**“Gender is the biggest predictor of criminality.”  
How far do you agree with this view?**

Official statistics show that men commit far more crimes than women, and that they also commit different types of crime. Some Sociologists would argue that gender is the biggest predictor or criminality, however other sociologists would put forward other suggestions.

Heidensohn argues that women are subject to far more and far stronger social controls than men. This is called 'control theory': women commit fewer crimes than men because the lives of women are subject to more social control than the lives of men. If this is true, in a patriarchal society, crime-rates will always be lower for women than men. Therefore, it could be argued that gender is the biggest predictor of criminality.

There are other reasons to think that men are more likely to commit crimes: gang cultures are heavily male dominated. Likewise, all large organised crime syndicates are both patriarchal in nature and almost exclusively male. Perhaps this can be explained by the social-pressures men face to earn money and gain social status symbols in order to feel “successful in life.” Therefore, the socialisation of men could also point toward gender being the biggest predictor of criminality.

However, maybe there are other factors that serve as stronger predictors of criminality: Marxist sociologists would argue that class, poverty, inequality and the pressures of capitalism are the biggest drivers of crime in society. For example, there is more crime among working class people than in middle/upper class people. This shows that it could be wealth, and not gender that is the biggest predictor of crime. However, it could be argued that the middle/upper classes do commit white collar crimes that are harder to report/record.

In conclusion, gender is a significant, if not the most significant, factor in predicting criminality. Regardless of theory: the statistics are fairly clear on the matter. Heidensohn’s theory and a study of how males are socialised in our society show that there are good sociological reasons for differences in male and female crime-rates.