent group) and youth that resisted the Disengagement Plan without taking part in any of the illegal activity (the legal ideological group).

The average age of the participants was 16.20 years ($SD = 1.18$). They had lived in Judea and Samaria communities for an average of 13.33 years ($SD = 4.26$). Most of them were born in Israel (97.33%) and described themselves as religious (98.4%), that is, meticulously observant of the commandments of the Jewish religion. The remainder defined themselves as traditional, that is, they observed some but not all religious commandments. All the participants study in religious schools and live in communities defined as religious ones.

Measures

Personal background questionnaire. This questionnaire includes demographic questions (age, gender, family background, etc.). To determine the level of religious observance, the participants were asked to define themselves by marking the appropriate answer (secular, traditional, religious), to define the type of school they attend (religious or secular), and the community they live in (religious or secular). Participants were also asked to describe what drove them to participate in anti-disengagement activity (For more details see Shechory & Laufer, 2008).

Questionnaire to determine extent of participation in the evacuation process. This questionnaire was designed to determine the extent and kind of participation and included 18 questions relating to active opposition to the disengagement process. Questions were divided into two categories: legal activity and illegal activity. Ten legal activities were listed, such as distribution of stickers, persuasion of soldiers to refuse orders, and establishment of protest tents; in addition, eight illegal activities were listed, such as blocking roads, burning tires, using caltrops, and physically confronting the police. Participants were requested to mark each activity in which they took part (yes–no

questions). Participants involved in at least one illegal activity were placed in the illegal activity group. As such, none of the adolescents in the legal activity group were involved in any illegal activity.

Hirschi's Control Theory Questionnaire (Hirschi, 1969). This is a self-report questionnaire that includes 36 questions divided into four dimensions: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. Responses to the questions were graded using a Likert-type scale ranging from *not at all* (1) to *very much* (5). The present study examined attachment and involvement measures with regard to relationships with parents and friends.

The attachment measure consists of 16 questions, 9 of which relate to the nature of the adolescent's relationship with parents ("To what extent do your parents understand you? To what extent do you take your parents' opinions into consideration?" $\alpha = .84$). The remaining 7 questions relate to the adolescent's relationship with friends ("To what extent do your friends understand you?" "To what extent do you take your friends' opinions into consideration?" $\alpha = .79$). The involvement measure includes 3 questions that relate to the amount of time devoted to involvement with parents and shared activities that are unconnected to household routine ("To what extent are you and your parents involved in shared activities that are unconnected to household routine?" $\alpha = .69$). The measure also includes 3 questions relating to activities and involvement with friends ("To what extent do you participate in the activities of your group of friends?" $\alpha = .60$). The commitment measure includes 4 questions that relate to the extent to which the individual invests in conventional activities and the extent of his or her motivation to succeed ("Are you willing to volunteer for a social activity that you are not obliged to take part in?" $\alpha = .82$).

The belief measure includes 4 questions that relate to acceptance of norms and laws ("At school I comply with the set rules and regulations"; "Most offenders are not to blame for their actions"; "It's okay to violate the law as long as you are not caught"; "In order to get ahead, I may have to do things that do not always comply with accepted norms"; $\alpha = .36$). In light of this low internal consistency in the belief measure, we decided to examine it using only one question: "In order to get ahead, I may have to do things that do not always comply with accepted norms." This question was chosen as it represents the perception that the person is prepared to violate the law solely for the sake of achieving his or her objective (for more details, see Shechory & Laufer, 2008).

Ideological Obligation Questionnaire (Solomon & Laufer, 2004). This questionnaire examines ideological obligation. Participants were asked to rate to what extent each of the 20 statements reflected their position on a 5-point scale ranging from (1) *not at all* to (5) *very much*. (e.g., "I'm willing to participate in demonstrations"; "I'm willing to try to persuade other people to believe in my political views"; "It bothers me that some people hold political views opposed to mine"). The score was the mean of the participant's responses. Internal consistency for the scale was $\alpha = .82$. This questionnaire was administered in another study on Israeli youth and was found to be reliable, with a high Cronbach's alpha (.89; Solomon & Laufer, 2004).

Procedure

As described above, the present study used a convenience sample whereby research assistants interviewed the adolescents residing in Judea and Samaria where they gather in their communities (youth movement meetings, rallies). The questionnaires were distributed during the Gaza Disengagement process and when it was being implemented. The data were collected over a period of about 6 weeks, from the beginning of August 2005 until mid-September 2005.

A *Z* test was used to assess gender differences in youth involvement in illegal ideological activity, and analyses of variance were used to assess gender differences in ideological motivation and social control measures. Multiple and logistic regressions were used to examine whether ideological and social control variables have a different association with boys' and girls' illegal ideology-based activity.

Results

Gender Differences in Activity Patterns in Antidisengagement Protests

An analysis of the findings indicated that boys and girls tended to participate in similar legal and illegal activities. However, gender differences did appear with regard to one particular activity—moving to take up residence in Gush Katif (the Hebrew name for the Jewish settlements in Gaza). The findings showed that girls (41.4%), more than boys (21.6%), tended to move and take up residence in the settlements slated for evacuation ($Z = 3.17, p < .001$, two tailed).

In general, with regard to all the activity among youth during the Disengagement, 37.8% of the participants took part in legal activity only (and as such they constituted the nondelinquent ideological group), compared with 62.2% who participated in illegal as well as legal activity (constituting the delinquent ideological group). Overall, it was found that boys (72.7%) tended more than girls (56.9%) to participate in illegal activity ($\phi = -0.15, p < .05$, two tailed.).

Gender Differences in Ideological Obligation

To examine the differences between the groups regarding ideological obligation (according to the ideology questionnaire), we conducted a two-way 2×2 analysis of variance. Means and standard deviations by group are shown in Table 1. Results indicated that ideological obligation was higher for girls compared to boys— $F(1, 256) = 8.91, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03$ —in both the illegal and the legal group, $F(1, 256) = 28.89, p < .001, \eta^2 = .10$. No interaction was found between gender and type of activity, $F(1, 256) = 1.21, ns, \eta^2 = .01$.

Furthermore, in response to the question about the reasons and motivation for participation in antidisengagement activity (personal background questionnaire), most of the adolescents noted that the main motivation for opposition to the evacuation was

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of the Study Variables by Legal or Illegal Activity and Gender ($n = 231-260$)

	Legal activity, <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)		Illegal activity, <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Belief	4.08 (0.88)	4.26 (0.98)	3.86 (1.23)	3.58 (1.35)
Commitment	3.70 (0.46)	4.05 (0.43)	3.76 (0.63)	3.84 (0.52)
Attachment—parents	3.21 (0.54)	3.56 (0.71)	3.20 (0.60)	3.37 (0.71)
Involvement—parents	2.56 (0.69)	2.82 (0.72)	2.47 (0.73)	2.59 (0.72)
Attachment—friends	3.43 (0.68)	3.54 (0.73)	3.58 (0.64)	3.59 (0.59)
Involvement—friends	3.62 (0.60)	3.43 (0.77)	3.88 (0.69)	3.72 (0.52)
Ideological obligation	3.56 (0.57)	3.69 (0.60)	3.86 (0.54)	4.16 (0.38)

ideological (boys, 84.1%; girls, 93.1%) followed by religious belief (boys, 76.1%; girls, 89%). The gender differences were nevertheless significant. Girls, more than boys, stated that their participation in antisocial activity was based on ideology ($Z = 2.28, p < .05$, two tailed) and religious beliefs ($Z = 2.73, p < .01$, two tailed).

Gender Differences in the Social Control Variables

To examine gender differences according to social control measures, we conducted a 2×2 multivariate analysis of variance, by gender and type of activity (for means and standard deviations, see Table 1). Significant differences were found regarding commitment— $F(1, 227) = 8.16, p < .01, \eta^2 = .04$ —and attachment to parents, $F(1, 227) = 6.80, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03$. Girls, compared to boys, tended to have a higher level of commitment to conventional activity ($M = 3.92, SD = 0.49$, and $M = 3.64, SD = 0.58$, respectively) and a higher attachment level to parents ($M = 3.44, SD = 0.71$, and $M = 3.02, SD = 0.68$, respectively). In addition, the analysis according to activity pattern revealed differences between the groups regarding belief— $F(1, 227) = 6.94, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03$ —and involvement with friends, $F(1, 227) = 7.99, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03$. Adolescents involved in illegal activity tended to have a lower sense of belief ($M = 3.53, SD = 0.73$) and a higher level of involvement with friends ($M = 3.88, SD = 0.69$) compared to adolescents who were involved in legal activity ($M = 3.84, SD = 0.59$, and $M = 3.62, SD = 0.59$, respectively). No significant interactions were found between gender and type of activity.

Predicting Illegal Ideological Activity

Correlations among the study variables by gender appear in Table 2. Two sets of regressions were conducted to explore the associations between gender, social control measures, ideological obligation, and illegal activity among the adolescences. The first set was composed of two multiple regressions, by gender, of ideological obligation on social control measures (belief, commitment, involvement with friends and parents,

Table 2. Correlations Among the Study Variables by Gender (*n* = 260)

	Commitment	Attachment— parents	Involvement— parents	Attachment— friends	Involvement— friends	Ideological obligation
Males						
Belief	.21	-.08	-.08	-.03	-.18	-.10
Commitment		.03	-.18	.11	.15	.31***
Attachment—parents			.38***	.30***	.14	.10
Involvement—parents				.02	.11	.01
Attachment—friends					.37***	.14
Involvement—friends						.45***
Females						
Belief	.40***	.11	-.02	.04	.10	-.07
Commitment		.20**	.24**	.16*	.26**	.01
Attachment—parents			.42***	.26**	.10	.03
Involvement—parents				.13	.20*	-.07
Attachment—friends					.39***	.15
Involvement—friends						.13

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

Table 3. Multiple Regressions Predicting Ideological Obligation With Social Control Variables by Gender ($n = 224$)

	Boys ($n = 80$)			Girls ($n = 144$)		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Belief	-0.03	0.05	-.08	-0.05	0.04	-.11
Commitment	0.16	0.09	.20	0.02	0.11	.02
Attachment—parents	-0.04	0.010	-.05	0.03	0.07	.04
Involvement—parents	-0.02	0.08	-.03	-0.08	0.07	-.10
Attachment—friends	-0.05	0.09	-.07	0.09	0.07	.10
Involvement—friends	0.34	0.09	.44***	0.14	0.07	.18

Note: Males: $R^2 = .26$, $F(6, 73) = 4.25$, $p < .01$. Females: $R^2 = .07$, $F(6, 137) = 1.69$, *ns*.

*** $p < .001$.

Table 4. Logistic Regressions Predicting Illegal Activity With Social Control Variables and Ideology by Gender ($n = 224$)

	Boys ($n = 80$)			Girls ($n = 144$)		
	B	SE	Exp(B)	B	SE	Exp(B)
Step 1						
Belief	-0.25	0.27	0.78	-0.53**	0.19	0.59
Commitment	0.01	0.48	1.01	-0.97*	0.50	0.38
Attachment—parents	0.29	0.56	1.34	-0.03	0.30	0.98
Involvement—parents	-0.36	0.40	0.70	-0.53	0.30	0.59
Attachment—friends	0.19	0.45	1.20	-0.21	0.33	0.81
Involvement—friends	0.64	0.44	1.90	0.95**	0.36	2.58
Step 2						
Belief	-0.23	0.28	0.80	-0.54**	0.21	0.58
Commitment	-0.38	0.53	0.69	-1.15*	0.56	0.32
Attachment—parents	0.48	0.61	1.61	-0.18	0.33	0.84
Involvement—parents	-0.43	0.44	0.65	-0.46	0.32	0.63
Attachment—friends	0.28	0.47	1.33	-0.38	0.37	0.68
Involvement—friends	0.21	0.50	1.23	0.72	0.39	2.06
Ideological obligation	1.57*	0.64	4.82	2.18***	0.51	8.88

Note: Males: Step 1, $\chi^2(6) = 5.49$, *ns*, Nagelkerke's $R^2 = .10$; Step 2, $\chi^2(1) = 6.87$, $p < .01$, Nagelkerke's $R^2 = .11$; total: $\chi^2(7) = 12.36$, *ns*, Nagelkerke's $R^2 = .21$. Females: Step 1, $\chi^2(6) = 29.21$, $p < .001$, Nagelkerke's $R^2 = .25$; Step 2, $\chi^2(1) = 25.29$, $p < .001$, Nagelkerke's $R^2 = .18$; total: $\chi^2(7) = 54.50$, $p < .001$, Nagelkerke's $R^2 = .43$.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

and attachment to friends and parents). The second set was composed of two logistic regressions, by gender, of legal or illegal activity on social control measures in the first step, and ideological obligation in the second step. Table 3 presents the multiple regressions of ideological obligation, and Table 4 the logistic regressions of legal or illegal

activity. It should be noted that correlations with age maximized at $r = .23$ ($p < .05$) and therefore age was not controlled for in the regressions.

The tables show that for boys, greater ideological obligation is predicted by higher involvement with friends. Illegal activity (vs. legal) is in turn predicted by greater ideological obligation for both genders as well as by lower belief and commitment for girls. Gender differences in the extent of prediction of illegal activity by ideological obligation were revealed as nonsignificant ($Z = 0.75$, *ns*; Paternoster, Brame, Mazerolle, & Piquero, 1998); that is, ideological obligation predicts illegal activity to a similar extent for both males and females.

To sum up, boys were more involved in illegal activity than girls. Ideological obligation among boys, which was lower than among girls, was predicted by higher involvement with friends and predicted greater involvement in illegal activity. Girls had higher ideological obligation than boys. They had greater commitment than boys and, together with belief, this negatively predicted illegal activity. Ideological obligation positively predicted illegal activity among both genders.

Discussion

The present study is an attempt to examine the differences between boys and girls in motivation toward ideological delinquency. An examination of the participation of adolescent boys and girls in illegal antisocial activity pointed to higher involvement of boys than of girls. Our findings are in line with official criminal statistics, which indicate that the incidence of criminality among women is lower than among men (Corbett, 2007). Despite the increase in female crime rates (Chernoff & Simon, 2000; Small, 2000) and in the number of women in prisons (Islam-Zwart & Vik, 2004; Harrison & Beck, 2003), women still commit fewer offences, they are apprehended less, and the nature of their crimes is less severe (D'Unger, Land, & McCall, 2002). Although these data relate to criminal offences, the present study indicates that it is also relevant for ideological delinquency.

Gender-related differences in criminal activity are also in keeping with the literature that deals with the distinctive socialization processes boys and girls undergo and with the connection between these and delinquency. Therefore, the second aim of the study was to examine gender differences regarding ideology and social control variables. It was found that girls reported higher levels of ideological obligation and social control compared to boys. The findings were in line with the claim by Hirschi (1969) that boys and girls are subjected to different socialization processes and that this inevitably affects their motivation to violate the law.

Despite the passing of several decades, this view is supported by Heidensohn (1995) who, in her feminist approach, claims that a broad range of intricate social mechanisms exert pressure on women to conform rather than to contravene the law. It appears that even today, the outcome of higher social control and ideological obligation is that girls are more prone to conform to social norms than are boys.

Therefore, the third aim of the study was to examine via path analysis whether gender differences exist in the association between ideological obligation and social

control measures and the illegal activity. Results indicated that a dual pattern leading to illegal activity, one that differs by gender, emerges from the model. Boys are lower than girls on commitment and higher on involvement with friends, which heightens the likelihood of illegal activity. Yet they are lower than girls on ideology, which lowers this likelihood. Girls are higher on commitment and lower on involvement with friends than boys, which lowers the likelihood of illegal activity, yet they are higher than boys on ideology, which increases this likelihood. Thus, there are two conflicting forces increasing the likelihood of illegal activity: One has to do with lower commitment and higher involvement with friends (applies to boys) and the other is about stronger ideological obligation (applies to girls).

The results found for boys—indicating that higher involvement with friends and lower commitment are the variables associated with ideological delinquency—strongly resemble previous findings regarding boys' juvenile delinquency. It has already been mentioned that friends have important direct effects on delinquency (Costello & Vowell, 1999; Weerman & Smeenk, 2005; Warr, 1993) and that delinquent peer associations offer norms that undermine conventional belief in the family and in religion (Burkett, 1993). These claims were made with regard to criminal delinquency. However, they might explain, at least partially, the involvement of boys in ideological delinquency.

With regard to ideology, Gurr (1980) has claimed that ideological offenders belong to social groups that espouse the same ideology. The association with a peer group with similar ideological beliefs may be explained by the differential association theory (Sutherland, 1955). According to this theory, criminal definitions and techniques are learned in intimate personal groups, and behavior is influenced by associations that are higher in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity. Although Sutherland did not limit the differential association theory to peer influence, when testing the theory, research has generally focused on peers and association with delinquent peers as a strong predictor of delinquent behavior. In this regard, we can see a similarity between ideological and criminal delinquents, because in both groups social involvement is the basis for illegal acts.

However, peer influence was found to be more appropriate for explaining delinquency among boys, whereas among girls it was found that the main motivation for involvement in ideological delinquency derived from their religious ideological beliefs.

In the same vein, we think there is a similarity between Gilligan's (1982) attribution of higher obligation among women to a moral value system and the findings in the present study, which point to higher obligation among girls toward the ideological-religious beliefs of their group. In our estimation, this finding indicates that value systems influence the behavior of girls more significantly than of boys. This finding matches those of other studies (Donahue, 1985; Milevsky & Levitt, 2004) that report that women tend to be more religious than men and perceive religiosity as an intrinsic orientation (i.e., as the aim itself) rather than as an extrinsic one (i.e., as a means toward some other aim). This means that for girls, more than for boys, value perceptions (moral values, religiosity or ideologies) constitute a significant influence on their behavior.

Similarly, Mears, Ploeger, and Warr (1998), based on Gilligan's theory of moral development and Sutherland's differential association theory, found that moral evaluation among girls served as a barrier against the influence of delinquent peer groups. This was not found in our study; on the contrary, it was found that ideological obligation was positively associated with ideological delinquency among girls. Hence, we assume that although the girls' moral code served as a barrier against involvement in illegal activity, it had an opposite effect in the case of ideological delinquency, as their moral code in fact encouraged involvement in illegal activity.

We think it is important to note that although attachment to parents was not found to be one of the factors influencing involvement in ideological delinquency, the gender differences found in this measure are significant. We tend to assume that the greater attachment to parents among girls found in this study is significant for understanding the role of ideology in their involvement in illegal activity. As noted above, concern for others constitutes a barrier against delinquent behavior among girls (Mears et al., 1998). However, the girls who participated in antidisengagement activity come from homes and a social environment with similar religious ideological beliefs. This being the case, we assume that attachment to parents not only does not prevent ideological involvement but it may in fact encourage it when it constitutes a fulfillment of beliefs held by the girl's parents. Further studies are needed to address this issue.

As a rule, it seems that the explanations in the known literature regarding the importance of the family and of parental control as factors that inhibit or facilitate delinquency (Hirschi, 1969; Datesman & Scarpitti, 1975; McCord, 1991; Rankin & Kern, 1994; Wells & Rankin, 1986) do not explain ideology-based delinquency when the adolescent's social environment holds the same religious ideological beliefs. When the social environment regards it necessary to oppose a government action, the ideological delinquency of its adolescents may represent a reflection, albeit an extreme one, of these beliefs. This way adolescents are not detaching from their parents; rather, their actions are a powerful, even extreme, expression of attachment to parents and a continued reinforcement of their worldviews.

Social control theory (Hirschi, 1969) proposes that delinquent behavior occurs when an individual's bonds with the society are broken or weakened. It explains conformism mainly in terms of formal and informal social control factors. The assumption is that nonviolation of the law is rooted in the internalization of conventional beliefs, laws, and cultural norms (the intrinsic validity of the norm; Hirschi, 1969; Meier, 1982), as well as in respect for the socialization agents that instilled them (Hirschi, 1969; Fagan & Pabon, 1990; Kaplan, 1995). Study findings show that when a clash occurs between formal cultural norms (laws) and informal cultural norms (fulfillment of ideological and religious values) held by the adolescent's in-group—friends and parents—the influence of the informal mechanism tends to dominate.

Furthermore, although the involvement of a juvenile delinquent with a peer group is associated with diminishing attachment to parents, and both together are associated with greater involvement in crime, this association was not found in the present study. Our findings and the interpretations thereof in the discussion did not indicate that

increased involvement with peer groups undermined the beliefs held by the family or in the religion. On the contrary, in the case of ideological delinquents, as opposed to criminal delinquents, peer-group influence coincided with the family's influence and religious ideology.

Overall, the study findings indicate a distinct difference in the motivation for ideological delinquency between boys and girls. Whereas among girls it seems that ideology is the main factor that contributes to involvement in ideological offences, among boys we see a far greater influence exerted by peer groups. Therefore ideological delinquency among boys is more similar to the motives associated with criminal juvenile delinquency found in previous studies. These findings indicate the importance of a more in-depth examination of ideological delinquency among adolescents, as it cannot be explained using models that refer to criminal delinquency among youth.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Continued Research

Several limitations of this study need to be addressed. First, the research population included only those adolescents who participated in antidisengagement activity and who agreed to complete the questionnaire. Therefore, the study does not examine the relationship between Hirschi's components among adolescents who did not take part in antidisengagement activity. The aim of this study was to examine the tendency toward delinquency among adolescents holding the same religious ideological beliefs. Nevertheless, there is a need for continued research to examine the relationship between Hirschi's measures among adolescents who are not involved in ideology-based protest activity and those who are.

It should also be noted that the girl sample was larger than the boy sample. Although it was a target sample, girls were in fact more willing to participate in the study. It was probably because of the fear of exposure that fewer boys volunteered to cooperate. However, because the statistical analyses also included comparisons between the genders, and as all the data take into consideration the size of the groups, in our opinion the difference in the numbers of girls and boys had no impact on the findings.

Moreover, the present study did not examine individual psychological traits that differentiate between adolescents involved in illegal activity and those involved in legal activity, nor the characteristics that define self-control. These variables are pertinent (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1995) and worthy of investigation in future studies. Even so, the aim of the present study was to examine general social variables that characterize boys and girls who are likely to turn to illegal ideological activity. Ideology is a powerful social force, and understanding the characteristics of adolescents who are likely to violate the law for their ideological or religious beliefs is an important goal in itself. In the present study, this factor was found to have particular influence over boys. However, the measure that examined involvement with friends referred to involvement in various activities in general. Perhaps there is a need to examine the nature of relationships with delinquent peers. Recent studies (e.g., see Weerman & Smeenk, 2005) emphasized the importance of the distinction between the roles of regular friends and

best friends with regard to peer similarity in delinquent behavior. This should also be examined in relation to involvement in delinquent activity based on religious beliefs in order to gain a broader and more in-depth knowledge of all related issues in the field of ideological delinquency among youth, which is still in its infancy.

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The authors declared no conflicts of interests with respect to the authorship and/or publication of this article.

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