

Juvenile Delinquency
Agnew- General Strain Theory
Sutherland – Differential Association

Foundations for a General Strain Theory of Crime And Delinquency- Agnew

Agnew's strain theory focuses on relationships, and the manner in which motivations to offend are created through stress and strains experienced. He argues that crime is motivated by pressure that is socially exerted, taking a social-psychological theoretical approach.

He further argues that there are more goals that people aspire to, not only financial success, and that adolescents rarely worry about economic goals. Agnew argues that relationships may limit one's access to achieving their goals, which causes strain and may lead to crime.

Three Types of Strain- Agnew

- I. Individuals may prevent people from achieving valued goals (like Merton)
 - i. Other individuals often block access to these goals, such as parents or friends – curfews, symbols of status among teenagers (having the right clothes), etc., which may produce strain and lead to crime
- II. Individuals may remove, or threaten to remove, positively valued stimuli that people possess
 - i. Parents may restrict access, taking away computer and cell phones, grounding, limiting access to friends, which may create strain and lead the individual to find a new (delinquent) way of achieving their goals
 1. Ex: buy a new phone when your parents limit your phone calls
 2. Ex: being dumped
- III. Individuals present, or threaten to present, people with noxious stimuli (negatively valued stimuli)
 - i. Parents can impose rules and regulation that are perceived as negative, introducing some unwanted activity or punishment to deter bad behavior.
 1. Parents giving their children more chores

Agnew argues that teenagers have a wider set of goals than just economic mobility-popularity, freedom, fun, social acceptance, and good looks. Agnew argues that these three types of strain are revolved around relationships.

Strain and Delinquency