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Presentation title: General strain and cybercrime offending: A cross-national comparison of strains and cybercrime in three developed countries

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Agnew's General Strain Theory (GST), which posits that criminal acts are performed as an attempt to cope with negative emotions such as depression, anxiety and anger that result in strain (Agnew, 1992), has been applied to cybercrime. However, support for GST for explaining cybercrime is limited. Agnew's general strain theory emphasizes key causal variables that are neglected in other theories. Specifically, it hypothesizes that strainful social relationships and events give rise to negative emotional states that, in turn, are catalysts for aggressive and criminal behavior. Although GST has been tested on various crimes and also personal cybercrimes (e.g., cyberbullying: Patching & Hinduja, 2011), non-personal cybercrimes such as hacking or identity theft were not included in previous analyses. In addition, GST has not been tested on cybercrime using cross-national samples that could potentially shed light on how different levels and types of strain define communities' cybercrime perpetration. Therefore, in the current study, the authors test general strain theory to find out whether the influence of strain on cybercrime perpetration varies by country. On 1,300 randomly selected samples of adults in three countries (US, Finland, Hungary) with different socioeconomic and sociopolitical makeups, we test general strain theory and find significant differences in the perpetration of various cybercrimes in the examined countries. The paper offers possible socioeconomic and sociopolitical explanations and concludes that crime prevention and policy should follow national characteristics.