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Examining the Strain-Crime Relationship Among African American Women: An Empirical Test of Agnew's General Strain Theory

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EXAMINING THE STRAIN-CRIME RELATIONSHIP AMONG AFRICAN
AMERICAN WOMEN: AN EMPIRICAL TEST OF AGNEW'S GENERAL STRAIN
THEORY

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Department of Sociology at the University of Kentucky

By
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Lexington, Kentucky

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Lexington, Kentucky

2016

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

EXAMINING THE STRAIN-CRIME RELATIONSHIP AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN: AN EMPIRICAL TEST OF AGNEW'S GENERAL STRAIN THEORY

Agnew's (1992; 2006) general strain theory (GST) has become one of the foremost theories to explain crime in contemporary criminology. While it has undergone several empirical tests over the years, there remain many understudied aspects of the theory. The current study addresses some of these aspects by longitudinally exploring the relationship between multiple types of strain and drug and non-drug crime among a sample of African American women.

Data for this study were collected as part of a larger study on how drug use and criminality are related to health disparities, particularly HIV, and service utilization among African American drug-using and non-drug-using women across justice system status—prison, probation, and community, no supervision. The overall sample comprised of 462 women who completed structured interviews at four time intervals with a response rate of 87 percent.

The study was guided by three specific research aims. First, this study examined whether various types of strain—economic hardship, criminal victimization, and gendered racism—were conducive to different types of crime. Second, this study examined whether certain negative emotional states—anger, depression, and anxiety—mediated the effects on the strain-crime relationships among the women. And third, this study examined whether certain factors—social support, coping skills, and spiritual well-being—moderated the strain-crime relationships among the women.

Findings revealed all three forms of strain had statistically significant effects on involvement in crimes unrelated to drug use, such as check fraud or burglary, among the women in the sample, while only economic hardship and victimization had significant effects on drug crime. In addition, partial mediation was found between economic hardship, anger, and non-drug crime and complete mediation occurred between gendered racism, anger, and non-drug crime. That is, women in the sample became angry after experiencing these types of strain and responded to that feeling by engaging in crimes unrelated to drugs. Lastly, moderation was only found in the logistic regression model

examining gendered racism, social support, and non-drug crime. In other words, women with perceived high social support were less likely to commit non-drug crimes than those with low social support except when their gendered racism experiences became extremely high. This study's findings will make significant contributions to the scholarship across multiple disciplines, as well as potentially inform practice and policy. Drawbacks and directions for future research are discussed.

KEYWORDS: General Strain Theory, African American Women, Crime, Criminal Justice Policy, Discrimination

To Gibson and Nolan, for I hope this act of diligence inspires you to do great things.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

African Americans have historically been one of the most marginalized demographic groups in our society. As a group, they have experienced racial discrimination and poverty at disparate rates, which have been driven by underlying social structural factors (e.g., political system, economy). By its very nature, Schwalbe (2008) argues, capitalism creates an unjust balance of resources among various classes of people, and the groups who are marginalized by those in power are limited in the opportunities presented to them during their lives in the form of, for example, education, career obtainment, and social status. One ramification of the racial and class disparities that African Americans have experienced is their disproportionate involvement in crime and the justice system. The experience of crime and involvement in the justice system has become an unfortunate familiarity for many African Americans. For example, research has found that two-thirds of African American male high school dropouts born since 1965 will go to prison at some point in their lives (Western 2006). African American women compose about 25 percent of the female prison population and have the highest incarceration rate among all female demographic groups (Carson 2015); yet, they represent only 13 percent of the U.S. female population (U.S. Census Bureau 2012).

Social scientists have settled on several explanations for the disparities in incarceration rates between African Americans and other populations. Most notably, sentencing laws enacted in the late 20th century paved the way for judges to issue harsher penalties for violent and drug offenses, including longer prison sentences, for which African Americans have often been disproportionately arrested as compared to whites

(National Research Council 2014). This finding has been most prominent at the federal level, where there was a gradual increase in the number of offenders sentenced for drug related offenses from 1995 to 2010 (Harrison and Beck 2005; Maruschak and Parks 2012). For offenders placed on probation supervision in the community nationally, the two most common offenses committed in 2011 were drug law violations (25%) and driving while intoxicated (15%) (Maruschak and Parks 2012). Likewise, law enforcement strategies associated with the “war on drugs,” systematic racial differences in case processing, and racial bias and stereotyping have also contributed to disparities in the incarceration of African Americans (National Research Council 2014). Comparing the arrest rates for drug abuse violations with national survey data on drug use for African Americans illustrates these points well. According to national survey data, African Americans’ use of illegal drugs and nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers is less than whites and Hispanics (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 2013; 2014; 2015), though uniform crime data collected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation indicate that African Americans comprise about 30 percent of drug use cases each year.

What these facts and statistics reveal is a clear intersection between social disparities and the justice system in which the justice system seems to exacerbate disparities on the individuals and communities who experience them (see Anderson 1999; Sampson and Wilson 1995; Wakefield and Uggen 2010). And African American women, specifically, are arguably the most profoundly affected by these issues. Not only have they become more involved in the justice system, as described above, but they also seem to be more directly affected by the collateral consequences of mass incarceration of

African Americans in general. For example, there are many unfortunate inconveniences that prison life has on the families of inmates. The loss of income, the strain on marriages and intimate relationships, and the detrimental effects of losing a parent or a child are among the few problems that arise when a family member is incarcerated (see Wakefield and Uggen 2010). Arditti and colleagues (2003) found that financially struggling families go further into poverty following the incarceration of fathers. Other research has found that children with incarcerated fathers are at an increased risk of homelessness, especially among black children (Wildeman 2014). With this said, African American women are more likely to bear the brunt of such effects, since they are more likely to be the primary provider for their families, as compared to white women. Yet, society generally expects them to continue demonstrating the role of the “Strong Black Women” (see Beauboeuf-Lafontant 2007), which may mean that they neglect their personal health and well-being over that of their children and other family members in response to their circumstances. Along these same lines, research has also demonstrated that African American women experience more individual-level stress than white women (Collins 1986; hooks and Mesa-Bains 2006; Perry, Harp, and Oser 2013; Thomas, Witherspoon, and Speight 2008), and such experiences seem to be related to their race and compounded by sexism, which is something not experienced by their male counterparts.

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate how African American women respond to adverse experiences in their lives. More specifically, how do such experiences affect them emotionally? Are they more likely to commit crime as a result of such experiences? And, how are their responses influenced by their emotional states and external factors, such as family support? There is a need for this research, given that

African American women remain an understudied population in the empirical literature related to the theory in question, though they face a unique set of circumstances in society because of their race, class, and gender. This dissertation addresses this void in the literature by empirically testing a major criminological theory, Agnew's (1992; 2006) general strain theory (GST), among a longitudinal sample of African American women, some who were involved with the justice system and others who were not. Simply put, Agnew (2006) describes "strains" or "stressors" as events or conditions that are disliked by individuals. Thus, strains can result from a person losing something good, receiving something bad, or failing to get something s/he wants. The premise of GST is that individuals engage in crime to alleviate the distress caused by strains and the negative emotional affect related to the strains.

The current study will make several contributions to the literature. First, it examines an understudied demographic group within the GST literature. This is important because it will test the generalizability of GST to demographic groups other than those that have been used to establish the theory as a major framework to explain the causes of crime. GST has been applied to women offenders, including African Americans, in prior research. For example, Slocum and colleagues (2005) examined retrospective data collected from nearly 300 women prisoners, most of whom were African American, to study intra-individual variations in strain and criminal offending. Further, Jang (2007) examined differences in experiences with strain and crime among a national, cross-sectional sample of African American men and women. While both studies are important in terms of advancing the GST literature, both had noteworthy drawbacks. Slocum and colleagues (2005) acknowledge that their study did not include

measures of negative emotional affect, nor did it examine how prosocial coping mechanisms (e.g., social support) affect the response to strain. The underlying limitation of Jang's (2007) study was the use of cross-sectional data to make inferences on the causal relationships between strain, negative emotions, and crime. The current study addresses these limitations by studying longitudinal data collected over 18 months from a sample of nearly 500 African American women and including measures that provide a comprehensive empirical test of GST (i.e., strain, negative emotions, prosocial coping factors, and crime, both drug and non-drug related).

Second, the current study offers insight to the types of causes or correlates that are most conducive to crime among African American women. More specifically, what types of strain are most relevant to African American women? The current study does this by examining the women's victimization, economic hardship, and discrimination experiences as types of strain. As will be discussed, discrimination strain has been a causal factor argued by GST to be strongly conducive to crime, although it has received very little attention by scholars. Agnew (2006) argues that experiences with discrimination based on race/ethnicity and gender may lead to greater individual-level involvement in crime. While research conducted in recent years has demonstrated a direct relationship between racial discrimination and individual involvement in crime (e.g., Anderson 1999; Burt, Simons, and Gibbons 2012; Eitle 2002; Katz 2000; Simons et al. 2003), little attention has been given to both racial and gender discrimination. To fill this void, the current study measures this aspect of intersectionality by combining these two individual types of discrimination to create a "gendered racism" measure and examines its impact on crime. Similarly, violent victimization is a type of strain quite relevant to

African American women that leads to adverse health outcomes (see Kramer, Johnson, and Johnson 2015). Yet, does being victimized lead African American women to other outcomes, such as crime? And while some research has already found that African American women face financial strain comparable to their male counterparts (see Jang 2007), it is still not well known how economic hardships may affect these women emotionally and behaviorally with respect to crime, nor how they cope with an aspect of their lives that may be permanent. The current study will address all of these issues.

Lastly, the current study may inform policy and practice as they relate to improving the quality of life among African American women. For example, the findings could provide insight into the types of social services such women may benefit from the most during times of adversity, regardless of whether the women are involved with the justice system or not. Yet, it would be informative to practitioners to know how services may vary based on whether the women's criminal activity involves drug use or not. Moreover, information that ties in factors culturally relevant to African American women could be used to inform administrators and executives of government agencies where funding is needed to allocate the most appropriate resources to community programs and activities. Community organizations that offer social services to African American women, particularly low-income women with children and who may have substance abuse issues, could include stress management, anger management, job skills development, health and wellness, educational needs, and parenting skills, among others. In addition, the current study's findings could inform policy that would lead to the implementation of gendered and culturally sensitive programs to improve outcomes for marginalized groups of people. For example, policy and programs that consider women's

needs, are relational and promote health connections to family members, and take a holistic approach have been found to best increase the likelihood of successful reintegration into the community (Bloom, Owen, and Covington 2003).

1.2 Overview of Subsequent Chapters

This dissertation is separated into various chapters. Chapter 2 provides a detailed overview of the research literature as it relates to African American women, the social disparities they face, and their disproportionate involvement in crime and the justice system. The collateral consequences of mass incarceration as they relate to the women in the current study are also discussed in Chapter 2. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the types of strain African American women most commonly face and the cultural nuances of responses to strain by African American women, which will underscore the importance of studying the effects of these strains on their involvement in crime.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of GST, the theory that is empirically tested in the current study. GST is intended to explain general crime, regardless of demographics of offenders or the type of crime or deviance. Thus, given its breadth, this chapter gives an overview of the theory and its central arguments as they relate to the current study. At the end of Chapter 3, the study's seven research questions and their corresponding hypotheses are discussed and an illustration of the study's analytic model is included in order to better comprehend the key relationships being tested.

Chapter 4 discusses the methodology used to examine the research questions and hypotheses provided at the end of Chapter 3. A description of the study sample, measures used in the analyses, and analytic plan are discussed in this chapter. Notably, the current study tests for both mediation and moderation effects of certain factors that are important

to explaining and understanding the strain-crime relationship, for which some research has found support.

Following the discussion of the methodology, Chapter 5 provides the results of the analyses with a series of tables of logistic regression models. The descriptive statistics of the data are provided in the chapter as well. Chapter 5 is organized by the order of the seven research questions, with a differentiation between crime that involves drug use, possession, and/or trafficking from non-drug crimes, such as theft, check fraud, or assault. All of the tables are located at the end of the chapter.

Finally, Chapter 6 discusses the findings reported in Chapter 5 within the context of the research literature outlined in Chapters 2 and 3. Each key finding is presented and discussed in relation to the hypotheses developed for the seven research questions. The study's limitations are also discussed in this chapter. In the conclusion of Chapter 6, the impact of the study's findings on policy, practice, and directions for future is discussed.

1.3 Conclusion

African American women face disproportionate levels of strain that make them, as a demographic group, an interesting study population within the context of GST. For example, with respect to financial strain, African American women have the highest working-poor rate (14.8%) among all demographic groups (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015). African American women are also victimized at high rates comparative to other female populations. Specifically, they consistently report more frequent and serious episodes of domestic violence than white women (Lilly and Graham-Bermann 2009; West 2004; Wright, Perez, and Johnson 2010). And of course there is the strain of the intersection between racism and sexism experienced by African American women, which

has been shown to have a significant negative impact on their health (Grollman 2012; Thomas, Witherspoon, and Speight 2008). Yet, as discussed above, African American women remain an understudied population in the GST literature. The current study addresses these voids in the literature and seeks to advance the scholarship on understanding the reasons for African American women's involvement in crime. What factors impact the strain-crime relationship for these women? Do African American women have different emotional responses to certain strains and, if so, how does this affect their involvement in crime? Are there cultural nuances that shape these women's experiences with strain and their responses to distress in their lives? All of these questions and others will be addressed in the current study. The next chapter begins with a discussion of the research literature on the disparities African American women face, the strain they experience, and their involvement in crime and the justice system.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The current study rests on the assumption that individuals experience different types and intensity levels of strain, which produce negative emotional affects, and the pressures and negative emotions of strain are alleviated by committing crimes. The focus of this chapter is to review the research literature as it specifically relates to the participants of the current study, African American women, and their disproportionate involvement in crime and the justice system. First, however, the chapter begins with a general discussion of the development of social disparities in the United States over the past 30 years and their effects on large segments of minorities, specifically African Americans.

2.1 Structural Causes of Social Disparities for African Americans

From a sociological standpoint, any serious discussion of race, urban poverty, and social policy over the past 35 years has to begin with William J. Wilson's *The Truly Disadvantaged*, published in 1987. In this book, Wilson's central argument is that, since 1970, certain structural changes in the American economy, such as the shift from manufacturing to service industries and the departure of low-skilled jobs from the urban centers, have led to an increase in African American people without jobs living in inner-city ghettos. Furthermore, Wilson (1987) notes that these inner-city areas also suffered from the relocation of middle- and working-class African Americans, who took advantage of affirmative action and fair housing laws, to more affluent urban neighborhoods and the suburbs. As a result, as working families gradually relocated to more promising residential areas, the inner-city areas were increasingly characterized by concentrated poverty and, thus, created an "underclass" of single-parent families, welfare

dependency, chronic unemployment, and overall increased “social pathologies” (Wilson 1987:viii).

Various explanations for the changes in the social fabric of urban demography in American cities have been provided by scholars: (1) the African American middle-class flight model, which was discussed above (see Jargowsky 1997; Jargowsky and Bane 1991; Wilson 1987); (2) the residential segregation model, proposed by Massey and his colleagues (Massey and Denton 1993; Massey, Gross, and Shibuya 1994), which blames increases in urban poverty on poorly enforced fair housing laws and that led to the increase in neighborhoods with high concentrations of poor African American people; and (3) the departure of low-skilled jobs model, which argues that the loss of manufacturing jobs in inner-city areas led to drastic increases in unemployment and, thus, increases in concentrated poverty in these areas (see Jencks and Mayer 1990; Kain 1992; Kasarda 1989; Weicher 1990; Wilson 1987). Rather than one model being superior over the others, Quillian (1999) states the three models complement one another in explaining the dramatic increases in concentrated urban poverty during the 1970s and 1980s. In particular, he suggests the middle-class flight model explains the migration of African Americans over time, while the residential segregation model better accounts for the cross-sectional concentration of poverty among African American people.

Yet, how exactly did such persistent residential segregation, mainly among African Americans, develop? Was it simply a failure of anti-discrimination laws along with a changing demography within these neighborhoods? Two theoretical explanations for the development of residential segregation among African Americans in urban areas have focused on a couple of factors: prejudices and housing-market discrimination. One

argument suggests that minorities are stratified by location according to the group's relative standing in society, which limits assimilation of minorities with higher social status to "white neighborhoods." Whites use segregation in the historical sense, irrespective of anti-discrimination laws, in that it allows them to keep their social distance from minorities, primarily African Americans. This process of residential segregation has been driven by underlying social structural factors that are linked to racial prejudice and discrimination that preserve the relative status advantages of whites (Bobo and Zubrinsky 1996; Logan, Alba, and Leung 1996; Massey and Denton 1993; Meyer 2000). In reviewing the empirical support for this argument, Charles (2003) found that racial prejudice does play an influential role in the persistence of residential segregation among African Americans; however, whites are not the only ones who engage in such prejudice, as African Americans also perpetuate prejudices by preferring to live by neighbors of the same race.

And secondly, scholars point to the institutional discrimination that existed within the housing market during the 1970s and 1980s as a cause of residential segregation among African Americans (see Charles 2003). The Fair Housing Act of 1968 was an example of the movement towards the implementation of progressive social policies in the United States and, as a byproduct of the Civil Rights Act of 1965, intended to, from a legal standpoint, rid discrimination from the public sphere. Charles (2003) documents an overwhelming amount of evidence to suggest that these policies failed to provide more opportunities to minorities, particularly African Americans. As she notes, "Access to housing is constrained, the search process is more unpleasant (i.e., more visits, more waiting, etc.), homeseekers receive far less assistance from lenders in the mortgage

application process and are more likely to have their applications denied, and their moving costs are higher” (Charles 2003:196). In the end, like differences in prejudices, housing-market discrimination fosters the persistence of residential segregation among African Americans.

An additional example of the racial and class disparities that exist in the United States relates to the stark differences in wealth among whites and African Americans. Although it has received relatively little attention as compared to income, many scholars contend that wealth is a better indicator of financial well-being (see Keister and Moller 2000). This is because of what wealth represents in the financial structure. While income refers to the flow of money over time, and it defines what people receive for work and their retirement plans, wealth pertains to what people own, such as an inheritance or assets that accrue over a person’s lifetime. It is about security and stability in the procurement of the “good life.” Such a distinction is important with regard to racial inequalities, as the more we begin to understand the differences, the more we realize how whites have been able to retain power both socially and financially over African Americans, among other minorities, for several decades now (Oliver and Shapiro 1995).

The causes of wealth disparities between whites and African Americans relate to the increases in concentrated urban poverty during the mid-to-late 20th century, the residential segregation of African Americans in these inner-city areas, and the housing-market discrimination that continue to persist to this day. What appears to be evident throughout the literature is a series of acts built on racism, prejudices, and discrimination that have continuously separated whites from minorities, particularly African Americans, socially, physically, and financially. Schwalbe (2008) sheds light on this conclusion by

suggesting that such inequalities exist as a result of the capitalistic economic structure of our society, which by its very nature, he argues, creates an unjust imbalance of resources among various classes of people. In the end, groups of people are marginalized by those groups in power, and thus they are limited in the opportunities presented to them during their lives in the form of education, career obtainment, and social status, among others. What are the consequences of these disparities, though? Among people of color, such as African Americans, they have become disproportionately involved in crime and the justice system and, to some extent, the justice system has exacerbated the disparities through policies and programs.

2.2 Experiences of Crime and the Justice System among African Americans

In 1999, Elijah Anderson published *Code of the Street*, one of the most riveting works of criminological scholarship in recent years on the criminal subcultures that develop within poor, inner-city neighborhoods primarily inhabited by African Americans. The “code” refers to the set of values to which young African American males must subscribe in these areas; rather than becoming victims of violence, they become perpetrators of violence. Anderson suggests these values are learned through association with peers, and after some time, they become engrained in the culture and are passed on over generations. His study is one about the importance of cultural values in shaping the lives of people, but also the significance of larger social structural forces that mold those cultural values; forces like the middle-class flight among African American families from inner-city areas, the persistence of residential segregation among African Americans and other minorities, and the failures of social policies that were intended to alleviate problems of the poor, not perpetuate them.

This is a sentiment echoed by Sampson and Wilson (1995) in their theory of race, crime, and urban inequality. While attempting not to underestimate the importance of structural factors in creating ideal social conditions for crime, they stressed the influential nature of culture as well on involvement in crime. Specifically, they argue that, for some youth, crime becomes part of their “cognitive landscapes” as a result of the ecological structure of the primary social environment (p. 50). For instance, if a youth is literally born into a neighborhood where violence is common and the criminal lifestyle is envied, then the possibility of engaging in crime and violence at some point in this youth’s life is part of his “cognitive landscape.” In contrast, for a youth who does not have such experiences, he does not even have the ability to cognitively construct a situation in which he would engage in violence. As Sampson and Wilson (1995) note, this has become an unfortunate reality for many young African American males living in impoverished social conditions in urban areas. Like their counterparts who have not experienced a life surrounded by crime and violence, these youth do not know any differences in lifestyles, as their isolation to the neighborhood where they reside, among other factors, makes it difficult to assimilate to a more prosperous environment.

In detailing the lives of the young people who reside in concentrated urban poverty, it is not a surprise that a disproportionate number of them become involved in the justice system. Hagan and Peterson (1995) made this observation even prior to the prison boom of the late 1990s and early 2000s, noting, “...in America the experience of crime, especially violent crime, is highly concentrated among young, disadvantaged, minority males” (p. 15). Prison incarceration has become one of the primary ways in which the justice system has sorted and stratified large segments of minorities,

particularly young African American males (see Alexander 2012). The latest prison data show that the incarceration rate for African American men is 2,724 per 100,000 U.S. residents, almost seven times higher than the incarceration rate for white males and about twice the rate among Hispanic males (Carson 2015). When educational attainment is taken into consideration, the results are even more staggering for young African American males. In fact, a third of non-college-educated African American men and two-thirds of African American male high school dropouts born since 1965 will go to prison at some point in their lives (Western 2006). A similar trend is found among African American women, who have had a disproportionately higher incarceration rate for several years as compared to other female, racial groups. In 2014, for example, the incarceration rate was 109 per 100,000 African American women, the highest among all racial groups of women and over two times that of white women (Carson 2015). In general and regardless of sex, these differences between the incarceration rates for whites and African Americans have existed for several decades (see National Research Council 2014).

So what crimes are African Americans committing that lead them to disproportionate involvement in the justice system? Use of illicit drugs (e.g., marijuana, cocaine, crack, heroin, prescription-type psychotherapeutics used non-medically, etc.) is certainly one type of crime that has caused such disparities. Uniform crime data collected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation indicate that African Americans comprise about 30 percent of arrests for drug abuse violations each year. Yet, national survey data indicate that African Americans make up only about 14 percent of the population that uses illicit drugs (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 2013;

2015). Furthermore, their rate of nonmedical use of prescription pain relievers is less than whites and Hispanics (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 2014).

So what explains the disparities between the arrest and incarceration rates for drug offenses of African Americans and whites? In addition to the social structural causes described above, ways in which the justice system has operated are partially to blame. Scholars convened by the National Research Council (2014) to examine the causes of high incarceration in the United States claim that sentencing laws enacted in the 1980s and 1990s led to harsher penalties for violent and drug offenses, including longer prison sentences, for which African Americans have often been disproportionately arrested as compared to whites, especially crack cocaine offenses. Law enforcement strategies associated with the war on drugs also contributed to such disparities. For example, African Americans have been arrested for drug offenses at disproportionately higher rates than whites due to police decisions to emphasize arrests of street-level dealers (Beckett et al. 2005; Beckett, Nyrop, and Pfingst 2006; Mitchell and Caudy 2015). Systematic racial differences in case processing at different stages of the justice system—for example, at pretrial detention, plea bargaining, and sentencing options—seem to have partly contributed to this problem as well (Crutchfield et al. 1995; Demuth and Steffensmeier 2004; Miller and Wright, 2008; Spohn 2013). Finally, such disparities exist in part by “conscious and unconscious bias and stereotyping that remain pervasive in America despite the near disappearance of widespread beliefs about racial superiority and inferiority” (National Research Council 2014, p. 103).

The collateral consequences of such a complex matter are profound as well. In fact, this has become a unique area of scholarship that has particular relevance for communities of color. One topic of study is the ways in which the justice system via mass incarceration has indirectly stratified people and exacerbated problems. In their review of the literature on the relationship between incarceration and stratification, Wakefield and Uggen (2010) discuss the process in which prisons actually generate inequality. They relate this process to the ways in which schools, hospitals, and other social institutions sort and classify their clients. Prisons are unique, however, in that if they do not adequately address deficiencies among the people who inhabit them, which a great deal of evidence seems to suggest, they put those individuals and the communities to which they will return at significant risk of reinforcing existing social disadvantages. For example, as Wakefield and Uggen (2010) illustrate, consider those former inmates who attempt to reintegrate back into the labor market. If such individuals are undereducated and unprepared for the labor market, research has found that they are more likely to end up in prison (Arum and Beattie 1999; Arum and LaFree 2008; Hirschfield 2008).

Additionally, regardless of a person's level of vocational training and educational attainment while in prison, any imprisonment term severely hinders the chances of the person obtaining a job during the post-release stage of reentry. Pager (2003; 2009) has well documented this fact in her research on hiring disparities between African American and white ex-inmates. Her findings reveal a greater penalty of incarceration for ex-inmates who are African American relative to white ex-inmates. In attempting to determine how the mark of a criminal record varied across race, Pager (2003) found that approximately 34 percent of white testers without criminal records received callbacks

from employers, compared to 17 percent of white testers with criminal records. Among African Americans, however, the corresponding percentages were only 14 percent and 5 percent. Pager (2009) suggests various reasons account for the employment consequences of incarceration. One, those who are sent to prison would not find work even in the absence of incarceration; two, the experience of going to prison changes people and makes them less willing to engage in the labor market; and three, ex-inmates are stigmatized for going to prison, regardless of any real changes on their behalf. There is evidence for all three of these mechanisms (see Wakefield and Uggen 2010).

Wakefield and Uggen (2010) also discuss the impact incarceration has on health issues, families, and civic engagement of inmates. Regarding health problems, they claim that “just as inmates bring poor work histories and educational deficits into the prison, they also bring substantial health problems and may become less healthy while doing time” (p. 396). For example, research shows that inmates have very high rates of infectious diseases (e.g., tuberculosis, hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS) and mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia/psychosis, PTSD, anxiety) (National Commission on Correctional Health Care 2002). The unfortunate ramifications that prison life has on the families of inmates are profound as well. The loss of income, the strain on marriages, and the detrimental effects of losing a parent or a child are among the problems that arise when a family member is incarcerated. Finally, thousands of ex-inmates are unable to engage in civic life as a result of being convicted of a felony. The process to having one’s voting rights reinstated, for example, is arduous and typically has to be approved by the governor. This is an issue that continues to be debated nationally.

Collectively, all of these issues point to the need to address the race and class disparities that exist in the United States, which often lead to certain segments of the population becoming overly involved in the justice system. In fact, it seems the intersection between these disparities and the justice system only exacerbates the problems for the individuals and communities that experience them. As has been detailed above, minorities, specifically African Americans, seem to have such experiences at disproportionate rates. An objective of this dissertation is to better understand how types of strain impact African American women's lives to the extent that they become involved in crime and the justice system. Undoubtedly, African American women unduly face different types of strain as a result of their social conditions.

2.3 Experience of Disproportionate Strain by African American Women

Research has shown that, in general, African Americans experience different appraisals of stressors, more negative stressful life events, and employ differential coping strategies than whites (Gilbert and Wright 2003; Jackson et al. 1996; Resnicow et al. 2002). A distinction has been made between the types and amount of strain African American women and women of other racial/ethnic status experience, and the expectations of these women given their personal responsibilities. For example, in general, African American women experience more individual-level stress, or strain, than white women (Collins 1986; hooks and Mesa-Bains 2006; Perry, Harp, and Oser 2013; Thomas et al. 2008), and such experiences seem to be related to their race and are compounded by sexism. As has been discussed above, the distinction is mainly due to the intersection between their race, class, and gender, and the fact that such an intersection is structurally situated within the social fabric of society. This section will focus on the

three types of strain that affect African American women and are examined in this dissertation: economic hardship, criminal victimization, and discrimination based on race and gender.

Strain caused by economic hardship disproportionately impacts African American women at a greater rate than some other groups of women. As was discussed in section 2.1, certain social structural forces have created significant disparities for African Americans in general, which have displaced them to reside in impoverished areas. For example, in 2014, 26 percent of African Americans lived in poverty; more than two times the rate for whites (10%). Of these, 12 percent had household incomes less than 50 percent of the federal poverty threshold, which exemplifies the depth of the poverty in which they live (DeNavas-Walt and Proctor 2015). A related factor of living in poverty, as well as a source of economic hardship, is the difficulty in finding or maintaining a job with a living wage. In general, unemployment tends to be higher among African Americans than among whites. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey data, from 2008-2014, the average annual unemployment rate of African Americans (13.6%) was almost two times that of whites (7%), while the rate among African American women (12.1%) was significantly higher than the overall rate (7.9%). Moreover, among those who are employed, African Americans and Hispanics are more than twice as likely as whites and Asians to be among the "working poor," defined as people who spent at least 27 weeks working or looking for work but whose incomes still fell below the federal poverty level (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015). African American women have the highest working-poor rate (14.8%) among all demographic groups.

Given that mass incarceration disproportionately impacts people of color, it seems the effects of such economic hardships would be more profound among African Americans, specifically women, as well. For example, Arditti and colleagues (2003) found that for families who were already living in harsh social conditions prior to the incarceration of a partner or father, they become even more impoverished following his incarceration. Other studies have found that mothers' participation in public assistance programs increases when fathers go to prison, especially when the father was living in the household prior to incarceration (Sugie 2012; Walker 2011). The economic impact on children in these families is significant as well. Wildeman (2014) found that recent paternal incarceration is associated with an increased risk of child homelessness, especially among black children, due to a reduction in financial resources. In the end, the evidence suggests that the experience of economic hardships is a real and prevalent source of strain among African American women.

Being the victim of physical and/or sexual abuse can be another major source of strain for African American women. While official data indicate that violent victimization rates—for crimes of rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault—are among their lowest in the past 20 years (see Truman and Langton 2015), sexual and physical violence still affects many people in the United States. Historically, African Americans have had among the highest violent victimization rates across demographic groups. Official data indicate that young, African American males living in impoverished, inner city areas have been the most at-risk demographic group for violent victimization (see Harrell 2007). Furthermore, a consistent trend in official data is that African Americans are more likely to commit violent crimes against other African

Americans. For African American women, specifically, a majority of violent crimes committed against them are by intimate partners, relatives, or people they know well (Harrell 2007). In fact, African American women consistently report more frequent and serious episodes of intimate partner violence than white women (Lilly and Graham-Bermann 2009; West 2004; Wright et al. 2010). Yet, while research has demonstrated that violent victimization among African American women certainly leads to adverse health outcomes (see Kramer et al. 2015), what is not well understood within the current literature is non-health related effects of being victimized among African American women. This dissertation contributes to the literature by examining whether victimization leads such women to commit crime.

And finally, racism-related stress comes in different forms for African American women. These women may experience specific episodes of direct racial discrimination, which can occur as early as childhood and continue throughout their lives. For example, an African American woman who is turned down for a promotion at work because her boss says she “wouldn’t fit in” is experiencing direct racial discrimination. African American women may also experience stress from daily occurrences of racial microaggressions. These are often subtle and, possibly, unintended acts that occur during regular interactions in which African American women may have grown to expect. Finally, on a larger scale, African American women may experience racism-related stress through acts of institutional discrimination (see Franklin, Boyd-Franklin, and Kelly 2006; Harrell 2000; Sue 2010; Sue et al. 2008). This source may manifest through unjust and/or discriminatory mistreatment of groups or individuals by governments, corporations, schools, healthcare centers or other social institutions. Regardless of the source, these

acts of racial discrimination can be tremendously stressful for African American women to the extent their mental and physiological health may be adversely impacted (Clark et al. 1999; Harrell, Hall, and Tagliaferro 2003; Meyer 2003; Ocampo 2000; Pearlin 1999).

As mentioned, racism-related stress may be compounded by experiences of sexism. Acts of sexism may also occur during individual interactions, whether overt or discrete, or systematically by various social institutions. Similarly, stress related to sexism is associated with mental and physical impairments among women as well, such as emotional distress, obsessive-compulsivity, and somatic symptoms (Klonoff, Landrine, and Campbell 2000; Landrine et al. 1995; Moradi and Subich 2003). At the heart of this matter is the intersectionality between the racism and sexism experienced by African American women that may create stress disproportionately to other demographic groups. This is particularly reflected in individual attitudes and cultural stereotypes that portray African American women as “dangerous, sexually promiscuous, and prone to violence” (Perry et al. 2013:28). Yet, the fact remains that African American women are more likely to be the primary provider for their families, as compared to white women, and they need to continue to demonstrate the role of the “strong African American women” commonly perceived within society (see Beauboeuf-Lafontant 2007). Researchers have found that while racial or gendered discrimination alone adversely affect African American women, the experience of multiple forms of discrimination can have a greater negative impact on their health (Grollman 2012; Thomas et al. 2008). Beyond just their health, though, experiencing such intersected forms of discrimination may make these women more susceptible to committing crimes to potentially alleviate such strain. Thus,

it is important to understand how these women may respond to strain and what cultural nuances may affect such responses.

2.4 Cultural Nuances of Responses to Strain by African American Women

The underlying argument of this dissertation is that African American women tend to experience, and in some cases at disproportionate rates, certain types of strain that may lead them to commit drug and non-drug related crimes, and how they respond to such strain may be influenced by their emotional states and/or certain internal and external factors. The latter pertains to, for example, the coping skills, social support systems, and spirituality of these women, and these factors are shaped by cultural nuances in the African American community.

Over 30 years ago, James and colleagues (1983) created a theoretical construct for how African Americans cope with adverse situations in life, titled John Henryism Active Coping (JHAC). The idea is that hard work and determination are necessary to cope with stressful life events that exist either internally or within one's environment. Early research focused on African American men and reported on the adverse health outcomes, such as higher blood pressure, when engaging in active coping (James 1994). Yet, later research found the opposite effect on health outcomes for African American women (Clark, Adams, and Clark 2001; Clark and Adams 2004; Dressler, Bindon, and Neggers 1998; Light et al. 1995), suggesting differences between the sexes. Moreover, some research has found certain factors to actually influence JHAC among African American women, such as self-esteem, when they have experienced interpersonal trauma (Bennett et al. 2004; Stevens-Watkins et al. 2014). What appears to be missing from the literature, however, is whether JHAC moderates the relationship between stressful life events and

non-health related outcomes, such as drug use and/or crime, among African American women. This dissertation addresses this gap in the literature.

Social support is another culturally relevant factor that may impact how African American women respond to strain. African Americans, in general, value the notion of depending on and interacting with others as a means of navigating through life and, in particular, adversity (Sue and Sue 2008). For African American women, research has found social support to be important in mitigating the effects on their health and well-being after experiencing stressful events, such as interpersonal trauma (Banks-Wallace and Park 2004; Thompson et al. 2002; Utsey et al. 2007) or financial problems (Broman 1996; Neighbors and LaVeist 1989; Taylor, Chatters, and Celious 2003). These findings speak to the positive nature of African American women's social support networks, including extended family members (see Sarkisian and Gerstel 2004; Taylor et al. 1990).

Such support networks, however, can also have negative implications. Lincoln and colleagues (2005) found that support networks for African Americans can be stressful, demanding, and even detrimental to mental health, which they refer to as "negative interactions." For example, African American women may have many resources within their support network to watch their children, but then those persons expect the mother to reciprocate the favor by helping them in some way. In other examples, conflicts and criticisms may be common features among interactions between members of African American families. Furthermore, African American women who seek social support from their family after experiencing traumatic events may be seen as problematic by others (Keith and Brown 2010), which may be indicative of the Strong Black Women ideology that exists in African American communities (Collins 2004;

Wyatt 2008). That is, African American women must “persist despite adversity” (Stevens-Watkins et al. 2013, p. 334) and appear courageous for others around them, even if it means sacrificing their emotional and mental well-being (see Hunn and Craig 2009; Johnson and Crowley 1996).

Taylor and colleagues (2014) examined these dynamics, both positive and negative, more closely among African American families and identified four specific patterns of emotional support and negative interaction. Persons in “ambivalent support networks” experience high emotional support with their family members, but these networks are also characterized with high levels of criticism and gossiping. Second, persons with perceived high levels of emotional support coupled with low levels of negative interactions are in “optimal support networks.” Third, persons in “estranged support networks” have little emotional support from their family members, but they also have limited negative interaction among them as well. Finally, persons who perceive their networks not to be emotionally supportive and highly critical of them are in “strained support networks.” While other racial and ethnic groups may experience similar types of support networks, these four types have been specifically identified for African American families. What remains to be understood is how these dynamics that exist within the support networks of African American women influence their behavioral outcomes, such as crime and/or drug use, upon experiencing strain in their lives. This dissertation will contribute to the current literature by examining what moderating effect, if any, exists between the strain-crime relationships among African American women.

There is also evidence that spirituality or religious well-being serve as protective factors in response to stressful life events, particularly among African Americans.

Spirituality may be conveyed as a “private, individual-level concept that is characterized by perceptions, beliefs, and feelings about a sacred or divine higher power, universal spirit, or ultimate purpose,” while religious well-being deals with “attending religious services or affiliation with a particular religious group” (Staton-Tindall et al. 2013, p. 1246). Scholars have documented for some time that African Americans report being more religious and spiritual than whites, and use religion and spirituality as coping mechanisms for life-related problems (Connell and Gibson 1997; Ellison 1993; Sherkat and Ellison 1999; Taylor, Chatters, and Joe 2011). Given this, researchers have found favorable results of the protective nature of spirituality among African American women. Bryant-Davis (2005) found spirituality to be an effective coping strategy among African American women who experienced trauma, and other research has found spirituality to be strongly associated with improvements in mental health among African American women survivors of domestic and family violence (Paranjape and Kaslow 2010; Watlington and Murphy 2006). Despite this scholarship, however, relatively little is known about how spirituality or religious well-being may moderate the effect of strain on other non-health related outcomes, such as drug use and/or crime, among African American women. This dissertation fills that void in the literature.

2.5 Conclusion

As a group, African American women provide unique opportunities for purposes of sociological inquiry. The disparities that have existed culturally and systematically to impact African American women and the disproportionate amount of strain they have experienced as a result of such disparities make them unique in that they seem more susceptible to various types of victimization and involvement in crime. Certainly being

born into a society that seems to place African American women at stark disadvantages as compared to other groups furthers this notion. And of appropriate theories to best explain these phenomena, GST seems poised as a framework. The current study makes this connection in the relationship between African American women, strain, and crime. The next chapter provides a broad overview of GST and outlines the research aims and hypotheses for the study.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

As stated previously, the current study is an empirical test of GST with an understudied sample of African American women. GST is well-suited as a framework for this study, because it argues that negative life events and/or harsh social conditions influence people's involvement in crime and, generally speaking, African American women as a group tend to be disproportionately involved with such events/conditions, as was described in the previous chapter. This chapter will provide an overview of the theory, its central arguments as they relate to this study, and the study's research aims and hypotheses that are grounded in the theory. It is important to theoretically ground research questions for multiple reasons. One, it provides the best opportunity to empirically test the strengths and weaknesses of any theory, which then advances the scholarship and overall understanding of the subject. And two, it provides the researcher with a roadmap to carry out a study, and a detailed plan from the outset helps to reduce any ambiguity about a study's objectives and conclusions.

3.1 Theoretical Foundations of GST

Any discussion of GST should begin with its theoretical foundations in anomie theory. One of the founders of classical sociology, Emile Durkheim, described anomie, or a "state of normlessness," as a temporal function of any society that results from rapid social change that goes unrestrained by formal social controls (Pfohl 1994). Further, in line with his functionalist perspective, he characterized human nature as being driven by an unlimited appetite of aspirations and desire. So without appropriate social controls to regulate behavior, crime and deviance ensue, and this is most relevant during times of social change. And to some extent, given that social resources are finite, crime and

deviance are inevitable and may even help regulate the functioning of society (see Pfohl 1994).

While the Durkheimian perspective on anomie developed as a result of how the French sociologist perceived the social changes in early-20th century European society, Robert Merton furthered anomie theory by examining the structured disparity between promises of achievable prosperity and the practical opportunities to carry out these promises in mid-20th century American society. In his classic work, "Social Structure and Anomie," Merton (1938) articulated a formal theory of deviance that rested on the underlying premise of unfulfilled aspirations, not normlessness, as driving people to commit crime. In fact, he argued that crime is the result of a socially structured contradiction between normative aspirations and the lack of available means for legitimately attaining valued cultural goals. For instance, the accumulation of wealth and prestige has long been a culturally valued goal within American society; yet, not everyone has the equal chance of obtaining this goal. As a result, some people will be successful at accomplishing this goal through legitimate means, while others may pursue the goal illegitimately, such as in the form of crime and deviance.

Merton seem to place the focus more on the individual, rather than society as Durkheim did, and this level of analysis led to a more complete understanding of how individual behavior was influenced by a juxtaposition of social forces, such as social structures and cultural beliefs. Several theorists attempted to extend Merton's work and further the anomie perspective without much progress. However, Robert Agnew was one theorist who revolutionized the conventional belief in anomie theory by claiming that other types of strain, such as those at the micro-level of analysis, exist and have profound

effects on individuals who experience them. Initially, Agnew (1985) criticized macro-level strain theories for only considering the blockage of goal-seeking behavior as an explanation for criminal behavior. He argued that individuals "...not only seek certain goals, they also try to avoid painful or aversive situations" (Agnew 1985:185). In short, Agnew's most significant contribution to the anomie perspective on crime was his notion to incorporate the importance of emotions, specifically negative emotions, in relationships between people and the situations they may encounter as causal factors of crime.

3.2 Central Tenets of GST

GST's most fundamental theoretical premise states that individuals engage in crime because they experience strain in the form of negatively valued stimuli (e.g., person is ridiculed by friend or family member), the removal of positively valued stimuli (e.g., money or property is stolen), or the failure to achieve positively valued goals (e.g., status of earning less money) (Agnew 1992; 2006). The experienced strain then creates a negative emotional affect (e.g., anger, frustration, disappointment, fear, depression, anxiety) within individuals and crime is seen as a way for individuals to reduce or escape from strain. This framework draws heavily on stress research in psychology and sociology (for an overview, see Thoits 1995), which examines how the loss of those things we value and negative treatment by others impacts us.

Agnew (2001; 2006) discusses strains as either objective (generally disliked) or subjective (disliked by the particular person or persons being examined) and, therefore, he argues that it is important for criminologists to understand both a person's exposure to objective strains and a person's subjective evaluation of these strains. He also claims that

personal experiences with strains (e.g., being physically assaulted) should bear the strongest relationship to crime; however, it is sometimes important to consider the individual's vicarious (i.e., strains experienced by others around the individual) and anticipated (i.e., expectations that strains will continue into the future) experiences with strains as well. These experiences may have different effects on the individual and, thus, vary in leading the individual to engage in crime (Agnew 2002).

Agnew (2006) provides three primary explanations for why strains increase the likelihood of crime: to reduce or escape from strains, to obtain revenge against those who have wronged them, and to alleviate negative emotional affect from strains. He initially developed these explanations as exclusive from another in order to conceptualize the theory. However, as GST has evolved, these explanations are not necessarily viewed as mutually exclusive. For example, a youth may steal valuable jewelry from his abusive parents in order for him to afford to be able to run away. So crime may be perceived by such persons as a way to achieve their goals, though achieving such goals may create additional problems over time (see Agnew 2005:90-93). A teenager who runs away from home to escape the abuse of his parents may become homeless, hungry, and involved in acts of deviance.

In his second explanation, Agnew states that crime allows individuals to obtain revenge against those who have wronged them or, if this is not possible, against more vulnerable targets. For example, individuals who believe they have been assaulted without any apparently good reasons may want to get revenge against those who assaulted them. Someone gets beat up, so s/he seeks out the assailant and retaliates by fighting the person again; however, it may not be possible for such individuals to seek

and carryout revenge against their aggressors. Thus, the person who was victimized may seek out vulnerable targets to victimize as a way of retaliation. Consider the person who is abused and then bullies those who are less than a threat as a means of dealing with his transgressions. Scholars have found that individuals take this path of crime in response to the anger and frustration experienced by the strains, even if doing so does little or nothing to reduce their strains (see Carey 2004; Mullins, Wright, and Jacobs 2004; Neergaard 2004).

And finally, to Agnew's third explanation, crime may allow individuals to alleviate their negative emotions. For example, individuals may drink alcohol excessively or use illegal drugs in an effort to seek relief from the strains they have experienced in their lives. Researchers who have studied the strain-crime relationship through the mediation effects of negative emotions have documented this finding (see Aseltine and Gore 2000; Cerbone and Larison 2000; Hoffmann 2000; Hoffmann, Cerbone, and Su 2000). This is not to suggest that emotions do not play a role in Agnew's first two explanations. In fact, emotions can and often do play a role in those explanations. These explanations, altogether, simply provide pathways to crime in response to experienced forms of strain. Agnew seemed to recognize the oversimplification of his original explanations and, thus, broadened the theory by including elements of "criminal coping."

Agnew (2001; 2006; 2013) argues that individuals who engage in crime employ criminal coping techniques to alleviate the negative emotional states, such as anger, stemming from certain types of strain, or individuals may decide to engage in crime independent of the emotions they are experiencing. Therefore, the coping process in GST can be rational or driven largely by emotions, depending on how individuals subjectively

evaluate the type of strain, as well as the circumstances surrounding the strain. For example, individuals may employ criminal coping techniques when the costs of crime are low (i.e., they are in environments where the likelihood of sanction for crime is small) or when they are more susceptible to commit crime (i.e., they have been socialized from an early age and have a natural inclination) (Agnew 2006). All of these different pathways to crime illustrate the complexity of the coping process, given that it is influenced by several factors across multiple stages. Certain factors, such as poor conventional coping skills and low levels of conventional social support, are more conducive for individuals to engage in criminal coping, which mainly reflect individual resources and personality traits.

Agnew (2013), however, acknowledges that for most of the time individuals legally cope with strain and only turn to criminal coping once they have perceived the legal means to have failed them, which is influenced by certain characteristics of the strain and coping strategies. Most notably, strains that are seen as high in magnitude, are viewed as unjust, and associated with low social control increase the likelihood of crime (Agnew 2001). These characteristics are highly influential to criminal involvement because of their degree of emotional affect, as well as their ability to decrease self-control, reduce levels of social control, and foster the social learning of crime. In addition, Agnew (2013) argues that individuals may employ strategies of rumination and withdrawal. The former may increase the perceived magnitude and injustice of strain, thereby increasing the likelihood of reacting in anger. And the latter may reduce levels of social support. For example, take criminal victimization as a type of strain. An individual who is physically victimized by his or her spouse may become temporarily emotionally

detached from that person through social withdrawals as a result of experiencing state depression. Such an individual may also become less interested in conventional institutions like work or church, or he or she may become more self-interested and have less concern for others. Such victimization may even encourage the individual to engage in crime, such as illegal drug use, as a way to alleviate the negative emotion of state depression (Agnew 2002; 2006). Economic hardship may also take a similar path as victimization in leading to drug-related crime. Yet, other types of strain, such as discrimination based on gender and/or race, may involve different characteristics that make people more susceptible to non-drug crimes, given they encourage people to utilize externalize criminal coping skills.

3.3 Strains, Negative Emotional States, and Crime

As mentioned above, one of the central ideas of GST and this study is that certain types of strains produce a range of negative emotions and people alleviate those emotions by engaging in various criminal activities. It is important to acknowledge the distinction Agnew (2006) makes between emotional states and emotional traits. The former is the actual experience of an emotion, whereas the latter refers to the general tendency to experience certain emotions. Depression can be used to highlight the difference between emotional states and traits. An individual who experiences the emotional state of depression is engaged in the process and stages of depression, which, as GST argues, is manifested by experiences with strains. On the other hand, an individual high in trait depression has a tendency to be sad a lot, though he/she may not be necessarily depressed at any given time. While emotional traits have a role in the GST framework, the current study focuses on the relationship between strain, emotional states, and crime.

This argument for how strains lead to negative emotions and, in turn, increase the likelihood of a criminal response seems fairly straightforward. People feel bad as a result of experiencing strains and they want to take some form of corrective action to alleviate those feelings. Further, negative emotional states tend to lower the ability for people to cope in a legal manner, reduce the perceived costs of crime, and even create a disposition for crime (Agnew 2006). The process for how these elements manifest, however, is quite complex and crosses over to both the natural and social sciences. Yet, what is provided hereafter pertains to the social scientific explanation in understanding emotions, their characteristics, and their effects on crime as argued within the GST framework.

This study focuses on three emotional states within the GST framework: depression, anger, and anxiety. Depression can be generally defined as the result of experiencing a disliked event or condition that leaves a person feeling powerless to overcome the disliked state of affairs. It is often characterized as a major emotion that is coupled with feelings of anguish, despair, hopelessness, and disappointment. Agnew (2006) argues that the emotional state of depression increases the likelihood of crime in part because depressed people tend to be lethargic and feel powerless to act in more responsible, healthier ways. Furthermore, he argues that depression reduces the perceived costs of crime, as depressed people feel as if they have nothing to lose by engaging in criminal activity. A limited amount of research has found depression to have a greater effect on more “passive” crimes, such as illegal drug use, than on crimes that involve violence and aggression (see Bao, Haas, and Pi 2004; Jang and Johnson 2003; Landau 1997; Peirce et al. 1994; Piquero and Sealock 2004; Power and Dalgleish 1997; Sigfusdottir, Farkas, and Silver 2004; Simons et al. 2003).

Anger can be generally defined as the result of being treated unjustly by others and is often associated with feelings of power. It produces an immense desire to correct or respond to a perceived injustice. Like depression, anger is also characterized as a major emotion that is associated with feelings of frustration, envy, and jealousy. Agnew (2006) identifies four reasons that anger and its related emotions increase the likelihood of crime. Most notably, such emotions create a strong need to correct a perceived injustice or to satisfy desires. Second, these emotions, anger in particular, directly impact people's ability to objectively assess situations in order to cope in pro-social ways, which leaves them to quickly respond to situations. Third, angry people are less concerned with the costs of crime, specifically long-term consequences of their behavior. Lastly, anger creates a strong disposition for crime, especially crime directed towards others. Angry people feel justified in their actions to engage in crime as a way to right a perceived wrong. Some research has found anger to be more strongly associated with violence and aggression (see Bao et. al 2004; Broidy 2001; De Coster and Kort-Butler 2006; Jang and Johnson 2003; Mazerolle, Piquero, and Capowich 2003; Sigfusdottir et al. 2004).

Finally, anxiety can be defined as anticipation of experiencing a disliked event or condition and feeling powerless to stop it. It is the anticipation of something happening that distinguishes it from depression, which transpires once an event or a condition actually occurs. Agnew (2006) views anxiety as a related emotion to fear and panic within the context of GST. Like depression and anger, anxiety should increase the likelihood of crime, specifically drug use, due to the fact that it often involves people psychologically escaping from the reality of their problems (see Aseltine, Gore, and Gordon 2000; Power and Dalglish 1997). In fact, Agnew (2006) argues that anxiety

should be less strongly related to crimes that occur between people (e.g., assault, robbery, etc.) than, say, anger.

3.4 Strains and Conditional Factors of Criminal Coping

In the above section, it was mentioned that certain factors of criminal coping help explain why some individuals engage in crime from the standpoint of GST. The current study examines the impact of some of these factors in moderating the strain-crime relationship. Why do these factors influence the likelihood of crime? And what are the conditioning effects of these factors on criminal coping? This dissertation examines the effects of three factors—coping skills, social support, and spiritual well-being—on the relationship between strain and crime among African American women. Agnew (2006) argues that such factors influence the subjective perception of strains that are generally disliked by most people, especially when such strains are perceived as unjust and high in magnitude by individuals. It is the interaction between individuals and these factors that either lead to criminal or legal coping of strains. As discussed in Chapter 2, of the factors argued by Agnew (2006) to influence the likelihood of crime, these three factors are most relevant to African American women and are understudied within the GST literature.

The first of these factors examined in the current study is poor coping skills. Strains tend to create adverse situations for individuals and they are left to their own skills and resources to deal with the strains in various ways. Problem-solving and interpersonal skills are at the root of how individuals respond to strains. Those who lack the necessary skills to sufficiently assess and resolve issues when confronted may be more likely to respond in procriminal ways (Agnew 2005). The range of coping skills is extensive and varies in complexity. Among the most basic of these skills is making eye

contact with others during conversations. Among the more difficult skills involves higher degrees of emotional intelligence. For example, individuals who can sufficiently perceive the emotions of others during interactions tend to function at higher levels of emotional intelligence and may be more adequate for responding to adversity or conflict in healthier ways. While researchers measure coping skills in different ways, their underlying focus is to use a scale in which skills range from “low” to “high.”

The assumption of the current study is that individuals with poor coping skills will be more likely to engage in crime in response to strains. The current GST literature seems to support this argument. In a nationally representative sample of adolescents aged 12 to 16, Agnew and his associates (2002) found that participants with poorer coping skills were more likely to respond to strains related to their families, school, peers, and neighborhoods with delinquency. More specifically, adolescents who acted impulsively and were easily upset by adverse situations, among other traits, indicated poorer coping skills. Mazerolle and his colleagues have conducted numerous studies on the conditional effects of poor coping skills on the strain-crime relationship. These studies have also included youth (i.e., children and young adults) as the research subjects. Mazerolle and his colleagues have generally found that those youth who have inept coping skills are more likely to engage in delinquency or situational violence when faced with different forms of strain (Mazerolle and Maahs 2000; Mazerolle et al. 2000; Mazerolle et al. 2003). Yet, this body of research has also produced mixed results; mainly that poor coping skills seem to affect crime and delinquency independently from strain. Such a finding may indicate that while a factor like poor coping skills may add to the overall effect, in conjunction with strain, there may not be an interaction effect between strain

and poor coping skills on crime. Another criticism of this research is that this aspect of GST has not been tested among samples other than youth, such as African American women.

Another factor examined in the current study is low levels of conventional social support. This seems to be among the most commonsensical factors that could influence the strain-crime relationship. For example, an individual falls on hard times economically to the extent that it becomes a chronic problem. She does not have the emotional, physical, and/or financial support from family or friends during this time and, thus, becomes vulnerable to coping to the strain in pro-criminal ways. In addition to family and friends, individuals can receive support from teachers, neighbors, religious figures, work colleagues, and even government agencies, among others. Support can come in a variety of ways as well. Social support may involve emotional ties between people in which they talk about their problems and provide advice on how best to resolve them. Support may also involve physical assistance in some way, such as providing temporary residence or means of transportation, or support may involve the provision of financial assistance. Thus, there is reason to believe that individuals who lack social support may be more likely to respond to strain by engaging in crime.

GST assumes that without conventional social support from family, friends, and members of the community, individuals may turn to criminal others as a means to cope with strain and, thus, commit crime. Anderson (1999) provides evidence of this from his ethnographic research conducted in an inner-city community. At one point in the community, there existed “old heads” (i.e., older, respected members) who mentored and supported young people living in the community emotionally and financially. Over time,

however, the old heads moved to more affluent areas of the city and the support system that was in place in the community moved with them. As a result, Anderson (1999) suggested crime rates in the community increased to some extent. Other research has also found evidence of social support being a protective factor from crime among people who experience types of strain (Agnew 2013; Cullen 1994; Wright and Cullen 2001). Mixed results have also been produced by studies examining the effect of social support on criminal coping (see Eitle and Turner 2003; Jang and Johnson 2005; Paternoster and Mazerolle 1994; Robbers 2004). Agnew (2013) offers many explanations of why this may be the case, including the constructs being tested by researchers are inadequate and that researchers have excluded other factors and strategies individuals may use to cope with strain.

Finally, a conditioning factor not well studied in the GST literature, but that has been found to be important in other social scientific scholarship, is religion and spirituality. While religion and spirituality can be thought of as a type of social control that can influence the behaviors of people, particularly when dealing with adverse conditions, Agnew (2013) suggests it is a standalone coping strategy for certain types of people. Engaging in religious practices (e.g., attending church regularly) and/or having strong religious beliefs may deter individuals from engaging in crime because of the guilt they may experience or that their belief in a higher purpose or power allows them to emotionally and cognitively cope with strain in more prosocial ways (Folkman and Moskowitz 2004). Furthermore, their weak investment in conventional institutions like church or work means they lack certain resources that facilitate legal coping. A couple of issues arise for researchers with respect to examining the conditioning effect of religion

and spirituality. One issue is the need to differentiate between religious involvement and religious coping; that is, religion may be involved in a person's life independent of the stress they face, though people may use religion as a way to cope with stress in their lives. The other issue is the complexities of properly measuring both religious and spiritual coping. Certainly spirituality can exist outside of religion, but it can be a part of religion as well (see Folkman and Moskowitz 2004). An additional point is the time-ordering of events needs to be exact to best determine the impact of religious and spiritual coping on the strain-crime relationship. That is, researchers should measure whether the coping come after experiencing strain and prior engaging in crime.

Despite this scholarship, however, relatively little is known about how spirituality or religious well-being may moderate the effect of strain on crime among African Americans. Jang and Johnson have conducted a few of the existing studies in the GST literature that have examined the conditioning effect of religion and spirituality. In one study, they found that religiosity buffered the effects of strain on crime among a sample of African Americans (Jang and Johnson 2003), and in another study, they found that African American women were less likely to engage in interpersonal aggression during times when they experienced strain or stressful events due to them being more religious than the men in the study (Jang and Johnson 2005). More recently, Staton-Tindall and her colleagues (2013) found that spirituality and religious well-being moderated the effect of strain on drug use among a sample of African American women. Further research is needed in order to either extend or contradict these findings. The current study contributes to the literature by finding further support of religion and spirituality serving

as a conditioning effect, particularly by examining its effect on different types of strain and crime, which was a limitation of Jang and Johnson's (2005) study.

3.5 African American Women, Strain, and Crime

Distinctions are made within the GST literature to explain nuances between sexes and racial/ethnic groups, including among African American women. In an elaboration of GST, Broidy and Agnew (1997) argue for three propositions to explain the differences in crime rates between males and females. First, females may experience different forms of strain, which, in turn, may lead them to commit specific types of crime. They liken this explanation to the differences in positively valued goals among males and females. For instance, males are more likely to experience strain related to finances and work, because they are more concerned with material success, external achievements, and distributive justice. However, they argue females tend to more strongly value interpersonal relationships, meaning and purpose of life, and procedural justice, which makes them more inclined to experience interpersonal or relational strain, such as criminal victimization. For years within criminological literature, the common thought was that males engage in more crimes as compared to females because they experience more strain; however, the larger literature on stress indicates that females experience as much or more strain as do males, especially those strains that are typically ignored by classic strain theories, including the presentation of noxious stimuli. In addition, Broidy and Agnew (1997) argue that males are more likely to engage in other-directed deviance or crime, such as interpersonal aggression, while females are more prone to self-directed deviance or crime, such as drug use. Some support has been found for this argument among studies involving women returning to communities after some period of

incarceration (Huebner, DeJong, and Cobbina 2009; Leverentz 2010; Slocum, Simpson, and Smith, 2005).

A second proposition advanced by Broidy and Agnew (1997) claims there are differences between males and females in how they respond emotionally to strain and such responses are related to their criminal coping behaviors. More specifically, anger has a stronger effect on other-directed deviance or crime, including both property and violent crimes, while depression and anxiety have stronger effects on self-directed deviance and crime. Broidy and Agnew (1997) postulate that women are more likely to report higher levels of depression and guilt than men, which has been supported by prior research (Broidy 2001; Hay 2003; Jang and Johnson 2005; Piquero and Sealock 2004; Van Gundy 2002). And it is not that women are less likely to report as much or even higher levels of anger than men, it is that women's anger is often compounded by other emotions, such as fear and shame, which women more often internalize and express through self-directed types of behaviors (Broidy and Agnew 1997; Jang 2007).

Lastly, Broidy and Agnew (1997) argue that differences exist between men and women in the factors that condition the strain-crime relationship; that is, some people engage in deviant coping strategies, while others use legitimate coping strategies, and this process differs by gender. For example, they claim that women who have lower self-esteem may be more likely to cope with strain through self-directed, deviant behaviors, such as alcohol or drug use, as a result of societal gender role socialization, gender stereotypes, and gender identities. Prior research has also found social support and religiosity to have similar effects among women as compared to men (Broidy and Agnew 1997; Ellison and Taylor 1996; Jang and Johnson 2003; Sherkat and Ellison 1999).

Jang (2007) found mixed results for these three propositions among a national, cross-sectional sample of African American men and women. First, the women in the sample were more likely to report experiencing strains related to physical health, interpersonal relations, and gender roles in the family as Broidy and Agnew (1997) hypothesized. However, the women were also more likely to report having experienced financial strain, which Broidy and Agnew (1997) speculated may be due to “the fact that increasing numbers of females live alone, head families, and/or have responsibility for supplying a substantial share of family income” (p. 289). Second, Jang (2007) found that strains related to interpersonal relationships, physical health, and gender roles were more likely to produce both self-directed (e.g., depression and anxiety) and other-directed (e.g., anger) emotions, and self-directed emotions had larger effects on self-directed behaviors than on other-directed behaviors, and vice versa. For the third proposition, however, Jang (2007) found that the African American women in the sample were more likely to engage in prosocial coping behaviors when they experienced strain, regardless of the type, which was largely explained by the effects of strain on self-directed emotions among the women. This latter finding is not surprising, though, since Agnew (2013) has recognized the mixed results with respect to conditioning effects of certain factors on the strain-crime relationship, which he argues is a limitation of cross-sectional survey data.

Knowing this, the current study seeks to advance the current GST literature by examining the effects of three forms of strain on both self-directed and other-directed crime, along with negative emotions and conditioning factors, among a longitudinal sample of African American women. Criminal victimization may be among the types of strain that are most conducive to crime (Agnew 2002; Eitle and Turner 2002; Wallace,

Patchin, and May 2005). In recent years, there have been several studies that find a positive relationship between victimization and crime using a GST framework (Carson, Sullivan, Cochran, and Lersch 2009; Hay and Evans 2006; Kaufman 2009; Manasse and Ganem 2009; Moon, Blurton, and McCluskey 2008; Ostrowsky and Messner 2005; Piquero and Sealock 2004; Spano, Rivera, and Bolland 2006). Within this body of research, researchers have found victimization (i.e., physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse) to be conducive to various types of criminal behavior, including property offending, drug use, and interpersonal violence. Most of the research, however, has examined either cross-sectional samples of adolescents or longitudinal samples of individuals beginning in adolescence through young adulthood. Nevertheless, the current study is extending the literature by exploring the relationship between victimization and crime among adult African American women. In particular, this study will determine whether victimization actually causes crime among the sample.

Just as negative relationships can be sources of strain, economic hardship, such as chronic unemployment or significant financial loss, can be a significant source of strain as well. Agnew (2006) argues that such work experiences can be significant types of strain that may lead an individual to engage in crime. As he notes, “the secondary labor market consists of jobs characterized by low pay, few benefits, unpleasant tasks (e.g., simple repetitive, or physically demanding work), little autonomy, and coercive control” (55). This is particularly true among individuals with criminal records, who can only find employment, if at all, in the secondary labor market. Pager (2009) suggests that various reasons account for the employment consequences of incarceration among individuals with criminal records, especially those who have been convicted of a felony: One, those

who are sent to prison would not find work even in the absence of incarceration; two, the experience of going to prison changes people and makes them less amenable to engaging in the labor market; and three, ex-inmates are stigmatized for going to prison, regardless of any real changes on their behalf. There is evidence for all three of these mechanisms (see Wakefield and Uggen 2010). The current study examines whether economic hardship causes African American women to commit crime.

As the final type of strain to be studied, Agnew (2006) argues that experiences with discrimination based on race/ethnicity and gender may lead to greater individual-level involvement in crime. This is a type of strain that fits well within the GST model, and there have been numerous studies in recent years to suggest a clear link between such discrimination and individual involvement in crime (e.g., Anderson 1999; Burt, Simons, and Gibbons 2012; Eitle 2002; Katz 2000; Simons et al. 2003). Most notably, Burt and colleagues (2012) studied this link among a sample of African American male youth, and found that racial discrimination was positively associated with increased involvement in crime. The authors also found that this association was enlarged by depression and perceptions favorable to crime, both of which are essential components of the GST model. Nevertheless, there remain other areas of the discrimination-crime relationship that need further investigation. For example, does being discriminated against because one is an African American woman increase the likelihood of engagement in crime? To fill this void, the current study measures this aspect of intersectionality by combining these two individual types of discrimination to create a “gendered racism” measure and examines its impact on crime.

3.6 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The overall goal of the current study is to investigate the types of strain that are most conducive to crime among a sample of African American women, and the ways in which the subjects respond to the strain. Figure 3.6.1 provides the analytic model for the study. In examining the model, there are several specific questions of the study that should be discussed.

First, the study will answer the question, “Which types of strain are conducive to the women in the sample committing drug related crime?” (RQ1). Hypotheses for this question include: “criminal victimization will be the most conducive to drug crime given that it is an interpersonally related strain and is more likely to lead to self-directed criminal coping, such as drug use” (H1a); “economic hardship will have a significant effect on drug crime given that it is a type of strain that could lead to self-directed deviant coping, such as drug use” (H1b); and “gendered racism will not have an effect on drug crime, since it is more likely to generate other-directed emotions that could lead to other-directed criminal coping” (H1c).

Likewise, the study will answer the question, “Which types of strain are conducive to African American women committing non-drug related crime?” (RQ2). Hypotheses for this question include: “gendered racism will be most conducive to non-drug crime, because it is a type of strain that is most likely connected to other-directed crime” (H2a); “economic hardship will have a significant effect on non-drug related crime given that it is a type of strain that could lead to other-directed deviant coping, such as check fraud or theft” (H2b); and “criminal victimization will not have a significant effect on non-drug related crime” (H2c).

Third, this study will answer the question, “What effects do the types of strain have on the negative emotional states—anger, depression, and anxiety?” (RQ3). Hypotheses for this question include: “depression, a self-directed emotion, will be generated by experiences of economic hardship and criminal victimization, but not by gendered racism experiences” (H3a); anxiety, another self-directed emotion, also will be generated by experiences of economic hardship and criminal victimization among the women, but not by gendered racism” (H3b); and “anger, an other-directed emotion, will be generated by both economic hardship and gendered racism experiences, but not by being a victim of a crime” (H3c).

Fourth, this study will answer the question, “Which negative emotional states have the greatest mediation effects on the relationships between the different types of strain and drug crime among the participants?” (RQ4). Hypotheses for this question include: “anger will not have a mediation effect on the relationship between any of the types strain and drug crime, since it is an other-directed emotion that is not tied to drug related crime” (H4a) and “depression and anxiety will equally have significant mediation effects on the relationship between criminal victimization and drug crime, as well as economic hardship and drug crime” (H4b).

Similarly, this study will answer the question, “Which negative emotional states have the greatest mediation effects on the relationships between the types of strain and non-drug crime among the women in the sample?” (RQ5). Hypotheses for this question include: “Anger will have the greatest mediation effect on the relationship between gendered racism and non-drug crime, and it will also mediate the economic hardship-non-drug crime relationship” (H5a); “anxiety will not mediate the relationships between

gendered racism or criminal victimization and non-drug crime” (H5b); and “depression will not have an effect on any of the types of strain and non-drug crime given that it is a self-directed emotion that leads to self-directed coping behaviors” (H5c).

Next, this study will answer the question, “Which conditioning factors moderate the strain-drug crime relationships among the African American women in the sample?” (RQ6). Three moderating variables will be examined in the study, which will concentrate on the social support systems, coping skills, and spiritual well-being of the women. These factors relate to the criminal coping mechanisms discussed above; however, the focus of the analysis will be, for example, how having healthy coping skills reduces the likelihood of committing crime, rather than how having poor coping skills makes the women more susceptible to crime. Hypotheses include: “higher levels of perceived social support will moderate the effects of economic hardship on drug crime” (H6a); “higher levels of coping skills will moderate the effects of economic hardship on drug crime” (H6b); “being more religious and spiritual will moderate the effects of economic hardship on drug crime” (H6c); “higher levels of perceived social support will moderate the effects of criminal victimization on drug crime” (H6d); “higher levels of coping skills will moderate the effects of criminal victimization on drug crime” (H6e); “being more religious and spiritual will moderate the effects of criminal victimization on drug crime” (H6f).

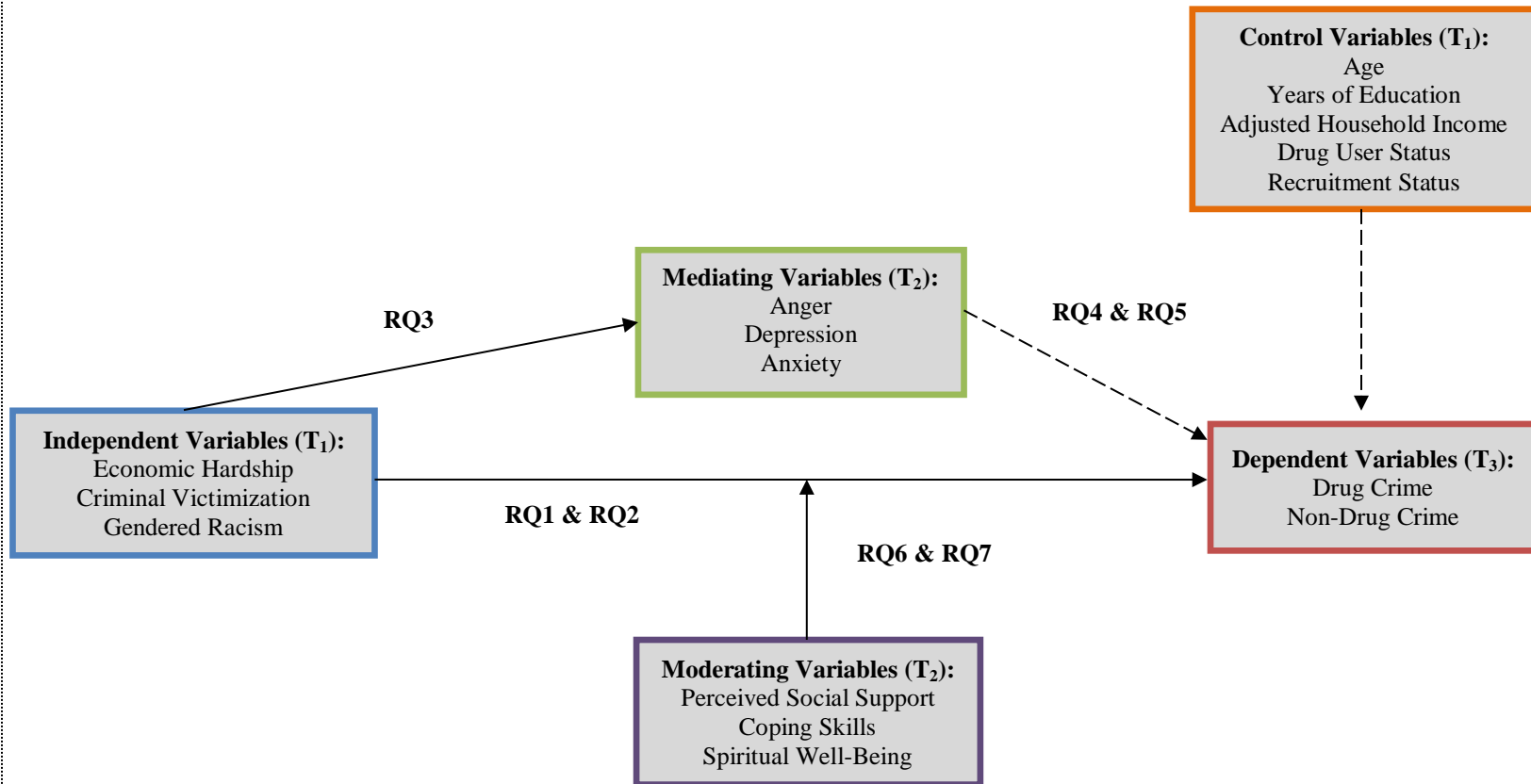
Finally, this study will answer the question, “Which conditioning factors moderate the strain-non-drug crime relationships among the African American women in the sample?” (RQ7). Hypotheses include: “higher levels of perceived social support will moderate the effects of economic hardship on non-drug crime” (H7a); “higher levels of

“coping skills will moderate the effects of economic hardship on non-drug crime” (H7b); “being more religious and spiritual will moderate the effects of economic hardship on non-drug crime” (H7c); “higher levels of perceived social support will moderate the effects of gendered racism on non-drug crime” (H7d); “higher levels of coping skills will moderate the effects of gendered racism on non-drug crime” (H7e); and “being more religious and spiritual will moderate the effects of gendered racism on non-drug crime” (H7f).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of GST and outlined the aspects of the theory, and related research literature, that are most relevant to the current study. In addition, the study’s research questions were listed, along with hypotheses that corresponded with each of the questions. The next chapter will present the methodology used to empirically test the relationships illustrated in Figure 3.6.1.

Figure 3.6.1: Analytic Model of Study



Chapter Four: Methodology

The preceding two chapters provided the theoretical framework for this study and reviewed the existing literature in relation to strain and crime among African American women. The research questions and hypotheses were described at the end of Chapter 3. This chapter will explain the methodology undertaken to examine those questions and hypotheses, beginning with a description of the study sample.

4.1 Sample

Data for this study were collected as part of a larger study on how drug use and criminality are related to health disparities, particularly HIV, and service utilization among African American drug using and non-drug using women across criminal justice status (prison, probation, and community-no supervision). To be eligible to participate in the study, women had to meet three criteria: (1) self-identify as an African American; (2) be at least 18 years-old; and (3) voluntarily participate in the study. In addition, the incarcerated women had to be eligible for community re-entry within 60 days (i.e., meeting the parole board or serving out), women in the probation sample had to be actively under probation supervision at the time of recruitment, and the women in the community could not currently be involved with the criminal justice system (e.g., on parole, on probation, or in drug court). During the screening process, women were also placed into either a drug user group or a non-drug user group based upon whether they self-reported having used an illicit drug in the year prior to incarceration for the women in the prison sample and in the year prior to the baseline interview for the women in the probation and community samples. All procedures were approved by the Institutional Review Board and, thus, participants were consented before participation, compensated

for their time and contribution to the study, and protected by a federal Certificate of Confidentiality given sensitive nature of the data collected.

A tiered strategy was used to recruit women incarcerated at Kentucky's three adult female prisons—Kentucky Correctional Institute for Women, Western Kentucky Correctional Complex, and Otter Creek Correctional Center. African American female prison inmates at all institutions, who were meeting the parole board or serving out their sentence within 60 days, were mailed an individual recruitment letter to attend an information session at the prison. The information session explained to interested women about the eligibility criteria and other details of the study. In particular, women who were screened but had expected serve-out dates beyond the study timeframe were not eligible to participate in the study. Two hundred forty women were enrolled in the prison sample between December 2008 and November 2011. There were a number of challenges recruiting a sufficient number of non-drug-using women, so drug users were overrepresented in that they comprised approximately 78 percent of the prison sample.

African American female probationers were recruited from Probation Districts 2, 7, 9, 16, 17, 18, and 19 of the Division of the Probation and Parole, Kentucky Department of Corrections. These districts include the cities of Hopkinsville, Louisville, Lexington, as well as Northern Kentucky, which borders Cincinnati, Ohio, and include the largest percentages of African American residents in the state. The recruitment strategy for the female probationers differed due to the fact that data on race are not publicly available. On probation report days, the trained African American female interviewers approached all women, regardless of their perceived race to describe the study, screen interested

individuals, and schedule appointments for interviews. The probation sample comprised of 197 women who were recruited between November 2008 and November 2011.

For the community sample of African American women, flyers and newspaper advertisements were posted in public venues (e.g., beauty parlors, convenient stores, public health departments, government agencies, etc.) in Lexington, Kentucky. These recruitment flyers and advertisements provided a 1-800 number and interested women were screened for eligibility. The community sample comprised of 206 women who were recruited between February and October 2009.

Participants underwent face-to-face interviews with trained African American female research staff members using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). Interviewers read the instructions, questions, and response categories from a laptop and directly entered the participants' responses. The interviews generally lasted about two hours, and they occurred at various locations, including but not limited to: prisons, probation offices, community treatment programs, public libraries, community corrections facilities or halfway houses, restaurants, university office buildings, and at the homes of participants. The CAPI formatting was programmed using Questionnaire Development System (QDS™) from Nova Research (see <http://www.novaresearch.com>).

4.1.1 Follow-Up Interviews and Rates

The numbers reported above regarding the sample sizes for each recruitment type were the women who participated in the baseline interviews of the study. Three waves of follow-up data collection were completed by interviewers for each sub-sample of women. Participants in the probation and community sub-samples were eligible for follow-up at 6, 12, and 18 months after their baseline interview. Participants in the prison sub-sample

were eligible for follow-up at 6, 12, and 18 months following their release from prison. Systematic tracking and interview procedures, as well as monetary incentives, were used to retain study participants during the follow-up periods. More specifically, participants were contacted by letter and telephone about their upcoming interviews at the beginning of each month in which they had interviews scheduled. Follow-up procedures for non-response participants included internet searches, courthouse record searches, and Kentucky correctional system checks.

Of the 643 total participants who were initially enrolled in the study, all of them were eligible for follow-up interviews except those who were not released from prison ($n=57$), who died ($n=2$), or who were not able to participate due to severe mental health problems ($n=1$); thus, leaving 583 eligible participants. A total of 550 women participated in the 6-month follow-up (T_1) interviews, which equated to a retention rate of 94 percent. A total of 536 women participated in the 12-month follow-up (T_2) interviews. This represented 92 percent of the women who were eligible. Finally, the current study used 18-month follow-up (T_3) interview data collected as of February 2013. These data were provided by a total of 498 women, which equated to a retention rate of 85 percent. Of the 498 women, 129 were in the prison sub-sample, 171 were in the probation sub-sample, and 198 were in the community sub-sample.

4.2 Measures

Data were collected across several domains during the participant interviews. Various types of variables were included in the analytic approach used to examine the statistical relationships among them: independent, mediator, moderator, control, and

dependent variables. Each type of variable is described in the section below. Table 4.1 provides descriptive statistics for all of the variables included in the analyses.

4.2.1 Dependent Variables

The dependent variables examined in this study measured self-reported criminal behavior using the Criminal Involvement Inventory (CII; Oser & Leukefeld, 2005). The CII is a 27-item scale intended to measure criminal activity and criminal justice involvement across 13 offense categories, including: shoplifting; theft, larceny, burglary, or breaking/entering; check fraud; disorderly conduct; sex trading; drug business; drug possession, use, or consumption; driving under the influence or driving while intoxicated; assault and battery, or robbery; homicide/manslaughter; arson; child abuse or neglect; and failure to pay child support. Participants were asked whether they had committed each of the 13 offenses T₃. Their responses were recorded as “yes” (=1) or “no” (=0).

Several steps were taken to determine the most robust measures. First, frequencies were run for all 13 offenses. There was at least one occurrence for all of the offense categories with the exception of homicide/manslaughter and arson. Next, the remaining 11 offenses were aggregated into four categories: property crime (i.e., shoplifting, burglary, and check fraud), drug related crime (i.e., drug business, drug use or possession, and driving under the influence), violent crime (i.e., robbery and child abuse), and public order crime (i.e., disorderly conduct, sex trading, and failure to pay child support). Frequencies were run for the four categories, which revealed that all but the drug related crime category was heavily skewed; meaning that 10 percent of cases reported having committed any property, violent, or public order crime at T₃. On the other hand, 40 percent (n=200) of the sample reported having engaged in drug related crime during the

same timeframe. This was not surprising, however, since participants were recruited to participate in the study based on their drug use status. As a result, two dependent variables were included in the analyses. The property, violent, and public order crime categories were collapsed into one aggregate, binary measure (“yes”=1, “no”=0) of “non-drug related crime,” and the drug related crime binary measure was used as standalone dependent variable in the analyses.

4.2.2 Independent Variables

This dissertation examined three types of strain that served as the independent variables in the statistical analysis, including economic hardships, criminal victimization, and gendered racism. The measures of strain were designed to gauge the experiences of participants based on their abilities, or inabilities, to overcome the strains they encountered during the timeframe captured at T₁. For the women in the prison sample, this means the six months from the time they were released from prison; for the women in the probation and community samples, however, this means the six months from the time of the baseline interviews. The decision was made to use data collected at T₁ for the measures of strain, rather than at the baseline interviews, due to the difference in the retrospective scope of the interview questions between the prison and community/probation samples. For example, during the baseline interviews among the prison sample, questions were premised with the phrase, “in the year prior to your current period of incarceration...” During the baseline interviews among the community and probation samples, however, the same questions were premised with the phrase, “in the past year...” Considering the fact that the average number of months between the arrest date and prison exit date among the participants in the prison sample was about 20

months, the time ordering of the variables in the model would have been compromised by using the baseline data.

Economic Hardship. One independent measure was related to strain experienced as a result of financial struggles or economic hardship. Three items were used to measure economic hardship, including whether the participant was (1) unemployed or sought work unsuccessfully, (2) laid-off or fired from their job, and/or (3) had a major financial crisis. If participants had experienced any of these events during T₁, their responses were coded as 1. If participants had not experienced any of these events, their responses were coded as 0. This dummy variable of economic hardship was included in the statistical analyses.

Criminal Victimization. Participants were asked to report whether they had been victimized at T₁ across various types of criminal acts: robbery or mugging that involved a weapon, severe assault by an acquaintance or stranger, physical abuse by a partner/spouse, unwanted sexual contact, and/or stalking. These five items were included on the Traumatic Life Events Questionnaire (Kubany et al. 2000) that was administered as part of the interviews with participants. As with the economic hardship measure, participants who had experienced any of these events during the specified timeframe, their responses were coded as 1. If participants had not experienced any of these events, their responses were coded as 0. This dummy variable of criminal victimization was included in the analyses.

Gendered Racism. Experiences of “gendered racism” were measured using the Schedule of Sexist Events (SSE; Klonoff and Landrine 1995) and the Schedule of Racist Events (SRE; Landrine and Klonoff 1996) instruments, which contain 13 and 17 items,

respectively. Participants were asked whether they ever experienced a series of events during the six months prior to T₁ “because you are a woman” or “because you are black” (e.g., denial of raise or promotion; inappropriate or unwanted sexual advances; actual or threat of verbal or physical assault; unfair treatment by employers, teachers, coworkers, neighbors, friends, partners/significant others, etc.). The decision to combine the items from the two instruments into one scale was guided by the high correlation between the scales and has been used in the work of Perry and her colleagues (2012).

The SSE and SRE were measured on different Likert scales. The SSE was measured on a 4-point scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often), while the SRE was measured on a 6-point scale (never, once in a while, sometimes, a lot, most of the time, almost all of the time). Because of the conceptual similarity of the first three response categories of the SRE to the first three categories of the SSE, the SRE was truncated at a value of four such that a lot, most of the time, and almost all of the time were combined into one category. This recoding prevented racist events from being over-weighted in the scale. In addition, six items were identical across scales. These were averaged across scales to prevent a single event, which may have been perceived as both racism and sexism, from being over-weighted. For instance, if a respondent reported “rarely” experiencing unfair treatment by people in service jobs due to being a woman and “sometimes” due to being African American, that respondent received a mean of 2.5 on a metric with a potential range from 1-4. These combined items and the remaining unique items were summed to give a composite measure of gendered racism experiences. The combined gendered racism scale was highly reliable, with an alpha of .90.

4.2.3 *Mediator Variables*

Measures of negative emotional states were included as mediating variables in the statistical models. In line with the emotions central to GST in explaining the strain-crime relationship as discussed in Chapter 2 (see Agnew 2006), this study concentrated on three emotions: depression, anxiety, and anger. Measures for all three emotions were derived from the Addiction Severity Index (McLellan, Luborsky, Woody, and O'Brien 1980) in which participants were asked: "In the past six months, have you had a significant period in which you experienced serious depression for at least two weeks?"; "In the past six months, have you had a significant period in which you experienced serious anxiety or tension for at least two weeks?"; and "In the past six months, have you had a significant period in which you experienced trouble controlling violent behavior" (i.e., anger)? These questions were prefaced by informing participants that the experiences of these emotions could not have been as a direct result of drug/alcohol use. Answers for the variables were coded as "no" (=0) or "yes" (=1). These data were captured at T₂ in order to account for any time-ordering effects between the independent and mediating variables.

4.2.4 *Moderator Variables*

Agnew (2006) argues that certain factors may increase or decrease the likelihood of an individual responding to strain thru crime and, thus, are central components of GST. Three moderating variables were examined in this study to determine their effects on the strain-crime relationship including social support, coping skills, and spiritual well-being. These data were also captured at T₂ interviews in order to determine the interaction between them and the mediating variables. The three conditioning variables and the ways in which they are measured are described below:

Social Support. The strength of an individual's conventional social support system may affect how that person responds to the strain once it is experienced. In this study, social support was measured using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support ($\alpha=.88$; Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, and Farley 1988). This scale assesses individual perceptions of support from family, friends, and spouses or partners across 12 items, including: "There is a special person who is around when I am in need"; "My family really tries to help me"; and "I can count on my friends when things go wrong." Responses to each item ranged from "very strongly disagree" (=1) to "very strongly agree" (=7). A composite measure of responses to all 12 items was calculated ranging from 12 to 84. The cutoff score was 71, meaning that approximately half of the participants had a score of 71 or less. Responses were then dichotomized into "low" (scores 12-71) and "high" (scores 72-84) to serve as dummy variables in the analyses. The social support scale was highly reliable with this sample, with an alpha of .89.

Coping Skills. While a strong conventional social support system may serve as an external factor in affecting how a person responds to strain, coping skills reside solely within the individual. Coping skills were measured using the John Henryism Scale of Active Coping (James 1994). This scale assesses a behavioral propensity of African Americans to cope actively with difficult psychosocial environmental stressors ($\alpha=.71-.74$ for women) across 12 items, including: "I've always felt that I could make of my life pretty much what I want to make of it"; "Once I make up my mind to do something, I stay with it until the job is completely done"; "I like doing things that other people thought could not be done"; and "When things don't go the way I want them to, that just makes me work even harder." Original responses to each item ranged from "completely

true” (=1) to “completely false” (=5). Responses were then reversed so that all items positively reflect active coping (i.e., “completely false”=1...”completely true”=5). A composite measure of all 12 items was calculated ranging from 34 to 60. The cutoff score was 53, meaning that 52 percent of the participants had a score of 53 or less. Responses were then dichotomized into “low” (scores 34-53) and “high” (scores 54-60) to serve as dummy variables in the analyses. The coping skills scale was highly reliable in this sample, with an alpha of .85.

Spiritual Well-Being. A person’s spiritual well-being may also serve as an influential factor in how they respond to strain. In this study, spiritual well-being was measured using a modified version (Staton, Webster, Hiller, Rostosky, and Leukefeld 2003) of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB; Paloutzian and Ellison 1982), which intends to actively measure a person’s level of spiritual well-being across two dimensions: religious well-being and existential well-being. The former refers to an individual’s sense of well-being in relation to God, while the latter refers to a sense of well-being based on life purpose and life satisfaction without any religious connotations. The overall SWB scale consisted of 24 items, including both sub-scales. Examples of items include: “I don’t find much satisfaction in private prayer”; “I understand my place in the world”; “I believe there is a higher power”; “life is a positive experience”; and “A higher power loves me and cares about me.” Original responses to each item ranged from “strongly disagree” (=1) to “strongly agree” (=6). Responses were reversed for several items to positively reflect spiritual well-being. Like with the other two moderator variables, a composite measure of all 24 items was first calculated; it ranged from 63 to 144. The cutoff score was 121, meaning that 49 percent of participants had a score of 121

or less. Responses were then dichotomized into “low” (scores 63-121) and “high” (scores 122-144) to serve as dummy variables in the analyses. The spiritual well-being scale is highly reliable, with an alpha of .91.

4.2.5 *Control Variables*

Certain demographics, legal history factors, and recruitment status were included in the analyses as control variables. These data were collected at T₁. The demographics included were age; number of years of education completed; and adjusted household income. While the age and education variables were directly reported as part of the interviews, adjusted household income, which accounts for the number of dependents in a household, was not directly reported and, thus, it had to be calculated using other data collected during the interviews. Each participant was asked to report her total household income, which was measured categorically using the following range: 0 = “\$0 to \$4,999”; 1 = “\$5,000 to \$9,999”; 2 = “\$10,000 to \$14,999”; 3 = “\$15,000 to \$19,999”; 4 = “\$20,000 to \$29,999”; 5 = “\$30,000 to \$39,999”; 6 = “40,000 to \$49,999”; 7 = “\$50,000 to \$74,999”; 8 = “\$75,000 or more”. The last category was set to the lowest value of \$75,000 to be conservative. These categorical values had to be recoded as raw figures in order to calculate adjusted household income. To do that, for each categorical value, the figure that fell in the middle of its given range was used to recode the variable. For example, if a participant reported her total household income as “\$10,000 to \$14,999” (=2), the recoded household income became “\$12,499.” The recoded household income variable was then divided by the square root of the number of dependents for each participant to calculate adjusted household income. The range for the recoded variable was \$884 to \$62,499.

Three additional control variables were included in the analyses that pertain to the recruitment status of the participants. As described above, a stratified sampling approach was used to recruit African American women from prison, probation, and the community. Dummy variables for those participants in the probation and community sub-samples were included in the analyses, while the prison sub-sample served as the reference group. Finally, the drug use status of participants as part of their initial recruitment was measured as a dummy variable.

4.3 Analytic Plan

The major goal of the data analyses was to examine the research aims, described in Chapter 3. The research questions guiding this study include: 1) Do the three measures of strain independently predict drug crime among African American women? 2) Do the three measures of strain independently predict non-drug crime among the women in the sample? 3) Do the three negative emotional states independently mediate the relationship between each type of strain and drug crime? 4) Do the three negative emotional states independently mediate the relationship between each type of strain and non-drug crime? 5) Do factors like coping skills, social support, and/or spiritual well-being independently moderate the relationship between each type of strain and drug crime among the women in the sample? 6) Do the aforementioned factors independently moderate the relationship between each type of strain and non-drug crime? The examination of these research questions was undertaken using a comprehensive analytic approach that includes mediation and moderation analyses through regression techniques. It should be noted that multicollinearity was not an issue among any of the variables included in the analyses, as

the VIF statistics for them were within the threshold of two (Walker and Maddan 2009). This section describes the analytic techniques.

4.3.1 Logistic Regression

Binary logistic regression was used to examine the first research aim—to determine the effect size of the three types of strain on drug and non-drug related crime. Logistic regression predicts the probability that a case will be classified into one as opposed to the other of the two categories of the dependent variable, and this classification is based on the independent variable(s) (see Menard 2002). It is a form of regression suitable for dichotomized dependent variables. In the current study, the two dependent variables examined in the analyses asked participants whether or not they engaged in drug or non-drug related crime at T₃.

For each binary logistic regression model, the odds ratio is used to interpret the logit coefficient, which is based on a transformation from the probability (bounded between zero and one) to the odds (unbounded between zero and infinity). Odds are defined as the probability that an event will occur divided by the probability that an event will not occur. The odds ratio is simply an expression of the exponentiated logit coefficient, or the log of the odds, and it is defined as the relative amount by which the odds of the outcome increase (i.e., odds ratio greater than 1) or decrease (i.e., odds ratio less than 1) when the value of the independent variable is increased by each unit. Standard interpretation of the odds ratio is for a unit change in the independent variable, the odds ratio of the outcome, or dependent, variable is expected to change by a factor of the respective parameter estimate, given the variables in the model are held constant. Additionally, the odds ratio can be interpreted in the form of percentages, which makes

the strength of the effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable more comprehensible.

4.3.2 *Mediation Analyses*

Binary logistic regression will also be used to establish mediation among the variables in the analyses. The analyses for this dissertation will follow the casual steps strategy as discussed by Baron and Kenny (1986) and Judd and Kenny (1981) to test for mediation:

1. Show that an initial variable X correlates with an outcome variable Y . Use Y as the dependent variable in a regression equation and X as an independent variable. This step establishes that there is an effect that may be mediated.
2. Show that X correlates with a mediating variable M . Use M as the dependent variable in the regression equation and X as an independent variable. This step essentially involves treating M as if it were an outcome variable.
3. Show that M correlates with Y . Use Y as the dependent variable in a regression equation and X and M as predictors.
4. To establish that M completely mediates the X - Y relationship, the effect of X on Y controlling for M should be zero. The effects in both Steps 3 and 4 are estimated in the same equation.

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), complete mediation occurs when all four of these steps are met; however, partial mediation is indicated if the first three steps are met but not the final step. Not all of the steps, however, have to be met to establish mediation. Additional scholarship on mediation indicates that Steps 2 and 3 are the most essential in establishing mediation, while Step 4 is only necessary if the expectation is complete

mediation and Step 1 is implied of Steps 2 and 3 are met (see Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger 1998).

As described above, the mediation analyses in this study will examine the impact of three negative emotional states on the relationships between the three strain measures and the two dependent variables. Each negative emotional state is examined independently in regression models following the steps noted above. For example, the mediation analysis of the impact of depression on the relationship between economic hardship and non-drug crime involves three regression models. First, a regression model examines the effect of economic hardship (i.e., X) on non-drug crime (i.e., Y). Second, another model examines the effect of economic hardship on depression (i.e., M). Then, the last model examines the effect of both economic hardship and depression, as predictors, on non-drug crime. Two types of mediation may result from conducting these steps: partial or complete. Partial mediation occurs when both the mediator and independent variables in the model remain statistically significant, though the independent's effect on the dependent variable is less than in the original model. Complete mediation, however, occurs when the mediator variable remains statistically significant but the independent variable is now found to have a null effect on the dependent variable than what was found in the original model. This same three-step procedure was conducted to examine the relationships among all of the independent, mediator, and dependent variables.

4.3.3 *Moderation Analyses*

Binary logistic regression was then used to establish moderation among the variables in the analyses. The goal of these analyses was to determine whether any of the

three moderator variables positively impacted the relationships among the independent and dependent variables. In other words, moderator variables are intended to mitigate the effects the independent variables have on the dependent variables. These moderator variables were examined in this study: social support, coping skills, and spiritual well-being. For example, as described in Chapter 3, a participant who experiences gendered racism may be less likely to engage in crime if she has a high level of social support. The same is hypothesized for the two other moderator variables in their relationships between the independent and dependent variables.

A procedure discussed by Baron and Kennedy (1986) was used to test for moderation in the analyses. This procedure involves the creation of an interaction term by multiplying the independent and moderator variables with one another. Then, the interaction terms are included in the regression models as part of the analyses. As discussed above, each moderator variable was dichotomized into a dummy variable, “high” (=1) and “low” (=0). Then, the dummy variable was used to create the interaction terms with each of the independent variables (i.e., economic hardship, victimization, and gendered racism) and included in the regression models. Baron and Kennedy (1986) argue there are three causal paths potentially affecting each dependent variable. The first path is the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The second path is the effect of the moderator variable on the dependent variable. Lastly, the third path is the effect of the interaction of the two previous paths on the dependent variable, which also includes the original independent and moderator measures in the models. Moderation is supported if the interaction term is statistically significant.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter described the sample, data collection methodology, variables, and analytic approach taken to investigate the study's research questions. Chapter 5 will provide descriptive statistics of the sample and the results of the logistic regression models ran to examine the relationships among the variables.

Chapter Five: Results

The preceding chapter explained the methodology and analytic approach undertaken to examine the aims and hypotheses provided in Chapter 3. This chapter will report the findings of the statistical analyses. Each section provides the findings in relation to each research question. First, the descriptive statistics of the data are provided, followed by a series of tables to illustrate the results of the regression models conducted in the analyses.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 5.1.1 provides the descriptive statistics for the variables used in the analyses. Means are provided for the three independent variables measuring African American women's experiences of strain. The means on all three strain variables are below the mid-point; however, it should be noted that the timeframe was only six months. To provide a more accurate depiction due to the limited timeframe, the scales for economic hardship and criminal victimization were recoded into dichotomous variables, as noted in Chapter 4, for the descriptive statistics to determine the prevalence of African American women's experiences with economic, gendered racism, and victimization strains. During the six-month study timeframe, half of the women experienced some form of economic hardship on at least one occasion, about 57 percent experienced discrimination based on their race or sex, and 13 percent experienced sexual or physical victimization. Of the two dependent variables, 40 percent of the women reported having committed a drug-related crime and about 10 percent reported having committed a non-drug related crime during the specified timeframe.

Negative emotions were examined as mediator variables. About 19 percent of the women reported having experienced serious depression, 22 percent experienced anxiety, and only eight percent experienced anger that resulted in some type of violent episode. The means on the three moderator variables assessing coping resources were above the mid-point on the respective scales. For example, most of the women in the sample had scores that reflected high levels of social support. The same is true for coping skills and spiritual well-being. Finally, with respect to the control variables, the average age of the women in the sample was about 36 years, an average of 12 years of education, and an average adjusted household income of around \$7,714. Over half of the women in the sample (57%) were drug users. Most of the women in the sample were residing in the community and not under any correctional supervision (40%), while over a third was on probation (34%), and the remaining 26 percent were released from prison.

Table 5.1.2 shows the bivariate correlations between the dependent variables and the independent, mediator, and moderator variables. All of the variables had statistically significant, but modest associations with drug crime except for gendered racism and anxiety. Women who experienced economic hardship or were victimized were more likely to commit a drug crime. Further, women who were depressed or had episodes of anger that led to violent outburst were more likely to engage in a drug crime. All three moderator variables were negatively associated with African American women's involvement in drug crime. Women with higher levels of social support, coping skills, and spiritual well-being were less likely to commit a drug crime.

Gendered racism was the only variable not statistically associated with African American women's participation in non-drug crimes. Again, all of the correlations were

modest at best. Women who experienced economic hardship or were victimized were more likely to engage in a non-drug crime. Women who were depressed, anxious, or had episodes of anger that led to violence were more likely to commit a non-drug crime. Lastly, as with drug crime, women with higher levels of social support, coping skills, and spiritual well-being were less likely to engage in a non-drug criminal act.

5.2 Effects of Strain on Committing a Drug Crime

RQ1 asks to what extent the various measures of strain predict engaging in a drug-related crime among the African American women in the sample. Each of the independent strain variables was examined in a separate regression model to determine its effect on African American women's participation in drug-related crimes at follow-up (T₃): drug use and possession, drug trafficking, and driving under the influence. Table 5.2.1 provides the results of these three models. Model A displays the effect of economic hardship on women's involvement in drug-related crimes, while controlling for recruitment status factors and key demographics. African American women who experienced an economic hardship at T₁ were 59 percent ($p < .05$; 95% CI: 1.06-2.39) more likely to commit a drug crime at T₃, which confirmed H1a (see Chapter 3). As expected, drug-using participants were nearly six times ($p = .000$; 95% CI: 3.66-9.14) more likely to engage in a drug crime as compared to non-drug users. In addition, where participants were recruited was a positive predictor of engaging in drug-related crimes. African American women recruited from probation offices or from the community were over three times ($p = .000$; 95% CI: 1.81-5.49) and over two times ($p < .01$; 95% CI: 1.33-3.88) more likely, respectively, to engage in a drug crime, as compared to participants in the prison sub-sample.

Model B in Table 5.2.1 provides the results of the logistic regression model predicting the effect of victimization on African American women's involvement in a drug crime. H1b was confirmed in the model: being the victim of a crime at T₁ more than doubled the odds ($p < .05$; 95% CI: 1.13-3.83) of engaging in a drug crime. As with the previous model, the drug use and recruitment statuses of participants were significant predictors of committing a drug crime. African American female drug users were over six times ($p = .000$; 95% CI: 3.89-9.69) more likely to engage in a drug crime as compared to non-drug users. Participants in the probation and community sub-samples were over three times ($p = .000$; 95% CI: 1.85-5.59) and over two times ($p < .01$; 95% CI: 1.40-4.11) more likely, respectively, to engage in a drug crime as compared to participants who were recruited from prison.

Model C of Table 5.2.1 provides the results of the logistic regression of African American women's experiences of gendered racism on committing a crime related to drugs, controlling for key demographics and recruitment status. Only control variables were found to be significant predictors of African American women's participation in drug-related crime in this model, indicating that gendered racism did not have a positive effect on committing a drug crime as suspected (see H1c in Chapter 3). The drug use and recruitment venue of participants were positively associated with their engagement in a drug crime. Drug users were six times ($p = .000$; 95% CI: 3.86-9.62) more likely to commit a drug crime as compared to non-drug users. Participants in the probation and community sub-samples were over three times ($p = .000$; 95% CI: 1.78-5.40) and over two times ($p < .01$; 95% CI: 1.31-3.87) more likely, respectively, to engage in a drug crime as compared to women who were recruited from prison. The Chi-square statistics for the

three models suggest that the models fit the data well, with higher statistics indicating better fit.

5.3 Effects of Strain on Committing a Non-Drug Crime

RQ2 addresses the effects of African American women's experiences of strain on engaging in a crime that was not drug-related, which includes property crimes (e.g., theft, burglary), disorderly conduct, sex trading, assault/battery or robbery, and child abuse or neglect. Table 5.3.1 provides the three logistic regression models of the effects of strain on non-drug crime. Model A of Table 5.3.1 displays the effect of economic hardship on committing a non-drug crime, while controlling for recruitment status factors and key demographics. African American women who experienced an economic hardship at T₁ were over two times ($p < .05$; 95% CI: 1.09-4.25) more likely to commit a non-drug crime. This confirms H2a. African American female drug users were over five times ($p < .01$; 95% CI: 2.00-14.40) more likely to engage in a non-drug crime as compared to non-drug users. Further, each additional year of age was associated with a four percent ($p < .05$; 95% CI: 0.93-0.99) decrease in the likelihood of having committed a non-drug crime in the past six months at T₃.

In Model B of Table 5.3.1, the logistic regression results of victimization on participating in non-drug crime are shown. African American women who were victimized at T₁ were over four times ($p = .000$; 95% CI: 1.94-8.57) more likely to commit a non-drug crime. By far, victimization had the strongest effect (of the three strain measures) on non-drug crime. This finding refutes H2b and is in contrast to previous studies that have consistently found victimization to be directly linked to self-directed deviance and crime. The drug use status of participants was positively associated with

their engagement in a non-drug crime. More specifically, being a drug user increased the odds of women's involvement in a non-drug related crime by almost six times ($p=.000$; 95% CI: 2.19-15.98).

Lastly, Model C of Table 5.3.1 shows the logistic regression model of gendered racism on non-drug crime. As suspected (see H2c), for each unit increase on the gendered racism measurement scale as reported at T_1 , the women in the sample were 5 percent ($p<.05$; 95% CI: 1.00-1.10) more likely to participate in a non-drug crime at T_3 , net of the effects of the other variables in the model. Similarly, identifying as a drug user increased women's odds of engaging in a non-drug-related crime nearly six-fold ($p=.000$; 95% CI: 2.15-15.46). Each additional year of age was associated with a 4 percent ($p<.05$; 95% CI: 0.93-0.99) decrease in the likelihood of participating in a non-drug crime. The Chi-square statistics for the three models suggest that the models fit the data well, with higher statistics indicating better fit.

5.4 Effects of Strain on Negative Emotion Mediators

As described in Chapter 4, a step in the mediation analyses is to determine whether the independent variables correlate with the mediation variables, which responds to RQ3. Table 5.4.1 provides the results of the three logistic regression models of the strain variables on depression. The overall models are significant at the .05 level based on the Model Chi-square statistics. Model A displays the effect of economic hardship on depression, while controlling for recruitment status factors and key demographics. Women who experienced economic hardship at T_1 were twice ($p<.01$; 95% CI: 1.24-3.23) as likely to experience depression at T_2 . Similarly, in Model B of Table 5.4.1, African American women in the sample who were victimized at T_1 were two-and-a-half

times ($p < .01$; 95% CI: 1.41-4.66) more likely to experience depression at T_2 . In Model C of Table 5.4.1, however, for each unit increase on the gendered racism measurement scale as reported at T_1 , women were 7 percent ($p = .000$; 95% CI: 1.04-1.11) more likely to experience depression at T_2 . Thus, H3a was partially confirmed in that both economic hardship and criminal victimization were suspected to generate depression, but gendered racism experiences were not.

Table 5.4.2 provides the results of the three logistic regression models examining the strain variables as predictors of anxiety, the mediator variable. Model A displays the effect of economic hardship on anxiety. Unfortunately, economic hardship did not reach statistical significance, as expected (see H3b), nor did any of the control variables. In Model B of Table 5.4.2, however, victimization positively predicted whether women in the sample experienced anxiety, which confirmed H3b. Women who were victimized at T_1 were over two times ($p < .01$; 95% CI: 1.26-4.04) more likely to experience anxiety at T_2 during that time, holding the control variables constant. Finally, in Model C of Table 5.4.2, for each unit increase on the gendered racism measurement scale as reported at T_1 , participants were 7 percent ($p = .000$; 95% CI: 1.03-1.10) more likely to experience anxiety at T_2 . This again partially refutes H3b. Further, for each additional year of education that women had, they were 11 percent ($p < .05$; 95% CI: 0.79-0.99) less likely to experience anxiety. The Chi-square statistics for the latter two tables suggest that the models fit the data well.

Table 5.4.3 provides the results of the three logistic regression models of the strain variables on the anger mediator variable. Model A displays the effect of economic hardship as a predictor of African American women's anger, while controlling for

recruitment status factors and key demographics. Women who experienced economic hardship at T₁ were nearly two-and-a-half times ($p < .05$; 95% CI: 1.17-5.16) more likely to experience anger at T₂, which provided partial support for H3c. In addition, two of the control variables were statistically associated with anger. Drug users were over three times ($p < .05$; 95% CI: 1.28-7.49) more likely to experience anger, and for each additional year of education that women had obtained, they were 17 percent ($p < .05$; 95% CI: 0.69-0.99) less likely to experience anger that resulted in a violent episode.

In Model B of Table 5.4.3, victimized women were over three-and-a-half times ($p < .01$; 95% CI: 1.65-7.76) more likely to experience anger that resulted in a violent episode. In addition, drug users were over three times ($p < .01$; 95% CI: 1.38-8.08) more likely to experience anger that resulted in a violent episode. And, for each additional year of education, African American women were 17 percent ($p < .05$; 95% CI: 0.69-0.99) less likely to become seriously angry. This finding partially refutes H3c, which is surprising since criminal victimization has not been one of the types of strain that generate other-directed emotions, such as anger.

Finally, in Model C of Table 5.4.3, for each unit increase on the gendered racism measurement scale, women were nine percent ($p = .000$; 95% CI: 1.04-1.14) more likely to experience anger that resulted in a violent episode, which confirms H3c. Once again, drug users were three-and-a-half times ($p < .01$; 95% CI: 1.43-8.52) more likely to experience anger. Each additional year of education was associated with a 19 percent ($p < .05$; 95% CI: 0.68-0.97) decrease in the likelihood of experiencing anger during the specified timeframe. Overall, the three models were significant as indicated by the Model Chi-square statistics.

5.5 Mediating Effects of Negative Emotions on the Strain-Drug Crime Relationship

The final two steps to test for mediation as described in Chapter 4 involve establishing whether the mediator variables correlate with the dependent variables and whether the mediator variables mediate the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Both of these steps are estimated in the same regression models. As it relates to the current study, mediation occurs when the effect of the strain measure on either crime dependent variable is reduced or no longer reaches statistical significance after the negative emotion mediator variable is included in the full model. This section provides the logistic regression models to address RQ4: Do the three negative emotional states independently mediate the relationship between each type of strain and drug crime? Mediation was not tested for the relationship between gendered racism and drug crime, because gendered racism did not correlate with drug crime as shown in Model C of Table 5.2.1.

For economic hardship, only two of the negative emotional states are tested for mediation—depression and anger—because economic hardship did not correlate with anxiety as shown in Model A of Table 5.4.2. Table 5.5.1 provides the results of the logistic regression models of economic hardship and negative emotions on the drug crime dependent variable. The multivariate models, Models A and B, demonstrate that mediation did not occur, since neither depression nor anger was a significant predictor of African American women’s participation in a drug-related crime. This finding refutes H4a, which stated, in part, that depression would mediate the relationship between

economic hardship and drug crime. The Chi-square statistics indicate the overall models were significant, however.

All three negative emotional states were tested for mediation in the victimization-drug crime relationship, since victimization correlated with all three of the negative emotional states. Table 5.5.2 provides the results of the three logistic regression models of victimization and the mediator variables (each measured independently) on the drug crime dependent variable, while controlling for recruitment status factors and key demographics. The Chi-square statistics for the models suggest that they fit the data well. However, H4a was refuted by these findings as well, since it predicted that depression and anxiety would mediate the relationship between criminal victimization and drug crime. The models demonstrate that mediation did not occur, since the negative emotion mediator variables were not significant predictors of the dependent variable.

5.6 Mediating Effects of Negative Emotions on Strain-Non-Drug Crime

This section provides the logistic regression models to address RQ5: Do the three negative emotional states independently mediate the relationship between each type of strain and committing a non-drug crime among African American women? Anxiety was not explored as a mediator, because economic hardship did not predict anxiety in Model A of Table 5.4.2. Table 5.6.1 provides the results of the logistic regression models of economic hardship and the other two strain-mediator variables—depression and anger—on the non-drug crime dependent variable. Of the two models, mediation was not found between economic hardship, depression, and non-drug crime (Model A), but partial mediation occurred in Model B between economic hardship, anger, and non-drug crime. In this model, African American women who experienced economic hardship were two

times (OR=2.00; $p < .05$; 95% CI: 1.01-3.98) more likely to commit a non-drug crime; women who experienced extreme anger were nearly three times ($p < .05$; 95% CI: 1.19-6.39) more likely to commit a non-drug crime, holding the control variables constant. However, the odds ratio for economic hardship in this model was slightly lower than the odds ratio for economic hardship in Table 5.2.1 (OR=2.16; $p < .05$; 95% CI: 1.08-4.25). In other words, women were more likely to cope with anger generated by the experienced economic hardship by committing a non-drug crime. This finding partially confirms H5a. The Chi-square statistics for both models suggest that the models fit the data well.

Table 5.6.2 provides the results of the three logistic regression models of victimization and the mediator variables (measured independently) on the non-drug crime dependent variable. The models demonstrate that mediation did not occur, which partially confirms H5a and H5b. The negative emotion mediator variables were not significant predictors of the dependent variable, though anger (Model C) approached statistical significance at the $p < .06$ level. Both H5b and H5c indicated that that anxiety or depression would not mediate the relationship between victimization and non-drug crime.

Finally, complete mediation occurred in one of the logistic regression models examining the mediating effect of negative emotions (each examined in a separate model) on the relationship between gendered racism and committing a non-drug crime (see Table 5.6.3). More specifically, complete mediation occurred in Model C between gendered racism, anger, and non-drug crime. This finding provides support for H5a, which indicated that anger would have the greatest mediation effect between gendered racism and non-drug crime. In this model, African American women who experienced anger that resulted in a violent episode were over two-and-a-half times ($p < .05$; 95% CI: 1.14-6.29)

more likely to commit a non-drug crime. The effect was so strong that it completely mediated the relationship between gendered racism and committing a non-drug crime, as was hypothesized. Gendered racism was no longer a significant predictor of African American women's engagement in non-drug related crime when anger was included in the full model. This finding supports GST in that African American women in the sample responded to the anger they felt after experiencing acts of gendered racism by committing a non-drug crime. The Chi-square statistics for the models suggest that the models fit the data well.

5.7 Moderating Effects of Strain on Committing a Drug Crime

The final two research questions examined in the current study, RQ6 and RQ7, were to determine whether factors like coping skills, social support, and/or spiritual well-being independently moderate the relationships between strain and crime. As described in Chapter 4, moderator variables are included in the models to see if they mitigate the effects of the strain variables on engaging in both drug and non-drug crimes. Moderation is supported if the interaction term is statistically significant. This section provides the logistic regression models of the independent and moderator variables on committing a drug crime, which pertains to RQ6. Moderation was not tested for the relationship between gendered racism and drug crime, because gendered racism did not predict committing a crime related to drugs as shown in Model C of Table 5.2.1.

Table 5.7.1 provides the three logistic regression models of economic hardship and the moderator variables on drug crime, while controlling for recruitment status factors and key demographics. The Chi-square statistics for the models suggest they fit the data well. Moderation was not found in any of the three models, which refutes H6a,

H6b, and H6c. However, there was an individual statistically significant relationship between African American women's spiritual well-being and committing a drug crime (Model C). In that model, women with a high level of spiritual well-being were 46 percent ($p < .05$; 95% CI: 0.30-0.97) less likely to commit a drug crime. In regard to the control variables, drug users and those who were in the community and probation sub-samples were significantly more likely to commit a drug crime.

Moderation was also not found in any of the logistic regression models of victimization and the moderator variables (measured independently) on the drug crime dependent variable (see Table 5.7.2), which again refutes H6d, H6e, and H6f. Nevertheless, victimization consistently predicted women's engagement in drug crime in all three multivariate models. The same relationships were found with drug users and subjects in the community and probation sub-samples as well. Specifically, African American women who identified as drug users, and were recruited while on probation or from the community, had significantly higher odds of committing a drug-related crime in all three models. There were individual statistically significant relationships between two of the moderator variables and drug crime—coping skills (Model B) and spiritual well-being (Model C). In Model B, women with high-functioning coping skills were 59 percent ($p < .05$; 95% CI: 0.41-0.98) less likely to engage in a drug crime. Similarly, in Model C, African American women with high levels of spiritual well-being were 39 percent ($p < .05$; 95% CI: 0.39-0.94) less likely to commit a drug crime. The overall models were significant as indicated by the Chi-square statistics.

5.8 Moderating Effects of Strain on Committing a Non-Drug Crime

The final research question, RQ7, asks whether social support, coping skills, and spiritual well-being independently moderate the relationships among the measures of strain and engaging in non-drug crime among African American women. Table 5.8.1 provides the logistic regression models of economic hardship and the moderator variables (each of which are measured in a separate regression model) on African American women's likelihood of committing a non-drug crime. Neither social support (Model A), nor coping skills (Model B), nor spiritual well-being (Model C) moderated the relationship between economic hardship and committing a non-drug crime. These findings refute H7a, H7b, and H7c. It is worthy to note, though, that in Model B African American women with a perceived high social support system were 75 percent ($p < .05$; 95% CI: 0.07-0.95) less likely to commit a non-drug crime, holding the control variables constant. In regard to the control variables, women who identified themselves as drug users and those who were younger were consistently more likely to engage in a non-drug crime. The Chi-square statistics for the models suggest that the models fit the data well.

Similarly, the moderation hypotheses were not supported in any of the logistic regression models examining the relationship between African American women's experiences of victimization and engaging in a non-drug crime, while controlling for recruitment status factors and key demographics (see Table 5.8.2). The Chi-square statistics were significant for all three models. Victimization was a consistent and robust predictor of engaging in a non-drug crime in all three models. Also, African American women who identified themselves as drug users and those who were younger were more likely to commit a non-drug crime in all three multivariate models.

Support for moderation was found in one of the three models examining the relationship between African American women's experiences of gendered racism and committing a non-drug crime (see Table 5.8.3). In Model A, while women with perceived high social support systems were 99 percent ($p < .01$; 95% CI: 0.00-0.22) less likely to commit a non-drug crime, the interaction effect between gendered racism and high social support indicated otherwise. That is, for women with perceived high social support, each additional gendered racism experience was associated with an increased risk of engaging in non-drug crime by 13 percent ($0.98 \times 1.15 = 1.13$ odds ratio), on average, holding the control variables constant. In other words, women with perceived high social support are less likely to commit non-drug crimes than those with low social support, except when their gendered racism experiences become extremely high. In those instances, the women with perceived high social support have a probability of engaging in crime unrelated to drug use or drug trafficking that approaches the probability of those women with low perceived social support. It seems there is a tipping point on the high end of the gendered racism scale that negates the protective effects of high social support. In regard to the control variables, once again, women who identified themselves as drug users and those who were younger were more likely to commit a non-drug crime in all three models examining the moderating effects on the relationship between gendered racism and committing a non-drug crime. The Chi-square statistics for the models suggest that the models fit the data well.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter provided the results of the series of regression models conducted to test the seven research questions of the current study. In total, the research hypotheses

were partially supported and dependent upon the strain, negative emotions, and type of crime. Among the three strain measures examined, African American women's victimization experiences had the strongest effect on both dependent variables. Similarly, victimization also had the strongest effect on each of the three mediator variables, or negative emotional states. Mediation was supported in two of the multivariate models examining the relationships between African American women's experiences of strain and engagement in a non-drug crime. Anger partially mediated the relationship between economic hardship and committing a non-drug crime; and anger completely mediated the relationship between gendered racism and committing a non-drug crime. Finally, support for moderation was found in one model. Specifically, the relationship between gendered racism and engaging in non-drug crime varied for African American women based on their level of social support. The relevance of these findings, drawbacks of the study, and future directions of research will be discussed in the next chapter.

Table 5.1.1: Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (N = 498)

	Range / %	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>Independent Variables</i>			
Economic Hardship	0-13 / 50%	1.65	2.56
Criminal Victimization	0-14 / 13%	0.44	1.56
Gendered Racism	25.0-62.5 / 57%	28.67	5.85
<i>Dependent Variables</i>			
Drug Related Crime	40.2%	-	-
Non-Drug Related Crime	9.6%	-	-
<i>Mediator Variables</i>			
Depression	19.5%	-	-
Anxiety	22.5%	-	-
Anger	8.0%	-	-
<i>Moderator Variables</i>			
Social Support	12-84	67.21	13.86
Coping Skills	34-60	52.63	5.32
Spiritual Well-Being	63-144	122.03	13.44
<i>Control Variables</i>			
Age	18-69	36.36	11.80
Education (# of years)	5-20	12.09	2.15
Adjusted Household Income (\$)	884-62,499	7,714.06	9,735.24
Drug Use Status (% Drug Users)	56.9%	-	-
Prison Sub-Sample	25.9%	-	-
Probation Sub-Sample	34.3%	-	-
Community Sub-Sample	39.8%	-	-

Table 5.1.2: Correlation Matrix between Variables of Interest

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Drug Crime	---									
2. Non-Drug Crime	.246**	---								
3. Economic Hardship	.131**	.103*	---							
4. Victimization	.147**	.210**	0.52	---						
5. Gendered Racism	.081	.085	.307**	.322**	---					
6. Depression	.114*	.097*	.197**	.220**	.184**	---				
7. Anxiety	.048	.101*	.136**	.148**	.159**	.566**	---			
8. Anger	.135**	.179**	.131**	.144**	.147**	.358**	.308*	---		
9. Social Support	-.150**	-.186**	-.108*	-.128**	-.078	-.251**	-.229**	-.148**	---	
10. Coping Skills	-.134**	-.148**	-.092*	-.070	-.092*	-.134**	-.037	-.082	.263**	---
11. Spiritual Well-Being	-.252**	-.201**	-.080	-.145**	-.023	-.207**	-.158**	-.184**	.370**	.287**

*p<.05, **p<.01

Table 5.2.1: Types of Strain on Drug Crime

<i>Variable</i>	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Economic Hardship	1.59*	1.06-2.39				
Victimization			2.08*	1.13-3.83		
Gendered Racism					1.02	0.99-1.06
Drug User	5.78***	3.66-9.14	6.14***	3.89-9.69	6.09***	3.86-9.62
Probation	3.15***	1.81-5.49	3.21***	1.85-5.59	3.10***	1.78-5.40
Community	2.27**	1.33-3.88	2.40**	1.40-4.11	2.26**	1.31-3.87
Age	0.98	0.96-1.00	0.98	0.97-1.00	0.98	0.97-1.00
Years of Education	0.95	0.85-1.05	0.94	0.85-1.04	0.94	0.85-1.04
Adjusted Household Income	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00
Model X ²	96.61***		97.07***		91.35***	
-2 Log likelihood	564.97		564.52		567.38	
N	492		492		490	

OR: Odds Ratio; CI: Confidence Interval

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p=.000

Table 5.3.1: Types of Strain on Non-Drug Crime

<i>Variable</i>	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Economic Hardship	2.16*	1.09-4.25				
Victimization			4.07***	1.94-8.57		
Gendered Racism					1.05*	1.00-1.10
Drug User	5.37**	2.00-14.40	5.92***	2.19-15.98	5.77***	2.15-15.46
Probation	0.71	0.32-1.56	0.74	0.34-1.65	0.69	0.31-1.52
Community	0.45	0.20-1.05	0.47	0.20-1.09	0.45	0.19-1.04
Age	0.96*	0.93-0.99	0.98	0.97-1.00	0.96*	0.93-0.99
Years of Education	0.86	0.72-1.02	0.94	0.85-1.04	0.86	0.72-1.02
Adjusted Household Income	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00
Model X ²	49.76***		57.14***		91.35***	
-2 Log likelihood	260.35		252.96		261.66	
N	492		492		490	

OR: Odds Ratio; CI: Confidence Interval

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p=.000

Table 5.4.1: Types of Strain on Depression

<i>Variable</i>	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Economic Hardship	2.00**	1.24-3.23				
Victimization			2.57**	1.41-4.67		
Gendered Racism					1.07***	1.04-1.11
Drug User	1.35	0.81-2.24	1.48	0.89-2.45	1.50	0.90-2.51
Probation	0.89	0.48-1.64	0.95	0.50-1.71	0.81	0.43-1.51
Community	0.95	0.52-1.73	1.02	0.56-1.86	0.87	0.47-1.60
Age	1.00	0.98-1.02	1.00	0.98-1.02	1.00	0.98-1.02
Years of Education	0.92	0.82-1.03	0.92	0.81-1.03	0.90	0.80-1.01
Adjusted Household Income	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00
Model X ²	15.23*		15.70*		22.69**	
-2 Log likelihood	464.82		464.25		456.41	
N	492		492		490	

OR: Odds Ratio; CI: Confidence Interval

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p=.000

Table 5.4.2: Types of Strain on Anxiety

<i>Variable</i>	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Economic Hardship	1.31	0.84-2.05				
Victimization			2.25**	1.26-4.04		
Gendered Racism					1.07***	1.03-1.10
Drug User	1.12	0.70-1.81	1.17	0.73-1.87	1.17	0.72-1.88
Probation	1.04	0.59-1.83	1.06	0.60-1.88	0.94	0.53-1.68
Community	0.75	0.42-1.34	0.78	0.44-1.40	0.67	0.37-1.22
Age	1.00	0.98-1.02	1.00	0.98-1.02	1.00	0.98-1.02
Years of Education	0.91	0.81-1.02	0.90	0.81-1.01	0.89*	0.80-0.99
Adjusted Household Income	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00
Model X ²	8.85		14.42*		20.53**	
-2 Log likelihood	508.52		502.96		495.85	
N	492		492		490	

OR: Odds Ratio; CI: Confidence Interval

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p=.000

Table 5.4.3: Types of Strain on Anger

<i>Variable</i>	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Economic Hardship	2.46*	1.17-5.16				
Victimization			3.58**	1.65-7.76		
Gendered Racism					1.09***	1.04-1.14
Drug User	3.10*	1.28-7.49	3.34**	1.38-8.08	3.49**	1.43-8.52
Probation	1.03	0.43-2.45	1.10	0.46-2.63	0.92	0.38-2.23
Community	0.96	0.40-2.29	1.02	0.43-2.43	0.84	0.35-2.04
Age	1.00	0.97-1.03	1.00	0.97-1.04	1.00	0.97-1.04
Years of Education	0.83*	0.69-0.99	0.83*	0.69-0.99	0.81*	0.68-0.97
Adjusted Household Income	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00
Model X ²	27.58***		30.73***		32.15***	
-2 Log likelihood	244.97		241.82		240.06	
N	492		492		490	

OR: Odds Ratio; CI: Confidence Interval

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p=.000

Table 5.5.1: Economic Hardship and Negative Emotions on Drug Crime

<i>Variable</i>	Model A		Model B	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Economic Hardship	1.53*	1.02-2.30	1.55*	1.03-2.33
Depression	1.50	0.91-2.50		
Anger			1.64	0.79-3.39
Drug User	5.72***	3.61-9.05	5.64***	3.56-8.94
Probation	3.19***	1.83-5.56	3.17***	1.81-5.53
Community	2.27***	1.33-3.89	2.28**	1.33-3.91
Age	0.98*	0.96-1.00	0.98	0.96-1.00
Years of Education	0.95	0.86-1.06	0.95	0.86-1.06
Adjusted Household Income	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00
Model X ²	99.12***		98.44***	
-2 Log likelihood	562.47		563.15	
N	492			

OR: Odds Ratio; CI: Confidence Interval; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p=.000

Table 5.5.2: Victimization and Negative Emotions on Drug Crime

<i>Variable</i>	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Victimization	1.95*	1.05-3.62	2.05*	1.10-3.79	1.97*	1.06-3.68
Depression	1.49	0.90-2.48				
Anxiety			1.09	0.67-1.78		
Anger					1.60	0.76-3.37
Drug User	6.04***	3.82-9.55	6.20***	3.92-9.80	5.98***	3.78-9.46
Probation	3.24***	1.86-5.64	3.24***	1.86-5.64	3.23***	1.85-5.64
Community	2.39**	1.39-4.10	2.48**	1.44-4.26	2.40**	1.40-4.12
Age	0.98	0.97-1.00	0.99	0.97-1.00	0.98	0.97-1.00
Years of Education	0.95	0.86-1.05	0.94	0.85-1.04	0.95	0.86-1.05
Adjusted Household Income	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00
Model X ²	99.42***		97.91***		98.64***	
-2 Log likelihood	562.16		562.66		562.95	
N	492					

OR: Odds Ratio; CI: Confidence Interval

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p=.000

Table 5.6.1: Economic Hardship and Negative Emotions on Non-Drug Crime

<i>Variable</i>	Model A		Model B	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Economic Hardship	2.06*	1.04-4.09	2.00*	1.01-3.98
Depression	1.52	0.74-3.14		
Anger			2.76*	1.19-6.39
Drug User	5.24**	1.95-14.05	5.00**	1.85-13.53
Probation	0.70	0.31-1.54	0.69	0.31-1.54
Community	0.45	0.19-1.04	0.46	0.19-1.07
Age	0.96*	0.93-0.99	0.96*	0.92-0.99
Years of Education	0.87	0.73-1.04	0.88	0.74-1.05
Adjusted Household Income	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00
Model X ²	50.99***		54.96***	
-2 Log likelihood	259.11		255.14	
N	492			

OR: Odds Ratio; CI: Confidence Interval; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p=.000

Table 5.6.2: Victimization and Negative Emotions on Non-Drug Crime

<i>Variable</i>	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Victimization	3.85**	1.80-8.24	3.79**	1.78-8.06	3.54**	1.65-7.63
Depression	1.31	0.62-2.77				
Anxiety			1.52	0.74-3.12		
Anger					2.33	0.97-5.58
Drug User	5.80**	2.14-15.68	5.95***	2.20-16.11	5.35**	1.97-14.57
Probation	0.74	0.33-1.63	0.72	0.32-1.60	0.71	0.32-1.60
Community	0.46	0.20-1.08	0.47	0.20-1.10	0.46	0.20-1.09
Age	0.96	0.93-1.00	0.96*	0.93-1.00	0.96*	0.93-0.99
Years of Education	0.86	0.72-1.03	0.86	0.72-1.03	0.87	0.73-1.04
Adjusted Household Income	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00
Model X ²	57.62***		58.33***		60.48***	
-2 Log likelihood	252.49		251.47		249.62	
N	492					

OR: Odds Ratio; CI: Confidence Interval

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p=.000

Table 5.6.3: Gendered Racism and Negative Emotions on Non-Drug Crime

<i>Variable</i>	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Gendered Racism	1.04	0.99-1.10	1.04	0.99-1.10	1.04	0.99-1.09
Depression	1.44	0.68-3.05				
Anxiety			1.61	0.79-3.28		
Anger					2.68*	1.14-6.29
Drug User	5.66**	2.11-15.17	5.75***	2.15-15.40	5.30**	1.96-14.30
Probation	0.69	0.31-1.53	0.68	0.31-1.50	0.69	0.31-1.54
Community	0.45	0.19-1.05	0.46	0.20-1.09	0.45	0.19-1.07
Age	0.96*	0.93-0.99	0.96*	0.93-0.99	0.96*	0.93-0.99
Years of Education	0.87	0.73-1.03	0.87	0.73-1.03	0.88	0.74-1.04
Adjusted Household Income	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00
Model X ²	48.92***		49.63***		52.80***	
-2 Log likelihood	260.78		259.86		256.90	
N	492					

OR: Odds Ratio; CI: Confidence Interval

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p=.000

Table 5.7.1: Economic Hardship and Moderators on Drug Crime

<i>Variable</i>	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Economic Hardship	1.34	0.76-2.36	1.90*	1.09-3.30	1.57	0.89-2.76
High Social Support	0.73	0.40-1.32				
Economic Hardship x High Social Support	1.44	0.64-3.25				
High Active Coping			0.67	0.37-1.21		
Economic Hardship x High Active Coping			0.67	0.30-1.52		
High Spiritual Well-Being					0.54*	0.30-0.97
Economic Hardship x High Spiritual Well-Being					0.98	0.44-2.22
Drug User	5.67***	3.58-8.97	5.69***	3.59-9.02	5.77***	3.63-9.17
Probation	3.24***	1.85-5.68	3.15***	1.80-5.52	3.23***	1.84-5.67
Community	2.34***	1.36-4.04	2.25**	1.31-3.86	2.25**	1.31-3.87
Age	0.98	0.96-1.00	0.98	0.96-1.00	0.98	0.97-1.00
Years of Education	0.95	0.86-1.06	0.95	0.86-1.06	0.97	0.87-1.07
Adjusted Household Income	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00
Model X ²	97.88***		105.95***		105.68***	
-2 Log likelihood	561.87		555.64		555.90	
N	492					

OR: Odds Ratio; CI: Confidence Interval

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p=.000

Table 5.7.2: Victimization and Moderators on Drug Crime

<i>Variable</i>	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Victimization	2.87*	1.22-6.74	3.29**	1.39-7.76	3.36**	1.38-8.19
High Social Support	0.95	0.62-1.47				
Victimization x High Social Support	0.50	0.15-1.73				
High Active Coping			0.41*	0.41-0.98		
Victimization x High Active Coping			0.33	0.09-1.19		
High Spiritual Well-Being					0.61*	0.39-0.94
Victimization x High Spiritual Well-Being					0.32	0.08-1.19
Drug User	6.07***	3.83-9.62	6.12***	3.85-9.72	6.01***	3.78-9.55
Probation	3.26***	1.86-5.70	3.25***	1.86-5.68	3.36***	1.91-5.91
Community	2.43**	1.41-4.19	2.36**	1.37-4.06	2.40**	1.39-4.15
Age	0.99	0.97-1.00	0.98	0.97-1.00	0.99	0.97-1.00
Years of Education	0.95	0.85-1.05	0.94	0.85-1.05	0.96	0.87-1.07
Adjusted Household Income	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00
Model X ²	98.68***		108.03***		109.03***	
-2 Log likelihood	561.06		553.56		552.56	
N	492					

OR: Odds Ratio; CI: Confidence Interval

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p=.000

Table 5.8.1: Economic Hardship and Moderators on Non-Drug Crime

<i>Variable</i>	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Economic Hardship	1.43	0.62-3.27	1.78	0.76-4.18	1.59	0.68-3.76
High Social Support	0.25*	0.07-0.95				
Economic Hardship x High Social Support	3.35	0.71-15.88				
High Active Coping			0.41	0.13-1.29		
Economic Hardship x High Active Coping			1.50	0.36-6.25		
High Spiritual Well-Being					0.45	0.14-1.41
Economic Hardship x High Spiritual Well-Being					1.99	0.49-8.17
Drug User	4.85**	1.80-13.09	5.32**	1.98-14.30	5.43**	2.02-14.60
Probation	0.67	0.30-1.50	0.69	0.31-1.54	0.71	0.32-1.57
Community	0.45	0.19-1.06	0.43*	0.19-1.00	0.45	0.19-1.04
Age	0.96*	0.93-0.99	0.96*	0.93-0.99	0.96*	0.93-0.99
Years of Education	0.88	0.73-1.05	0.87	0.73-1.04	0.87	0.73-1.04
Adjusted Household Income	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00
Model X ²	55.00***		105.95***		51.82***	
-2 Log likelihood	254.90		256.47		258.29	
N	492					

OR: Odds Ratio; CI: Confidence Interval

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p=.000

Table 5.8.2: Victimization and Moderators on Non-Drug Crime

<i>Variable</i>	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Victimization	4.24**	1.63-11.05	3.93**	1.53-10.10	4.66**	1.88-11.54
High Social Support	0.59	0.27-1.32				
Victimization x High Social Support	0.89	0.19-4.14				
High Active Coping			0.52	0.23-1.14		
Victimization x High Active Coping			1.04	0.22-4.92		
High Spiritual Well-Being					0.86	0.40-1.83
Victimization x High Spiritual Well-Being					0.56	0.10-2.98
Drug User	5.48**	2.02-14.88	5.77**	2.14-15.57	5.71**	2.11-15.44
Probation	0.69	0.31-1.55	0.72	0.33-1.61	0.75	0.34-1.66
Community	0.44	0.19-1.04	0.43	0.18-1.02	0.46	0.20-1.07
Age	0.96*	0.93-1.00	0.96*	0.93-0.99	0.96*	0.93-1.00
Years of Education	0.87	0.73-1.05	0.87	0.72-1.03	0.86	0.72-1.03
Adjusted Household Income	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00
Model X ²	59.88***		60.77***		58.29***	
-2 Log likelihood	250.02		249.33		251.81	
N	492					

OR: Odds Ratio; CI: Confidence Interval

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p=.000

Table 5.8.3: Gendered Racism and Moderators on Non-Drug Crime

<i>Variable</i>	Model A		Model B		Model C	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Gendered Racism	0.98	0.90-1.06	1.03	0.97-1.09	1.04	0.97-1.11
High Social Support	0.01**	0.00-0.22				
Gendered Racism x High Social Support	1.15**	1.04-1.29				
High Active Coping			0.11	0.00-2.89		
Gendered Racism x High Active Coping			1.05	0.95-1.17		
High Spiritual Well-Being					0.32	0.02-6.22
Gendered Racism x High Spiritual Well-Being					1.02	0.93-1.13
Drug User	5.64**	2.06-15.42	5.67**	2.12-15.18	5.73**	2.14-15.32
Probation	0.71	0.32-1.61	0.68	0.30-1.51	0.68	0.31-1.50
Community	0.46	0.19-1.10	0.43*	0.18-1.01	0.44	0.10-1.03
Age	0.96*	0.93-0.99	0.96*	0.93-0.99	0.96*	0.93-0.99
Years of Education	0.87	0.73-1.04	0.87	0.73-1.03	0.87	0.73-1.03
Adjusted Household Income	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00	1.00	1.00-1.00
Model X ²	58.02***		52.09***		50.02***	
-2 Log likelihood	251.47		257.61		259.68	
N	490					

OR: Odds Ratio; CI: Confidence Interval

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p=.000

Chapter Six: Discussion

To reiterate, this dissertation sought to investigate how African American women respond to adverse experiences in their lives emotionally and behaviorally, particularly in terms of their involvement in crime. The need for this research cannot be overstated. African American women remain an understudied population in the GST literature, though they face a unique set of circumstances in society because of their race, class, and gender. This dissertation addressed this void in the literature by empirically testing GST, a major criminological theory among a longitudinal sample of African American women, some who were involved with the justice system and others who were not. As provided in Chapter 5, the statistical analyses revealed many interesting findings, including those that were not statistically significant, in terms of GST assumptions and prior research. This chapter will discuss these findings in the context of the research literature outlined in Chapters 2 and 3; specifically, why some hypotheses were supported and others were not. In addition, this chapter will discuss the limitations of the study as well as future directions for research and practical and policy implications that could be supported by the study.

6.1 Descriptive Findings among the Sample

Before discussion of the main findings as they relate to the study's research questions and hypotheses, the descriptive statistics for the variables used in the regression analyses provided interesting results. First, with respect to the three different types of strain, the women in the sample experienced a great deal of adversity during the six-month timeframe for which data were collected by the interviewers. That is, 13 percent experienced sexual or physical victimization, 50 percent experienced some form of

economic hardship, and 57 percent experienced gendered racism. As mentioned in Chapter 2, historically, African Americans have had among the highest violent victimization rates across demographic groups (see Harrell 2007). Research demonstrates that African American women, specifically, are victims of violent crimes committed by people whom they know (Harrell 2007), and they consistently report more frequent and serious episodes of intimate partner violence, as compared to white women (Lilly and Graham-Bermann 2009; West 2004; Wright et al. 2010). Prior research has also confirmed that African Americans generally endure financial strain at disproportionate rates compared to other demographic groups. For example, the poverty rate of African Americans is more than two times that of whites (DeNavas-Walt and Proctor 2015), and African American women have the highest working-poor rate among all demographic groups (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015). It is also not surprising to find that nearly six out of every 10 women were discriminated against based on their race or sex given the significance of the intersectionality between racism and sexism experienced by African American women (see Perry et al. 2013). Overall, these findings related to the measures of strain seem to confirm the findings of prior research.

Second, of the two dependent variables examined in the regression analyses, more women (40%) reported having committed a crime related to drug trafficking, use, and/or possession, which is certainly higher than national survey data on use of illicit drugs among African Americans in the past month (14%; see Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 2013). Only 10 percent of women reported having committed a crime unrelated to drugs, such as burglary or check fraud. It is important to note that these findings were based on self-reports by the women and were not verified

by official crime data. For the drug crime dependent variable, it is also important to note that it includes involvement in the “drug business,” as well as drug use or possession. Some may argue that the two are very different types of crime and behavior. For example, among criminologists who study strain as a theoretical construct, they may suggest that drug trafficking is in fact an other-directed behavior, as opposed to a self-directed behavior like drug use. That is a fair argument. However, among the 498 African American women in the study sample, only about three percent (n=16) reported having engaged in some level of drug trafficking at T₃, and almost all of these women also reported having used drugs or been in possession of drugs at T₃ as well. So it seems highly doubtful such a distinction had any bearing on the study’s overall findings with respect to the statistical relationships between the variables and drug crime.

Third, the women in the sample reported having experienced negative emotions at fairly high rates. One out of every five women in the sample experienced either serious depression or anxiety at T₂, while less than 10 percent of women reported having become angry at T₂ that resulted in some type of violent episode. The latter may be a limitation of the current study given that the item related to experiencing anger with a violent episode when prior GST research suggests that women’s anger is often compounded by other emotions, such as fear and shame, which women more often internalize and express through self-directed types of behaviors (Broidy and Agnew 1997; Jang 2007). So the measure of “anger” in the study does not capture anger women experienced that did not result in a violent episode.

And lastly, most of the women in the sample had scores on each of the scales for the moderator variables that reflected high levels of social support, active coping, and

spiritual well-being. These findings are not surprising, however, since all three phenomena are greatly valued among African American women. For example, African Americans, in general, value the notion of depending on and interacting with others as a means of navigating through life and adversity (Sue and Sue 2008), and prior research has consistently found the positive nature of African American women's social support networks to mitigate effects on health (Banks-Wallace and Park 2004; Thompson et al. 2002; Utsey et al. 2007) or from financial problems (Broman 1996; Neighbors and LaVeist 1989; Taylor et al. 2003). Similarly, over the past four decades, considerable research has focused on how African Americans cope with adverse situations in life through hard work and determination, and has documented the positive effects active coping has on health outcomes (see Stevens-Watkins et al. 2014). Scholars have documented for some time that African Americans, especially African American women, report being more religious and spiritual than whites, and use religion and spirituality as coping mechanisms to life related problems (Connell and Gibson 1997; Ellison 1993; Sherkat and Ellison 1999; Taylor et al. 2011). In general, these findings seem to resonate well with what is known about African Americans as a demographic group and African American women more specifically.

6.2 Financial and Victimization Strains Led to Drug Crime

RQ1 examined to what extent the various measures of strain predict drug crime among the African American women in the sample. The logistic regression models revealed that women who had experienced some form of economic hardship or who had been a victim of a crime were more likely to commit a drug crime; yet, gendered racism experiences did not predict engagement in drug crime among the women in the sample.

All three hypotheses associated with RQ1 were supported by the findings and are in line with previous research and theoretical assumptions.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Broidy and Agnew (1997) hypothesized that women experience different forms of strain than men do, and these strains tend to be related more to interpersonal relationships and traditional gender roles. Yet, among African American women specifically, there is some evidence that they are also as likely to experience financial strain as African American men are, given they are more likely to live alone and be responsible for the majority of their family's income (Jang 2007). Broidy and Agnew (1997) argue that, as a result of the types of strain they experience, women are more likely to engage in self-directed crime and deviance, such as drug use.

The finding that financial and victimization strains led to drug crime among the women in the sample support Broidy and Agnew's (1997) theoretical propositions of GST. As previously noted, very little research has been conducted to examine their propositions, and even less research within the GST literature has involved study populations outside of young adults and adolescents. For instance, while Agnew (2006) argues that chronic unemployment and serious financial loss can act as types of strain, this argument has not been well tested within the scope of GST. This finding is also meaningful given the disproportionate rates of African American women who experience economic hardship. As mentioned above, the poverty rate of African Americans is more than two times that of whites (DeNavas-Walt and Proctor 2015), and African American women have the highest working-poor rate among all demographic groups (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015). So not only does this finding contribute to the GST literature, but it also extends general criminological knowledge about what we know about how adverse

financial experiences contribute to people—in this case, African American women—becoming involved in crime and the justice system.

Similarly, while some research has found a positive relationship between victimization and drug use using a GST framework (Carson et al. 2009; Moon et al. 2008), it generally has not involved African American women. Thus, finding a direct link between victimization and drug crime among the women in the sample is a significant contribution to the literature. Broidy and Agnew (1997) argue that strains related to interpersonal relations, such as victimization by an intimate partner, are more likely to lead to self-directed behaviors, such as drug use. As discussed in Chapter 3, Jang (2007) found support for this hypothesis, and the current study furthers that support among a marginalized sample of African American women, though the women's perpetrators were unknown.

The fact that H1c—gendered racism will not have an effect on drug crime—was substantiated is noteworthy as well. As discussed in Chapter 3, Broidy and Agnew (1997) suggest that as a result of experiencing different forms of strain, which produce specific negative emotions, women are more likely to also engage in different types of crime in comparison to men. Experiences of discrimination based on race and gender are more likely to generate other-directed emotions, such as anger, which would then lead individuals to engage in other-directed deviance or crime; drug crime would be considered a self-directed type of deviance or crime, according to GST (Agnew 2006; Broidy and Agnew 1997). This finding of the current study provides support for GST as it relates to explaining how gendered racism experiences act as a type of strain that leads to crime.

6.3 All Three Types of Strain Led to Non-Drug Crime

RQ2 examined the extent to which the various measures of strain predict non-drug related crime, such as assault and theft/burglary, among the African American women in the sample. The logistic regression models revealed that women who had experienced some form of economic hardship and who had been a victim of a crime were more likely to commit a non-drug crime, and women were more likely to engage in non-drug crime for each increase in their number of gendered racism experiences. Two of the hypotheses associated with RQ2 were supported by the findings and are in line with previous research and theoretical assumptions, but one hypothesis was refuted and is in contrast to findings of previous research.

It was hypothesized that both economic hardship (H2a) and gendered racism (H2c) would lead the women in the sample to commit non-drug crimes. The former is unique in that it is a type of strain that can generate different negative emotions and, in turn, may lead individuals on different paths to crime, such as drug crime (see Section 6.1 above) and crimes like check fraud that are directed towards other people. Financial strain has been an original type of strain developed along with the theory (see Agnew 2006), and Broidy and Agnew (1997) suggested that women may experience financial strain as much as men, due to the rise in the number of women acting as the sole breadwinner for their families. However, Jang (2007) found moderate effects of financial strain on other-directed crime among her sample of African American women.

On the other hand, gendered racism is a type of strain that is more likely to lead to other-directed deviance and crime, but not self-directed crime (e.g., drug use). Agnew (2006) has long argued that experiences with discrimination based on race/ethnicity and

gender may lead to greater individual-level involvement in crime and this is a type of strain that fits well within the GST model, but this has yet to be explored with African American women. The support of H2c adds to the literature that has examined such a link in recent years. For example, Burt and colleagues (2012) found that racial discrimination was positively associated with increased involvement in crime. Unfortunately, however, their measure of crime included marijuana use (33 percent of the sample self-reported marijuana use) and their study involved African American male youth. The current study, though, showed a direct link between gendered racism experiences and crime unrelated to drug use, possession, and/or trafficking among a sample of African American women.

It was surprising to find that victimization predicted involvement in non-drug crime. As Broidy and Agnew (1997) propose, victimization is a type of strain that is likely to lead to self-directed crime or deviance, but it is not necessarily linked to crimes committed against other people, particularly among women. While this finding in the current study may run counter to part of Broidy and Agnew's (1997) propositions, it is somewhat consistent with the broader criminological literature that has examined the victimization-crime relationship. Within this body of research, researchers have found physical, sexual, and/or emotional victimization to be conducive to property crimes and interpersonal violence (Hay and Evans 2006; Kaufman 2009; Manasse and Ganem 2009; Moon et al. 2008; Ostrowsky and Messner 2005; Piquero and Sealock 2004; Spano et al. 2006). Yet, very little of this research has involved African American women. So it may be that victimization is a type of strain that is conducive to multiple types of crime, regardless of gender, race, or age. A likely reason for this is that there are various forms of victimization, and each form involves a complex, dynamic process. For example,

financially-motivated victimization, such as robbery, is different from personally-motivated victimization, such as intimate partner violence. Further, victimization experiences may lead to different emotional responses, which may be interrelated, and they seem to manifest in different types of crime and deviance as well, as evidenced by the findings of the current study and prior research cited above. Overall, this finding advances the GST literature and contributes to the broader criminological literature on women, specifically African American women, and crime.

6.4 Negative Emotions Generated by Strain Varied by Type

RQ3 examined the individual effects each type of strain had on each of the three negative emotional states. Analyses found that depression was generated by all three types of strain among the women in the sample. Both being a victim of crime and having experienced gendered racism led to women feeling anxiety and, as with depression, anger was generated by all three forms of strain. All three of the hypotheses associated with RQ3 were partially supported by the findings and are in line with previous research and theoretical assumptions.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Broidy and Agnew (1997) suggest depression and anxiety are self-directed emotions that are more likely to be generated by strains related to interpersonal relationships or physical health. Depression is, after all, an emotion that leaves people lethargic and feeling powerless. Similarly, people who experience ongoing anxiety as a result of a stressful event(s) in their lives may feel powerless, but it is also accompanied by fear and heightened sensitivity to the anticipation of what might happen. The current study found partial support for these propositions in that women who were victimized were more likely to experience both depression and anxiety (see H3a and

H3b). However, it was also found that women who experienced some form of economic hardship were likely to get depressed but not experience anxiety. There could be various explanations for this finding, but the underlying reason could be that the women no longer had to anticipate what would happen as a result of their financial strain, because the consequences of the strain were already permanent to some extent, which were more likely to be accompanied by feelings of hopelessness and despair. This seems like a fair explanation when considering the average adjusted annual household income for the women in the sample was less than \$8,000, along with the fact that African Americans have been, historically speaking, disproportionately living in and affected by urban poverty (see Wilson 1987) and continue to live in poverty at two times the rate of white Americans (DeNavas-Walt and Proctor 2015). It is very difficult for people to get out of poverty once they are in it.

An additional and somewhat surprising finding was that women were more likely to become depressed and feel anxious by experiencing more acts of discrimination based on their race and gender. It was hypothesized that gendered racism experiences would generate other-directed emotions, like anger, but not depression or anxiety. This finding may be explained within the context of Agnew's (2013) argument that people's emotional reactions to strain are primarily as a function of their subjective evaluations of the experienced strain. Gendered racism is a type of strain that is multi-dimensional and often occurs over long periods of time. As a result, different emotions could manifest at different times based on, in this case, the women's subjective evaluations of the strain. Burt and colleagues (2012) found discrimination to be linked with depression among their sample of African American male youth. Moreover, emotional states are often

interrelated when people experience specific types of stressful events in their lives (see Finan, Zautra, and Wershba 2011). Thus, gendered racism experiences may elicit different emotional reactions, because the women may perceive the experiences as unjust, which would be linked with anger, and as uncontrollable, which is related more to depression and anxiety (see Agnew 2013). Such an explanation seems practical from the perspective of African American women, who may face daily occurrences of microaggressions of racial and sexual discrimination and, on a larger scale, acts of institutional discrimination. Given that very little research in the GST literature has focused on the direct relationships between types of strain and negative emotional states (e.g., Agnew 2006; Ganem 2010; Smith and Kirby 2011), these findings point to the need for further research.

Finally, the current study found that anger was generated by all three forms of strain. Agnew (2006) notes that anger, and its related emotions of jealousy and frustration, create a strong need to correct a perceived injustice or to satisfy desires related to the cause of the emotions. This is line with Broidy and Agnew's (1997) assertion that anger is more likely to be linked with other-directed behaviors. However, little focus has been given in the GST literature to explain what types of strain may be most likely to cause anger to manifest. As discussed in Chapter 3, Jang (2007) found that strains related to interpersonal relationships, physical health, and gender roles were more likely to produce both self-directed (e.g., depression and anxiety) and other-directed (e.g., anger) emotions among her sample of African American women. It makes practical sense for people to become angry or frustrated during dire financial times, after being victimized, and after being discriminated against based on their race and gender. These

findings support Jang's (2007) findings and suggest the need to further investigate how negative emotional states are connected with different types of strain.

6.5 Anger Mediated Relationships between Strains and Non-Drug Crime

RQ4 and RQ5 examined which negative emotional states had the strongest mediating effects on the relationships between the different types of strain and crime experienced by African American women and their involvement in crime. These mediation models were examined for both drug-related and non-drug related crimes. For RQ4, it was hypothesized that depression would mediate the relationship between economic hardship and drug crime, and that both depression and anxiety would mediate the victimization-drug crime relationship among the African American women in the sample. Unfortunately, the findings failed to support either hypothesis, which contrasts with some GST research (e.g., Carson et al. 2009; Jang 2007; Moon et al. 2008). As discussed in Chapter 3, Broidy and Agnew (1997) propose that depression and anxiety have stronger effects on self-directed deviance and crime, such as drug use. Moreover, some research has found depression to have a greater effect on more "passive" crimes, like drug use (see Bao et al. 2004; Jang and Johnson 2003; Landau 1997; Peirce et al. 1994; Piquero and Sealock 2004; Power and Dalglish 1997; Sigfusdottir et al. 2004; Simons et al. 2003), and Agnew (2006) argues that anxiety should be less associated with crimes that involve other people, such as theft or assault. Yet, Jang (2007) found that the African American women in her sample were more likely to cope with strain and negative emotions in prosocial ways. Thus, while both economic hardship and victimization had independent effects on drug crime and they also had independent effects on the negative emotions, the women did not cope with the emotions caused by

the strain through drug crime. Further research is needed to continue examining the links between strain, negative emotions, and drug related crimes among understudied populations, like African American women.

For RQ5, it was hypothesized that anger would have the strongest mediation effect between gendered racism and non-drug crime. The logistic regression models revealed that complete mediation did occur between gendered racism, anger, and non-drug crime among the women in the sample. More specifically, African American women in the sample responded to the anger they felt after experiencing acts of gendered racism by committing a crime unrelated to drugs, such as theft or assault. Agnew (2013) states that anger has a particularly significant role in GST, though other emotions may foster crime. Anger energizes people to take action and revenge, reduces their ability and inclination to cope in prosocial ways, reduces their perception of consequences for their behavior, and provides some justification for crime. So the women in the current study became angry after potentially numerous experiences of discrimination based on their race or gender. Those experiences may have occurred daily through microaggressions or through institutional forms of discrimination or, more likely, both. The women then took action, which they believed was warranted, against the perceived injustice of the discrimination by engaging in crimes that may have been directed towards others who wronged them. This may be likened to the concept of “criminal thinking” in that people justify or rationalize their antisocial behavior (Walters 2003). Moreover, criminal thinking is usually a key factor in actuarial instruments that estimate an individual’s risk to reoffend, though culturally relevant items are not typically included in such instruments (see Knight et al. 2006; Taxman, Rhodes, and Dumenci 2011; Walters 2012).

Such a specific finding has never been established in the GST literature and, thus, stands to make a significant contribution to the empirical support for GST and within the broader criminological literature that explains the relationship between race, gender, and crime.

Lastly, the findings of the analyses showed that partial mediation occurred between economic hardship, anger, and non-drug crime. That is, though women who experienced economic hardship were still two times as likely to commit a crime unrelated to drugs, they were over three times as likely to engage in non-drug crime if they had experienced sustained periods of anger. This finding provides support to the GST literature in that the African American women in the sample were more likely to cope with anger generated by the experienced economic hardship by committing a non-drug crime. Most notably, Jang (2007) found that the African American women in her sample were just as likely to experience some form of financial strain as the men were and that it led to them feeling a wide range of emotions, including anger, which had stronger effects on other-directed types of crime and deviance (e.g., theft). It should also be noted that H5c was substantiated by the analyses, which suggested that depression would not have an effect on any of the types of strain and non-drug crime. This hypothesis was in line with previous GST research that proposes that depression is a self-directed emotion that leads to self-directed coping behaviors (e.g., drug use). Both findings make contributions to the criminological literature and provide further support for GST as a major criminological theory.

6.6 Social Support Moderated Effect of Gendered Racism on Non-Drug Crime

The final two research questions, RQ6 and RQ7, examined which factors moderated the relationships between the different types of strain and crime, both drug-related and non-drug related. Three factors were examined in the analyses, as the intent was to determine if the relationship between strain and crime varied by participant's level of social support, coping skills, and spiritual well-being. For RQ6, it was hypothesized that all three of the factors would moderate the relationship between economic hardship and drug crime, and they would also moderate the victimization-drug crime relationship among the African American women in the sample. Unfortunately, neither hypothesis was supported by the analyses. The results of the analyses, however, are not surprising given Agnew's (2013) recent response to the mixed findings of the effects of moderating factors on the strain-crime relationship. For example, mixed results have been produced by studies examining the effect of social support on criminal coping, meaning that some studies have shown these factors to moderate the strain-crime relationship while others have not (see Eitle and Turner 2003; Jang and Johnson 2005; Paternoster and Mazerolle 1994; Robbers 2004). Agnew (2013) explains such mixed findings by suggesting that researchers may be using inadequate constructs or excluding other factors and strategies individuals may use to cope with strain.

Arguably, the most likely explanation is that there may not be an interaction effect between strain and any of moderating factors on crime and, instead, the moderating factors may have strong effects on crime that are independent of any interaction effects with types of strain. Some support for this explanation is found in the regression models. Women with high spiritual well-being and high active coping skills (see Tables 5.7.1 and

5.7.2) were significantly less likely to commit a drug-related crime, independent of any interaction effect. A few studies in the GST literature have found religiosity and spirituality to have inverse relationships with crime among African Americans; that is, the higher their religiosity and spirituality, the less likely people are to commit crime (Jang and Johnson 2003; 2005). As discussed in Chapter 3, religion may be involved in a person's life independent of the stress they face (Agnew 2013). So the women in the sample may have been less likely to engage in drug crime due to their religious and spiritual beliefs and practices, but they did not necessarily use their religiosity or spirituality to cope with the strain they experienced in their lives as measured in this study. Studies have also found that coping skills seem to affect crime independently from strain (Mazerolle and Maahs 2000; Mazerolle et al. 2000; Mazerolle et al. 2003). Similar to their spiritual well-being, the women in the sample may not have relied on their active coping skills to handle the stress in their lives as it related to their involvement in drug crime.

For RQ7, it was hypothesized that all three of the factors would moderate the relationship between economic hardship and non-drug crime, and they would also moderate the relationship between gendered racism and non-drug crime among the African American women in the sample. It was assumed that none of the factors would moderate the victimization-non-drug crime relationship, because it was not expected that victimization would have a positive effect on committing a crime unrelated to drugs. Analyses showed that moderation was only found in the model examining gendered racism, social support, and non-drug crime. As discussed in Chapter 5, once gendered racism experiences reached a tipping point on the scale, social support seems to have lost

its protective factor among the women in the sample. One possible explanation is that members of the women's social support systems eventually encourage criminal or deviant behavior once gendered racism experiences reach that tipping point. That is, they perceive great injustice and encourage the women to stand up for themselves to the point where they take justice into their own hands. Agnew (2006; 2013) argues that criminal coping is most likely when people are surrounded by others who foster the social learning of crime through modeling, reinforcing, and/or teaching beliefs and behaviors favorable to crime. The current study demonstrates that gendered racism may be a type of strain that creates some pressure or incentive for criminal coping. This is a significant finding and will make a substantial contribution to the GST literature and within the broader criminological literature on race, gender, and crime.

Like with the models pertaining to RQ6, the fact that moderation effects were not found between any of the factors on the relationship between economic hardship and non-drug crime may be indicative of the factors having strong effects on the dependent variable independent of any interaction effect. For example, in Model A of Table 5.8.1, women with perceived high social support were less likely to engage in non-drug related crime. And as expected, moderation was not found between any of the factors and victimization, though victimization was statistically significant in all three of the models (see Table 5.8.2). One possible explanation is that the effects of victimization on non-drug crime outweighed the effects of the conditioning factors on the relationship. Nevertheless, future research should continue to explore these relationships.

6.7 Study Limitations

While the analyses of the current study revealed many interesting findings, it is worth discussing a few noteworthy limitations. One of the main concerns pertains to the measures used in the analyses to empirically test GST. In response to Agnew's (2006) call for researchers to develop more creative and robust measures to test GST, the current study employed such measures, some of which have never been empirically tested in previous GST studies (e.g., gendered racism). Yet, other variables as they were measured do pose limitations. For example, the other two independent variables, economic hardship and criminal victimization, did not include the perceived magnitude of the experiences. That is, the study would have benefitted from the women in the sample being asked about the contextual factors of enduring a financial crisis, for example, or being physically assaulted. How significant was their financial crisis at the time? Was it something temporary or had they been dealing with it for a long time? Was any victimization reported to local law enforcement, and, if so, how was it resolved? How traumatic was the victimization experience to the women? Certainly, it would have been helpful to know such information, as Agnew (2006) argues that strains that are perceived as high in magnitude are more likely to encourage people to take corrective action to overcome those strains, which may involve crime.

Furthermore, understanding these contextual factors as they relate to African American women is important, because of how these issues disproportionately affect people of color. As discussed in Chapter 2, the National Research Council's (2014) explanations for the disproportionate involvement of African Americans in the justice system—law enforcement strategies that emphasized arrests of street-level dealers,

systematic racial differences in case processing, and conscious and unconscious bias and stereotyping of African Americans—have led to a general distrust of police by African Americans. For example, a woman’s emotional reaction to a victimization experience may have changed if she perceived the police unjustly handled her case. Other characteristics of those two independent variables could have enhanced the measures as well. For example, only three items comprised the measure for economic hardship. Other potential items that could have been included are whether the women were facing eviction or had challenges obtaining enough food for their families, or if unemployed, how long had they been without a job and were they actively seeking employment. All of these details would have provided a much fuller picture and understanding of the behavioral processes of the women in the sample.

Agnew (2006) has also encouraged researchers to develop better measures of the negative emotions involved in the strain-crime relationship, specifically questions that measure emotional states instead of traits. While the current study did use measures of emotional states, a few concerns stand out about the measures. First, the negative emotions were measured as dichotomous variables, which seem to underestimate the complexity of emotions. The measures could have been enhanced by asking the women in the sample to gauge the level and seriousness of the emotions they experienced during the specified timeframe. For example, did they perceive the emotions as problematic for them? Were they currently being treated for any emotional problems? How long had they been experiencing any of these emotions? Second, the women were not asked to report the types of negative emotions they experienced as a direct result of experiencing the specific types of strain. Moreover, the limitation of the way in which anger was measured

(i.e., violent outburst) potentially confounded how the women emotionally responded to strain. People can certainly experience anger without it resulting in violence. As important as it is, this raises a challenge in conducting research to empirically test GST. That is, asking participants to recall both stressful events in their lives and their emotions tied to those events over the course of recent months is difficult for researchers, and potentially for participants as well. Future research should continue addressing this challenge and in-person interviews, which were used in the current study, may be the best way of capturing these data from research participants.

It should also be noted that the three conditioning factors included as moderating variables in the current study have not all undergone extensive empirical tests by GST researchers, particularly the spiritual well-being variable. Moreover, as discussed above and in previous chapters, Agnew (2013) has offered explanations for the mixed results of the effects of conditioning factors on the strain-crime relationship, which certainly relates to what the analyses revealed in the current study with the exception of Model A in Table 5.8.3. As mentioned, what seems to be clear is that such conditioning factors may not be interacting with the types of strain in this study and, instead, they may have effects on crime independent of the strain variables. The current study could have also benefitted from including the negative emotions measures in the interaction effects between the strains and moderating variables. This could have potentially given some indication of whether the conditioning factors buffered the effects of the negative emotions as they related to the strain experienced among the women in the sample. Future research should continue to examine the nuances of conditioning factors within the scope of the strain-crime relationship.

Lastly, the results of the current study are not necessarily generalizable to other adult populations of African American women or to women of other racial and ethnic groups. Participants in the sample were recruited as part of a larger study on the health disparities and drug use among African American women, a very specific population. The study could have been enhanced by collecting primary data across a more generalizable sample of African American women or from a more racially diverse group of women that included women from other underrepresented groups, such as Native American women. It would have been interesting to compare results across the different groups of women. Yet, with these noted limitations, directions for additional research have been paved to improve the quality of the research conducted to empirically test GST. Future empirical tests of GST should include understudied populations, such as African Americans, who may experience disproportionate amounts of strain and are disproportionately involved with the justice system. There is a strong need to bring African American women to the forefront of GST research. GST seems relevant to this population, but many aspects of the theory remain untested in order to show its generalizability to explain involvement in crime by African American women.

6.8 Policy Implications and Directions for Future Research

Overall, the current study produced various noteworthy findings that should inform research, practice, and policy. First, the results should advance the research across various disciplines, including sociology, criminology, and social psychology. For example, the current study demonstrated that GST is an applicable theory to explain individual-level involvement with crime among African American women. The most notable findings revolved around the impact of gendered racism as a type of strain on the

women's involvement in crimes unrelated to drugs. In one instance, complete mediation was found in the model involving gendered racism, anger, and non-drug crime. To date, such a finding that directly links those variables together has never been established within the GST literature. So this finding provides credible empirical support for a theoretical assertion that has not been widely tested, which is a significant contribution to the literature.

Additionally, financial and victimization strains have been traditionally fundamental to GST. Some support was found for these types of strain in the current study as well, which should advance the empirical evidence for GST. Most notably, victimization had the strongest independent effects of any type of strain on both drug and non-drug crimes, supporting prior research (Carson et al. 2009; Hay and Evans 2006; Kaufman 2009; Manasse and Ganem 2009; Moon et al. 2008; Ostrowsky and Messner 2005; Piquero and Sealock 2004; Spano et al. 2006). Nevertheless, additional research is needed to tease out the relationship between various types of victimization among African American women and involvement in crimes unrelated to drug use. This will be particularly important given what we know about the cyclical nature of the victimization-crime process. That is, the same people are often both victims and perpetrators of crime, especially in economically disadvantaged communities.

On the other hand, the current study found support for the conditioning factors included in the models. That is, social support had a moderation effect on the relationship between gendered racism and non-drug crime, while coping skills and spiritual well-being had independent effects on whether the women in the sample engaged in crime. Given Agnew's (2013) recent response to the mixed findings for these conditioning

factors in the GST research, the findings of the current study should encourage researchers to further explore such factors in the strain-crime process. Future research should delve deeper into how people use conditioning factors generally in their lives and then also in relation to their experiences with strain. For example, people may be religious and they may rely on their faith during adverse times, but to what extent do they use their religious beliefs and practices to specifically cope with strain? Thus, as discussed in Chapter 3, there is the need to differentiate between religious involvement and religious coping; that is, religion may be involved in a person's life independent of the stress they face, though people may use religion as a way to cope with stress in their lives (see Folkman and Moskowitz 2004). In addition, research should focus on the time-ordering and specific timeframe of these factors as they relate to people's experiences with strain and their involvement in crime. This methodological approach is necessary in order to know the extent of how people use their coping skills or social support, as examples, to cope with strain.

Another direction for future research that would greatly contribute to the advancement of GST is for investigators to study the contextual factors that may influence strain-crime relationships. Up to this point, research has mainly focused on establishing the core components of the theory. Now, researchers need to delve deeper into the narratives of people's lives, particularly the lives of other vulnerable populations to best understand how the combination of various factors (e.g., intensity of the strain, circumstances surrounding the experience) contribute to their involvement in crime (Agnew 2013). Researchers must examine how people subjectively evaluate the magnitude and justness of their strain experiences in order to understand the emotional

reactions they may have and the ways in which they cope, either legally or criminally, with the strain, and it will be important for researchers to tie these factors to whether such people engage in crime. Better understanding the factors that condition the effect of strains on crime will serve to further advance GST as a major criminological theory and its applicability to explanations of crime across different groups of people.

Findings from the current study may also inform practices across a variety of fields, including criminal justice, social work, and mental health. For example, one finding was that social support is an important protective factor among African American women in the sample in relation to their experiences with discrimination based on their race and gender. The analyses revealed that women with higher active coping skills and spiritual well-being were significantly less likely to engage in crime as well. These findings were regardless of whether or not the women were involved with the justice system and are consistent with prior research (see Agnew 2005; 2013; Anderson 1999; Cullen 1994; Folkman and Moskowitz 2004; Wright and Cullen 2001). Social service workers could apply this research by investing more resources into the key protective factors, like social support systems, of African American women in community settings as a means to help them successfully navigate through experiences with discrimination. The same could be said for justice system practitioners who work with African American women offenders under community supervision. Such practitioners have to balance enforcing compliance with the law and facilitating service needs for offenders. So the more knowledge they have to help facilitate positive changes in offenders' lives, the better for everyone involved, including the general public.

Another finding was that the women in the sample emotionally responded to the types of strain quite differently, and anger had the greatest mediation effect of any emotion. This is important to acknowledge and continue investigating, because of the societal assumption that women are less likely than men to become angry. As discussed in Chapter 3, it is not that women are less likely to report as much or even higher levels of anger than men, it is that women's anger is often compounded by other emotions, such as fear and shame, which women more often internalize and express through self-directed types of behaviors (Broidy and Agnew 1997; Jang 2007). The current study found that women in the sample were more likely to express their anger through other-directed types of criminal behaviors. Are African American women unique in that they experience circumstances in their lives that may be quite different from other people? It is difficult to say without drawing inferences from comparable groups of women. Nevertheless, these women may have had numerous experiences with discrimination and, rather than internalizing their feelings related to those experiences as Broidy and Agnew (1997) have suggested, the women took action, which they believed was warranted, against the perceived injustice by engaging in crimes that may have been directed towards others who wronged them. The "Strong Black Woman" ideology (Collins 2004; Wyatt 2008) seems quite relevant to better understand this behavioral process. That is, African American women must "persist despite adversity" (Stevens-Watkins et al. 2013, p. 334) to appear courageous for others around them, even if it means sacrificing their emotional and mental well-being (see Hunn and Craig 2009; Johnson and Crowley 1996).

Information that ties in factors culturally relevant to African American women could be used to inform administrators and executives of government agencies of where

funding is needed to allocate the most appropriate resources to culturally relevant community programs and activities that strive to improve the quality of life among African American women. For example, there could be community organizations that offer social services to African American women, particularly low-income women who may have children. Such services could include stress management, anger management, job skills development, health and wellness, educational needs, and parenting skills, among others. Parks and recreation activities in communities for younger people, such as neighborhood recreational centers or even programs run by local YMCA centers, could provide people with more prosocial outlets in dealing with anger and stress in their daily lives. In the end, such programs and activities may not only improve the quality of life for African American women and their families, they may also improve the health and well-being of communities in general.

Next, the findings from the current study could lead to innovative changes in criminal justice and social policy. While more research is clearly needed, the current study's findings provide policy makers with a preliminary analysis of issues that could be addressed through effective legislation, as well as ways to overcome those challenges, as perceived by the African American women involved with the study. For example, the women's experiences with discrimination based on their race and gender seemed to have significant impacts on their mental health and behavior. Legislation could require programs and initiatives to be developed with the intention to prevent or reduce acts of discrimination. Further, the current study's findings could inform policy that would lead to the implementation of gendered and culturally sensitive programs to improve outcomes for specific groups of individuals, particularly those involved with the justice

system. And this point is particularly relevant to women involved in the justice system, whose risk factors and services needs vary from their male counterparts in terms of their histories of victimization and living in poverty (Belknap 2001; Covington and Bloom 2006). Policy has been traditionally informed by the viewpoints of practitioners, researchers, and lawmakers, but rarely has the offender population had a voice in this process. Such perceptions should be welcomed in the continuous efforts to address significant social issues. Criminal justice policy and programs should be supportive of women's needs, promote health connections to family members, and take a holistic approach to increase the likelihood of successful reintegration into the community (Bloom et al. 2003).

Finally, future research should concentrate on refining the methodological concerns raised in the current study. Most notably, robust measures should be used when applicable and researchers should ask participants to relate their experiences with strain to their emotional responses to truly gauge the dynamics of these relationships. Researchers could also replicate the findings of the current study with other demographic groups. African Americans, and minorities in general, remain understudied populations in the GST literature, though they continue to be involved in the justice system at disproportionate rates (see National Research Council 2014). And longitudinal data should continue to be collected in order to study these phenomena where participants are asked to recall their experiences across shorter periods of time (e.g., three months), as well as how multiple types of strain occurring simultaneously affect future behavior.

6.9 Conclusion

African American women, as a demographic group, face systematic challenges in our society. They experience victimization, economic hardships, and discrimination based on their race and gender at rates disproportionate to other populations (see Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015; DeNavas-Walt and Proctor 2015; Grollman 2012; Harrell 2007; Lilly and Graham-Bermann 2009; Thomas et al. 2008; West 2004; Wright et al. 2010). Moreover, African American women have become significantly more involved in the justice system in recent decades. All of these realities point to the need to conduct social scientific research to better understand how these women navigate through life's trials and tribulations. This dissertation makes significant contributions to the growing body of knowledge on the intersection between race, gender, and crime. Most notably, the African American women in the sample were more likely to engage in crimes unrelated to drugs, such as check fraud and burglary, to alleviate the anger they experienced from acts of discrimination against them based on their race and gender. Such a direct link has never been empirically established within the GST literature.

In addition, this study found that women with perceived high social support were less likely to commit non-drug crimes than those with low social support, except when their gendered racism experiences became extremely high. In those instances, the women with perceived high social support had about the same probability of engaging in crime as their low social support counterparts. As discussed, there seemed to have been a tipping point on the high end of the gendered racism scale that negated the protective effects of high social support for these women. Is it possible that members of the women's social support systems eventually encouraged criminal or deviant behavior once gendered

racism experiences reached that tipping point? Further research is needed to verify these findings, but, nevertheless, such findings will undoubtedly advance the criminological literature.

It is hoped that future research considers both the findings and limitations of the current study in order to advance our knowledge of what influences people to engage in crime. While it may be a major criminological theory that has received a great deal of empirical support, gaps in the GST literature remains and addressing them will be necessary in order to advance research, policy, and practice. The goal of all of this work is to improve the quality of lives for individuals, our communities, and society as a whole. However, we must remain humble and keep the adage in mind to seek first to understand, then to be understood. While our understanding of the issues facing African American women has improved significantly from research conducted over the past 30 years, much remains that we do not know. We must continue the process of understanding before we reserve the right to be satisfied with what we have done.

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Areas of Concentration: Crime, Law & Deviance and Social Inequalities
- M.S. Correctional & Juvenile Justice Studies, Eastern Kentucky University, 2007
- B.A. Sociology/Criminology, Morehead State University, 2003

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS HELD

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| Research Associate | American Probation and Parole Association
Lexington, KY | Dec 2009 – Present |
| Research Analyst | Justice & Safety Center
Eastern Kentucky University
Richmond, KY | Aug 2008 – Dec 2009 |
| Juvenile Services Clinician | Department of Juvenile Justice
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SCHOLASTIC HONORS

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| John A. O'Donnell Award for Academic Excellence in the Department of Sociology at University of Kentucky | 2012 |
| Dissertation Enhancement Award by the Graduate School of University of Kentucky (\$3,000) | 2012 |
| Outstanding Graduate Student Award by the Southern Criminal Justice Association; nominated by Dr. Brian Payne of Georgia State University | 2011 |
| Doris A. Wilkinson Outstanding Student Paper Award in the Department of Sociology at University of Kentucky | 2010 |
| Co-Founder and President, University of Kentucky Sociology Graduate Students Organization | 2009-2011 |
| Summer 2007 Commencement Student Speaker by the Office of Student Affairs of Eastern Kentucky University; nominated by Dr. Kevin Minor of Eastern Kentucky University | 2007 |
| Member of the National Scholars Honor Society | 2007 |
| Collegiate All-American Scholar by the United States Achievement Academy; nominated by Dr. David C. May of Eastern Kentucky | 2007 |

University

Second Place in the Graduate Student Paper Competition within the Juvenile Justice Section of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Baltimore, MD 2006

Outstanding Graduate Student of the Year in the Department of Correctional & Juvenile Justice Studies at Eastern Kentucky University 2006

Scholarship for Semester Graduate Tuition in the Department of Correctional & Juvenile Justice Studies at Eastern Kentucky University 2005

PUBLICATIONS

Books/Monographs/Book Chapters

Lowe, Nathan C. 2009. *Exploring the Social and Legal Responses to Juvenile Sexual Offending: From "Boys will be Boys" Attitudes to "Get Tough" Policies*. Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Publishing House.

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