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# An Intersectional Approach to Criminological Theory: Incorporating the Intersectionality of Race and Gender into Agnew's General Strain Theory

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# An Intersectional Approach to Criminological Theory: Incorporating the Intersectionality of Race and Gender into Agnew's General Strain Theory

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*Mainstream criminological theories often fail to incorporate demographic characteristics (which are robust predictors of criminal behavior). Also, many scholars suggest that theories of criminality need to move beyond sex or race or class etc. and utilize these dynamic characteristics in tandem. This theoretical perspective is often referred to as intersectionality. There is some criminological literature on the individual effects of these demographic characteristics as they represent social status as such they interact to effect experience, agency, and power. This analysis discusses how studying the intersectionality of gender and race may change explanations of criminal behavior. Specifically, how knowledge of gender and race literatures may interact to inform Agnew's general strain theory.*

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“Society is composed of individuals, but these individuals collectively create a structure, so that the structure may seem to be beyond them. Persons are born into this structure and, through socialization, they come to be a part of the system, recreate it, perpetuate it. They internalize its values. They may attempt to change it.”- Andersen (2005: 438, lecture notes on Mills, 1959)

## **Introduction**

Theories of crime struggle to account for gender and race disparities in offending, and these perspectives do not suggest how the intersectionality of these traits relate to behavior. The

theory of intersectionality was originated by feminist and critical theorists to describe logical approaches to revealing meaning and consequences associated with membership in various social groups. Collins (2000) describes intersectionality as constraints derived from a combination of micro- through macro-level power structures and interrelated systems of oppression. At the core of intersectionality research is the belief that for researchers to understand human behavior they must acknowledge and account for socially constructed, oppressed and oppressive forces which contribute to one's identity (Potter and Brown, 2014). Lynch and Michalowski (2006) suggest that the potential of general criminological theory is substantially increased "when they are linked to broader structural and contextual explanations of crime that incorporate race, class and gender relationships and power hierarchies" (p. 131). This essay intends to incorporate the basic tenets of intersectionality into a main criminological theory, Agnew's general strain theory. When considering the intersectionality of race and gender through general strain theory the assumptions of the theory must be modified on many levels to account for variability in perceptions and reactions to stressors based on their unique individual experiences which is tied to social identity.

The aspects of gender and race have consistently correlated with criminal behavior in the majority of criminological literature. These characteristics have been identified as the strongest predictors of deviant behavior in a plethora of peer reviewed research. In official, self-report and victimization data, men commit more conventional crimes and violent crimes than females (Bernie and Messerschmidt, 1995), and African Americans generally commit more crimes than whites, (Piquero and Brame 2008). There is much criminological research on the relationship between gender and crime and between race and crime, but often overlooked is how the intersectionality of both gender and race affect deviant behavior (Hill-Collins, 1998; Pyke and Johnson, 2003; West and Fenstermaker, 1995; Zinn and Dill, 1996). Proponents of intersectionality suggest that these characteristics are indicative of overarching factors that contribute to individual experience (i.e., agency, power). Furthermore, failing to take an individual's unique social status and experience into consideration will yield extraneous results in studies exploring human behavior (Young, 2011). This is a relatively old but frequently overlooked postulate. Mills (1959) cautioned that studying individuals outside of social context would result in the creation of "abstract individuals". Abstract individuals are described as persons studied who are detached from their social environment (e.g., class, location, social networks). Detaching an individual from their social environment creates a somewhat fictitious unit of analysis because the social environment is a major contributor to an individual's behavior. Mills (1969) asserted that social context determines various constraints of an individual's behavior as it can regulate opportunity and motivation to commit deviant acts.

Therefore, if scholars strive to understand individual human behavior, researchers must take into consideration the social context in which the person exists. Continuing, humans exist within social contexts created by intersections of systems of power (e.g., race, class, gender, and sexual orientation) and oppression (e.g., prejudice, class stratification, gender inequality, and heterosexist bias). Various decisions throughout the life-course are defined by the junctures of these systems of power which arise from race, gender and class. Also, much evidence suggests that these factors have a relatively constant effect across specific groups who share similar characteristics (Lynch, 1996). It is an unfortunate fact that

race and gender are still uniquely indicative of various social constraints within our modern American society, even after decades of struggle for equal rights. Both race and gender still serve as differentiators for access to chances for success and failure throughout an individual's life-course. Lynch (1996) points out that there has been no era in human history to which race, gender, and/or class has not determined position in social, political and economic arenas. Historically, each of these identifiers has had varying effects over time. For example, the effect of being African American was much different prior to the American Civil War, and although there have been great strides in women's rights, women still lack the political and economic power that of their male counterparts possess. It is also important to note that each construct is constantly interacting with race which creates a unique social experience. That is, the impact of both race and gender is co-occurring and should be considered together when examining the root of behavior. From a methodological standpoint, this is important because the effects of each are not additive; rather they are contextual (Anderson and Collins, 1995). The effects of being African American and female interact with each other through social and economic structure. Wing (2003) summarizes that "women of color are not merely White women plus color or men of color plus gender. Instead, their identities must be multiplied together to create a holistic One when analyzing the nature of the discrimination against them" (p. 7). This distinction is complex which may explain why top criminological theories have struggled to explain gender and racial differences in crime.

The layout of this essay is as follows. First presented is a discussion of intersectionality and its role in criminological research. Secondly, a discussion of general strain theory with emphasis on attributes that pertain to race and gender will be explored. Thirdly, a suggestion of how intersectionality could be considered from the perspective of general strain theory will be purposed. Concluding is a discussion of how general strain theory is changed due to the inclusion of intersectionality.

### **Research on Intersectionality and Offending**

Prior research on race and gender suggest that the intersectionality should be included in the research discussing propensities for criminal offending (Collins, 1998a; Pyke and Johnson, 2003; West and Fenstermaker, 1995; Zinn and Dill, 1996). This is grounded in the difficulty deciphering between the effects of each gender and race because the actual effects are intersectional. This combination yields a unique social experience and should be considered holistically. Often criminological research uses gender and race variables only as descriptive measures, while intersectional research suggests that they measure social inequalities, which influence behavior (Collins, 1998b). In short, it is misleading to simply use the race and gender as descriptive traits because outside of social context the meaning/effects of race and gender become uninterpretable (Weber, 1998). Furthermore, theories of intersectionality view gender and race as a reinforcing or relational process which is hidden when using categorical measures (Andersen, 2005). To understand the fluidity and interconnectedness of race and gender, researchers have must start by considering an analysis of power (including state power) and labor material domination (Anderson, 2005). It is proposed that to identify the power in a society researchers should look to who exercises the power rather than where it is located (Foucault, 2000). By locating and identifying where power is being exercised in a society, researchers can explore the constraints and power dynamics that

social structures create. This is especially necessary to understand how those with the least power adapt to the structures, specifically, those oppressed due to race and gender (Fraser and Naples, 2004). In recognizing the power dynamics that exist in American society researchers can begin to uncover how structural forces influence individual behavior.

A small body of criminological literature has supported the primary tenants of intersectionality in that structural power discrepancies and individual perceptions unique to gender and race influence criminal offending, perception, and prosecution. Aforementioned, possible reasons for its understudy could be related to a focus within criminological literature on males because males perpetrate the majority of criminal behavior (Messerschmidt, 1993). Nonetheless, some scholars have explored the relationship between intersectionality of race and gender and found fascinating disparities. Research reviewing the criminal justice system has found structured gender and race discrepancies in the procedural process (Visher, 1983; Daly and Tonry, 1997; Leiber, Brubaker, and Fox, 2009; Peck, Leiber, and Brubaker, 2013). This is evidence that personal experience with criminal justice systems is likely to be different across race and gender due to structurally influenced race and gender prejudice. Arnold (1990) considered the social forces of patriarchy, racism, and economic marginality that lead some African American females to engage in deviant activities. She found a pattern of gender and class-based oppression, as well as criminal legal system officials often blaming African American females for their own victimization. Furthermore, in a study of what circumstances lead to female criminal activity, Richie (1996) found that racism, poverty, inaccessibility to human services programs, and aggressive crime policies were the ultimate contributors. Katz (2000) found that white females who engaged in delinquency were more likely to be depressed and be heavily influenced by peers than African American females, and that African American females were more likely to engage in delinquency if they felt they were alienated. Haney and Armstrong (2006) reviewed city-level correlates of homicide by gender and race. They found that homicide rates and targets were vastly different based on gender. Further researchers have found that structural disadvantages have a stronger effect on white homicide rates versus African Americans (Krivo and Peterson, 2000; Messner and Golden, 1992; Ousey, 1999; Parker and McCall, 1997; Shihadeh and Ousey, 1998). According to Simpson (1991) African American females have higher rates of violence than white females but less than African American males. This limited body of criminological literature supports an image perpetuated by proponents of the intersectionality which is that the effects of race and gender are interconnected.

Because much of intersectional theories are based on African-American feminist theory, many of the studies conducted are limited to females of color, but some evidence suggests that intersectionality of race and gender can influence those individuals not necessarily in oppressed or subordinate positions. Intersectionality has a strong focus on social construction and differential opportunity. The effects can also be seen at those in higher societal positions. Messerschmidt (1993) reviewed the social identity of males perpetuated by social structure; therefore their access to power and resources affects ones identity and behavior. He postulates that young men operate from a particular position in society which propagates this identity of "masculinity". Furthermore, men tend to behave in accord with a socially constructed identity of masculinity in that they project this persona of

being “rough and tough” (Sutherland and Cressey, 1924; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Parsons, 1964; Wilson and Daly, 1985; Miedzian, 1991; Gruneau and Whitson, 1993; Weinstein, et al., 1995). Thus, men tend to react to their context similar to other more oppressed groups. Research has also been on how white women’s criminality and victimization can also be assessed within an intersectionality framework (see Potter and Thomas, 2012), but as a whole the intersectionality of gender and race has been void in criminological research. Daly (2010) acknowledges that there have been few attempts to integrate intersectionality into criminological research, but that “intersectional analyses are more an aspiration for the future than a research practice today” (p. 237). Nonetheless, it is unclear exactly why criminological theories and methodologies have not adapted to this convincing ideology.

It is believed that a sound criminological theory should account for criminal offending discrepancies among all race and gender groups, but main criminological theories fail to completely account for gender and race variables, and none account for the intersectionality of gender and race. Arrigo and Young (1998) suggest that modern criminological theories neutralize or dismiss the dynamics of gender and race in their conceptual analysis because they are not configured to include these variables. This abandonment of race and gender dynamics may be linked to the generality of criminological theories (Leiber, Mack, and Featherston, 2009). That is, many core criminological theories are poised to explain criminality across all genders and races which may deem race and gender variables as invariant. Alternative areas of study suggest undeniable effects of social context and perception within the intersectionality of race and gender (Barak et al., 2001; Belknap, 2001; Britton, 2004; Brown, Jones, and Greiner, 2014; Daly, 1993, 1997; Daly and Chesney-Lind, 1988; Daly and Stephens, 1995; Flavin, 2004; Lynch, 1996; Milovanovic and Schwartz, 1996; Price and Sokoloff, 2004; Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005; Zatz, 2000). Furthermore, criminological theories tend to be more male-centered. For example, in devising social bond theory, Hirschi (1969) completely excluded females from study without ample justification. Thus, the conception of social bond theory was completely tied to an all-male sample. Recently, theories have begun to integrate qualitative components that suggest the overall process for antisocial outcomes are similar across gender and races, but the indicators of experience are qualitatively different (Agnew, 2006). Although additional research is needed to incorporate the social dynamics of race and gender, one criminological theory that could provide insight to the distinctive qualitative differences across groups is Agnew’s general strain theory. Before discussing the integration of intersectionality into general strain theory, a brief overview of the theory will be provided, as well as related research findings.

### **General Strain Theory**

Although the specific aim of this essay is to discuss how general strain theory can incorporate the intersectionality of race and gender, first discussed is Merton’s (1968) theory of deviance that is the base for Agnew’s general strain theory. At the core of Merton’s theory is inequality between culturally defined goals (measured by monetary value) and legitimate means (measured by education work) to achieve these goals. He argues that there is an emphasis on achieving such goals, but not everyone has the legitimate means to achieve their goals. Furthermore, these means to achieve the goals are unevenly distributed based on social status; those of higher social strata have more options for legitimate means

to achieve goals. In short U.S. citizens strive for the “American dream,” but the opportunity to achieve this dream through legitimate means is unequal. Therefore a strain or pressure is created on lower class citizens who are more likely to turn to illegitimate means (crime) to achieve the “dream”. In terms of a structural explanation for racial disparities, Merton’s theory is supported in the data because African-Americans are overrepresented in lower economic classes. But Merton’s theory struggles in explaining gender differences in criminal offending. In short, gender differences appear to contradict the theory in that females in U.S. society have less opportunity to legitimate means thus should commit higher crimes, but crime data does not agree (for a full review, see Messerschmidt, 1993). Nonetheless, Agnew (1992) expanded on Merton’s theory introducing a variety of individual level strains or stressors related to the achievement of goals which may increase the likelihood of crime.

While there are core similarities with Mertonian strain theory, Agnew’s theory views crime and delinquency as a reaction to a broader list of stressors or sources of stress. He identifies that there are three types of strain producers that may lead to deviance: the failure to achieve an individual’s goals, the removal of positively valued stimuli from the individual, and the confrontation of the individual with negative stimuli. These stress producers result in negative emotion which can then be eliminated through coping mechanism or crime/delinquency (see Figure 1). Each of these original strain producers is defined in the next few paragraphs.

Within failing to achieve positively valued goals, three subtypes can be identified. The first concept is similar to Merton’s ideology in that strain is created when one fails to achieve aspirations and expectations. Agnew also included short-term goals along with long-term goals. This subgroup of strain also includes failure based on blocked opportunity and individual disabilities. The second strain producing subtype is the gap between expectation and actual achievement. This discrepancy can produce anger, resentment, and disappointment. The third subtype is related to fair and just outcomes. If the outcome is viewed as unequal or unfair, then deviancy causing strain is produced.

The removal of positively valued stimuli focuses on capturing individual life experience. This category encompasses the loss something loved or valued. Examples of being the loss of a girlfriend or boyfriend, death or illness of friends or family, or leaving school may produce strain. Confrontation with negative stimuli may also produce different strains or stressors. This category encompasses life events which involve confrontation of negative actions by others. For example adolescents may be exposed to child abuse but if unable to legally escape the situation, they may respond in a deviant manner.

As a reaction, individuals may resort to deviant behavior as a way of getting around the stress, seeking vengeance against the perceived source of strain or retreating to behaviors such as drug use. When anger is produced as a response to stressors, deviant behavior is a more likely outcome. Furthermore, anger is more likely to be produced in situations where individuals blame others rather than themselves for the adverse experience (Brenard, 1990). General strain theory interprets crime or delinquency as one of many adaptations to strain, and there are a multitude of internal and external constraints that determine one’s adaptation to strain. These constraints<sup>4</sup> include peer association, beliefs, attribution of causes, self-control and self-efficacy (Agnew, 2006)

Agnew’s advancements have given strain theory more viability to explain crime and

delinquency than earlier theoretical propositions related to strain (Akers and Sellers, 2009). General strain theory proposes that strain is no longer tied to class, but rather at the individual level. Racial and gender differences are also assessed individually rather than within groups or classes. Agnew (1992) strays away from structural factors, but he points out “there may be important group differences in the types of strain or negative relations most frequently encountered” (p. 62) and that these groups may experience strain differently. Although his initial analysis was on adolescent and adult differences, this assertion opens discussion to assuming that these differences amongst groups may be indicative of the groups created by the intersectionality of race and gender. That is, African-American women experience and react to strain differently than white women, white men, and African-American men. Furthermore, adding this differential factor of unique adaptations to strain, Agnew (1992) introduces various features indicative of other criminological theories such as social bonding and social learning theories. Although research is limited, how these different aspects affect a variety of intersectional groups may also be distinctive.

### **Research on General Strain**

Several studies have found a relationship between various measures of strain and delinquency (Agnew and White, 1992; Paternoster and Mazerolle, 1994; Hoffman and Miller, 1998; Hoffman and Cerbone, 1999; Mazerolle et al., 2000; Piquero and Sealock, 2000) but not all theorized sources of strain have been found to be related with deviance (Mazerolle, 1998; Mazerolle and Piquero, 1998; Agnew, Brezina, Wright, and Cullen, 2002). In more recent editions of strain theory, Agnew recommended measuring more particular types of strain, including, but not limited to, parental rejection, negative school experiences, abusive peers, and criminal victimization (Agnew, 2006). Agnew has also expanded general strain theory to include objective and subjective strain from past and present, as well as “vicarious” and “anticipated” strain. Relative to race and gender Agnew proposes that strain mediates the effect of these factors, but the effects of strain operate through personality, control, and learning. Relating back to intersectionality, little is known in regard to how gender and race intersect to impact personality, control, and learning variables (Lynch, 1996). Thus, the motivation to commit crime may vary by the intersectional relationship between race and gender.

### **Gender and General Strain**

Many Americans assume that the effect of gender has been reduced or eliminated, but in present day no evidence exists of this in the political and economic power of women (for a full review see Ridgeway, 2011). Continuing, Gender, like race, is a form of inequality based on a person’s membership in a particular social group. In an agrarian society, men have a greater control over land, and in an industrial society, men also have more control in white collar jobs and receive higher salaries. Evidence of these discrepancies is found in current media. Recently, President Obama signed into law “equal pay for equal work” for all federal contractors which is aimed at equalizing pay for women who have the same job at have the same qualifications with their male counterparts. Surprisingly, no Republican in Congress voted in favor of the act. This gesture follows the Equal Pay Act of 1963 in which deemed it illegal to pay a woman less than a man in the same job with similar job



experience. After almost 50 years of making it illegal, gender inequality still exists in pay rates. This is evidence that there is structural discrimination against females in modern American society. The effects of this oppression help to shape or formalize an individual's identity which contributes to his or her propensity for crime through strain.

Broidy and Agnew (1997) proposed that the processes of general strain theory may differ between males and females. They argue that perceptions of strain, types of emotional responses and access to legitimate and illegitimate coping strategies may vary by gender. Few studies have focused on the role of gender in general strain theory, and no test of the theory has reported differences in levels of strain across genders (Akers and Sellers, 2007). That is, research suggests that both males and females experience equal levels of strain, and responses are equally angry. Furthermore, the ability of strain variables to predict delinquent behavior or drug use is equal across both males and females (Hoffman and Su, 1997; Mazerolle, 1998). Worth noting is that neither of these studies used measures of negative emotion or coping mechanisms which are theorized to be a critical element to explaining gender differences using general strain theory. Conversely, Briody (2001) found evidence that females responded to strain with emotions such as depression, insecurity or resentment rather than anger. Furthermore, females employed better strategies in coping with the strain such as downplaying its importance, avoidance, or talking to others. Brody's findings may be evidence that gender differences in socialization may affect responses to strain. Agnew (2006) admits the general strain theory fails to explain why males and females are exposed to different strains conducive to crime, but he alludes to social context as a contributor. To better explain criminal behavior researchers should explore the effects of intersectionality, particularly race and gender, on the propensities for deviant behavior.

### **Race and General Strain Theory**

Similar to gender, race identifies another form of oppression in modern society. It is difficult to talk about race in the United States without discussing racism, which has been an issue in the United States since its founding, and despite heroic efforts to eliminate its negative effects, many disparities still exist in modern society. Nearly 40 percent of all African-American children in the United States are raised in poverty stricken households (U.S. Census, 2010). Furthermore, in 2010 close to 30 percent of all African Americans were living below the poverty level, compared to only 10 percent of whites (U.S. Census, 2010). Therefore many African Americans currently in the United States have limited opportunities for education, access to healthcare, and clean living environments. The differential impact of negative conditions from an early age is an obvious impact on African-Americans over their life-courses. As such, any theory of criminal behavior should evaluate the differential structural context of African Americans in the United States.

To understand race differences, general strain theory turns to its roots in Mertonian strain theory, arguing that African-Americans experience more strain which causes more negative emotion which results in more deviant behavior (Kaufman, Rebellon, Thaxton and Agnew, 2008; Jang and Johnson, 2003; Jennings, Piquero, Gover and Perez, 2009; Perez, Jennings and Gover, 2008; Piquero and Sealock, 2010; Simons, Chen, Stewart and Brody, 2003). African Americans experience more strain caused by economic hardship, family, lack of education and community, victimizations, and discrimination, which are identified as the most conducive to deviant behavior (Agnew, 2006). The unique social position of

African-Americans disproportionately promotes the resolution to behavior deemed criminal rather than alternative coping strategies. Unfortunately, just considering race outside the context of gender and possibly the context of class is misleading, giving the intersectional properties of each attribute.

The intersectionality of gender and race as it pertains to general strain theory begins with discussing issues that have essentially been unapproached. Being able to explain the differences between whites and African Americans is void if unique individual experiences are not considered. That is, if general strain theory can explain why African American males commit more crimes than white males, then it must be able to explain why African-American males commit more crimes than African American females. Conversely general strain theory should be able to explain why white females commit fewer crimes than white males. The discrepancies in offending here causes some problems in general strain theory. Due to gender oppression, African American males are less oppressed than African American females but experience a variety of the same oppression; therefore in accordance with Mertonian strain theory African-American females should be the most criminal. But obviously the data does not reflect this finding. Furthermore, white females have fewer opportunities to achieve desired goals than white males therefore, female offending should be greater. Although Agnew (2006) has modified strain theory it still has some shortcomings when viewed from an intersectionality perspective; therefore, some modifications or explanations to the theory would have to be made for integration.

### **Intersectionality and “General” Strain Theory**

In adapting Merton’s theory of deviance to individual level analysis, Agnew strays away from the contextual factors that define one social position which in turn contributes to the creation of strain and ultimately deviant behavior. Potter (2013) suggests that a sound research on intersectionality should, “assess the salience of identities and statuses of these individuals and groups in relation to their experiences with crime, the social control of crime, and any crime-related issues” (p. 316). Therefore to incorporate the intersectionality of race and gender into Agnew’s general strain theory focus needs to be moved back to the structural context in which an individual is situated. This integration can be included in multiple facets of general strain theory. First, given the dynamic factors related to power structures, any theory aimed at taking an intersectional approach should begin with analyzing how power is distributed in society (Andersen, 2005). Those with power have the authority to define and label behaviors and how law enforcement is organized and/or focused to control behavior. In modern American society has remained stable over the last three decades, but this may not necessarily continue to be the case. Subsequent theoretical development of modified general strain theory should be able to identify oppressed and oppressive groups. Within these groups are unique intersectional relationships which contribute to the creation of identity. Moreover, these factors seem to have relatively constant effects across oppressed groups who share similar characteristics (Lynch, 1996). Secondly, one could assume that within each of the three initial strain producers as suggested by Agnew (1992) (e.g., failing to achieve positively valued goals, removal of positively valued stimuli, and confrontation with negative stimuli) may be perceived and reacted to differently due to differences across races and genders, or more specifically across the intersectionality of race and gender. Structural forces will control the processes related

to how an individual arrives at deviant behavior through strain. A simple example of how options are constrained by structure is through gender and race. Generally, men have more options for goal attainment than women, and whites, more options than minorities. Therefore, there is clear variation in exposure to strain across race and gender due to structural factors, and this can be accounted for through the intersection of race and gender.

Furthermore, exposure to stress is also differential for races and genders which are defined by structural context. Agnew (2006) acknowledges that the response to strain is determined by self-control, social bonds, or learned behavior (peer association). In each of these three motivators or deterrents, unique individual experience induced by structural factors may contribute to how each reaction is created or how they each contribute to an outcome. Therefore, the individual context can determine variations in perception of strain as well as determining how individuals react to said strain.

## **Conclusion**

Hopefully, eventually race and gender will no longer effect how people are treated as well as how people behave, but as for now these variables should be included in subsequent criminological theoretical development. Integrating the intersectionality of gender and race into general strain theory is quite simple, but the methodology for carrying solutions out is the key to integration. First, general strain theory must conclude that personal experience is derived from several structural factors which limit choice and opportunity. Furthermore, race and gender are interconnected and should be conjured as such. This changes general strain theory by acknowledging that individuals across social strata are indeed different and may perceive a situation in a way consistent with people from other groups impacted by a different set of structural determiners. Future studies in general strain theory should consider individuals within the context of the intersectional relationship between race and gender. The inclusion of the intersectionality theories that speak to deviant behavior based on personal experiences and structural context is critical. The context is shifted from grouping categorically based solely on race or gender, to considering how they relate to effect deviant outcomes. For example, in considering the unique strain of African American males, African American females, white females or white males, prior research suggests that the unique differences among these different groups are not solely based on the amount of strain, but how perceptions of strain and how individuals cope with strain. These perceptions and coping strategies that determine deviant behavior may vary contingent on that person's structural context. Criminologists have been slow to adopt this framework possibly because there are few empirical guidelines for addressing intersectionality (McCall, 2005). Researchers may also conjure this idea that in addressing intersectional questions calls for complex designs involving large samples, but this is often not the case. The intersectionality of race and gender can be included in criminological research through theoretical inclusion. In short, the theories of criminal behavior should observe that the relationship of race and gender is dynamic and necessary to better understand human behavior.

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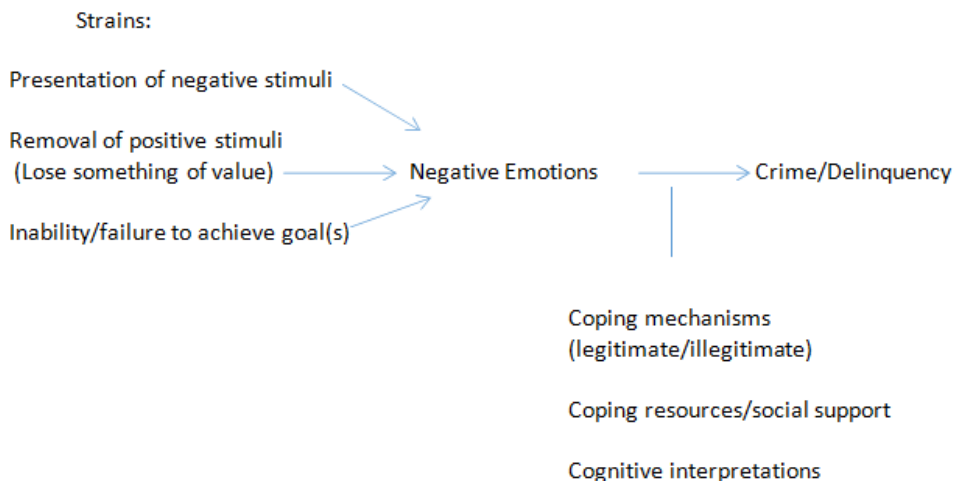
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## Appendix

Figure 1. Diagram of General Strain Theory



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Wyatt Brown, M.S., is a doctoral candidate in the College of Behavioral and Community Sciences in the Department of Criminology at the University of South Florida.