

# Personality correlates of criminal entitlement as a function of integral theory

## Abstract

The application of Wilber's Integral Theory to criminology permits a meta-view of the various quadrants of epistemology, which include the objective/exterior, the subjective/interior and the individual/collective manifestations of each. This report discusses research on personality dimensions of criminality that was based both on right quadrant empirical data and left quadrant understanding of internal subjective and intersubjective experiences. An Integral/AQAL model of criminality provides a meta-view of the field that may help resolve conflicting notions of the roles of subjective and objective knowledge in expanding the body of knowledge in criminological and forensic research.

**Keywords:** criminal personality correlates, forensic behavior, integral theory, criminal entitlement

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**Abbreviations:** IT, integral theory; AQAL, all-quadrant all-level; AIV, acceptance of interpersonal violence; CE, criminal entitlement

## Introduction

Criminology and the forensic behavioral and social sciences require a meta-theoretical model to best grasp the interior (subjective) and exterior (objective) dimensions of the field. The objective, evidence-based empirical approach is readily understood and supported by scholars. Quantifiable data and the scientific method are necessary to impose rigor, structure and reproducibility to the advancement of the discipline. As Rock et al.,<sup>1</sup> argue, empiricism spares criminology from exegetical grand theorizing and deconstruction that, unchecked, dilutes the core study of crime and turn it into something else entirely. At the same time, the nature of criminology such that the subjective quadrants of reality moral judgment, fear, anger, hate, revenge, and other emotions associated with crime- cannot be ignored. Criminology involves inherent subjective moral judgments as well as affective components attached to the actor, the victim and the greater culture. With no subjectivity or internal influence, there is no "crime," but merely behaviors that vary by activity but not by degree of harmfulness, morality, righteousness or even evil. Strictly external perspectives of clinical/academic categories such as "anti-social personality disorder," "psychopathy," "narcissism," and "deviance" (to name just a few) miss much of the reality of these subjects.

Therefore, a model such as Wilber's et al.,<sup>2-4</sup> is necessary for researchers to apprehend how the diverse strands of forensic scholarship fit into a unified framework. Further explanation of Wilber's theory is outside the scope of this work, and readers should not regard this work as properly representing the depth and breadth of Wilber's Integral vision. It is sufficient here to note that further exploration of the IT as an inclusive and heuristic meta-theory is a promising avenue of scholarship.

## Case presentation

This paper employs the IT perspective as an overlay against several branches of literature related to behavioral, cognitive and personality

attributes of the criminal mindset. The purpose of the study was to focus on the left subjective quadrants as sources of anti-social and criminal behavior, and to observe how they might manifest themselves in the external right quadrants. Scholars from Pepper<sup>5</sup> to Mills<sup>6</sup> to Quinney<sup>7</sup> to Sarbin,<sup>8</sup> among others, have critiqued the various perceptions and roles of empiricism in the social sciences. Wilber's IT<sup>2-4,9</sup> perspective is an organizing framework that maps out the domains and progress of human knowledge and activity. Wilber's term "Kosmos" (1998, pp. 73-74) captures the essence of the AQAL model.

The construction of the CE scale involved the awareness of how the various quadrants contribute to overall understanding of crime from both internal/subjective and external/objective quadrants. The 27-item included the internal dimensions of cognitions, attitudes, and beliefs associated with criminality, drawing from aspects of narcissism,<sup>10,11</sup> psychopathy,<sup>12-14</sup> Machiavellianism<sup>15</sup> and narrative psychology.<sup>16-18</sup> CE represents the meld of common personality correlates as perceived and organized within the narrative model. This model latter refers to human tendencies to organize their life experiences as dramatic story arcs, thereby infusing them with meaning, cultural connectedness, and significance.<sup>8,16,17</sup> The scale items were focused on the common core of entitlement as a driving correlate of some types of criminality (Criminal Entitlement/CE scale) (Table 1).

**Table 1** Pearson's r correlations for criminal entitlement and acceptance of interpersonal violence (N = 302)

Variable	Valid N	CE score	AIV score
CE Score	292	1	0.53**

**Note:** \*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

\*\*Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

CE, criminal entitlement; AIV, acceptance of interpersonal violence Participants who did not complete key items were excluded from valid N

The scale was tested as an independent variable against Burt's<sup>19</sup> Acceptance of Interpersonal Violence (AIV) scale. The AIV scale is an established measure of attitudes about rape and

violence<sup>20,21</sup> and was used here as a gauge for personality correlates that favor criminal thinking as well as aggression against women (Figure 1). The randomized cluster sample consisted of undergraduate students at a northeastern public university (N=292). Participants who declined to answer the key items were excluded from the analysis. Sample size was somewhat constrained by availability. Results

indicated support for the hypothesis of a positive overall relationship between CE and AIV with a Pearson’s *r* of .53 (significant at the .01 level on a 2-tailed test). Linear regression analysis yielded a PRE (*r*<sup>2</sup>) score of .28 and slope (*B*) of .13 at a 95% confidence interval (Table 2). The CE scale’s reliability was good (Cronbach’s alpha= .91).

<p><b>Upper Left Interior-Individual (Intentional)</b></p> <p><i>An individual’s internal, subjective cognitions; affect and emotional states; awareness; individual moral stage development; internal spiritual experiences; individual criminal intentions and thinking patterns.</i></p>	<p><b>Upper Right Exterior-Individual (Behavioral)</b></p> <p><i>An individual’s externally observable, measurable, empirically validated behaviors and physiological processes. Observable behaviors of the individual.</i></p>
<p><b>Lower Left Interior-Collective (Cultural)</b></p> <p><i>The collective internal experience; shared worldview; societal culture, laws within their social context; archetypes and cultural narratives</i></p>	<p><b>Lower Right Exterior-Collective (Social)</b></p> <p><i>Social system: criminal justice system and process; crime and research statistics and measures; macro-structural factors</i></p>

**Figure 1** Adapted from Wilber’s four quadrant model (2007). The right quadrants represent exterior, objective, empirical realities. The left quadrants correspond to the interior, subjective experiential realities. The upper quadrants denote the individual. The lower ones signify the collective (Champion).<sup>25,26</sup>

**Table 2** Summary of simultaneous linear regression analysis for criminal entitlement predicting acceptance of interpersonal violence (N = 302)

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	95% CI
CE	0.13	0.01	0.53	0.10- 0.15
R2 = .28				

CE, criminal entitlement; AIV, acceptance of interpersonal violence

### Discussion

This study demonstrated a modest but positive relationship between the CE construct and AIV. Although offending was not measured directly, past research has supported the relationship between AIV and criminal behavior.<sup>20-27</sup> Another potential avenue of inquiry lies in the melding of the narrative psychology dimension of the construct with the constellation of personality variables covered in CE (excessive self-regard, deservingness, and so on). The high overall internal consistency of the scale lends some credence to the integration of the subjective/inter-subjective domains into criminal personality correlates. Further exploration of the connections between interior quadrants and criminality will inform future research.

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### Patient consent form

N/A

### Conflicts of interest

The author declares there are no conflicts of interest.

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