

Background

My research interests are in the area of criminology, with emphasis on juvenile delinquency, gender and crime, and communities and crime. My current work is focused on explaining variation by gender and race/ethnicity in the social psychological processes leading to delinquency, and how these processes are shaped by community, school, and family contexts. Theoretically, my research cuts across a number of disciplines (e.g., criminology, social psychology, social inequality, gender), and considers causal processes that operate on different levels of explanation. My dissertation project represents an agenda to advance General Strain Theory (GST) by more precisely specifying the mechanisms through which strain impacts delinquent involvement among boys and girls.

Dissertation Research

My dissertation uses two waves of a unique sample of African American adolescents and structural equation modeling to test key hypotheses derived from GST and related work, which have yet to be examined in the literature. Specifically, I focus on how and why the processes that intervene between strain and subsequent delinquent involvement vary by gender. I establish that measures of strain (e.g., family, peer, perceived discrimination) predict delinquency differentially for males and females. Further, results indicate that strain effects delinquency by heightening anger (among boys) and depression (among girls). At present, I am examining gender variation in reciprocal effects between anger, depression, and delinquency, and how this variation helps to explain the different pathways leading to delinquent involvement among African American males and females.

Papers in Progress

First a paper co-authored with Ron Simons and colleagues involved with the Family and Community Health Study examines interaction effects between parenting strategies and perceived racial discrimination on violent delinquency in a sample of African American males.

In addition to a paper already under review, I have several papers in progress that will soon be under review at peer-refereed journals.

First, I am in the final stages of developing a paper based on analysis from my dissertation. This paper focuses specifically on gender variation in the effects of different sources of strain on delinquency and depression. It is currently being reviewed by my coauthors and I plan to submit it to *Justice Quarterly* the week of September 17th.

The second paper from my dissertation takes the analysis a step further with the females in the study. It incorporates anger and depression as emotions predicted to modify the effect of strain on delinquency. I will be presenting the results from this paper at the American Society of Criminology meeting this November in Toronto.

Future Research

My agenda for the coming years will continue to focus on issues related to gender, race/ethnicity, and delinquency. This fall I will start work with the Better Business Bureau as they offer a “Stop Shoplifting Class.” In an effort to measure the benefit of this program, I will conduct evaluation research on this intervention. Finally, I have begun collaboration with two Western students, Waverly Ann Harris and Mary Moneta, to develop several papers using data collected in Mobile and Prichard, Alabama. I hope to continue both the present research relationship and future relationships with students and colleagues at Western.