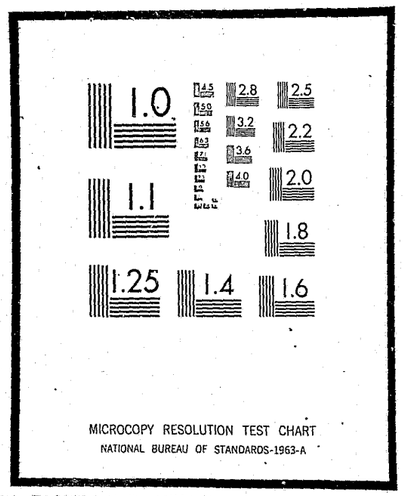

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND THE SCHOOL: AN APPLICATION OF CONTROL THEORY

by

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ABSTRACT

The major objective of this study was to develop and test a theoretical model for an explanation of juvenile delinquency. Specifically, the study was concerned with the relationships between social background characteristics, students' school experiences, and delinquent behavior. A perspective was presented developed from control theory that is believed to be a viable explanatory scheme. The model was tested on a sample of 923 high school sophomores in a metropolitan area in the Southeastern United States. School experiences were found to be stronger predictors of delinquent behavior than either race, social class, or the quality of family relationships. The findings also indicated that students' levels of commitment to school, which emanate from the nature of school-pupil interaction processes, are an important etiological factor in delinquency. It is suggested that commitments made within the school context serve to hold the adolescent within the legitimate system and that commitments made in other relevant contexts may serve a similar controlling function.

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AN APPLICATION OF CONTROL THEORY

INTRODUCTION

Of the general themes in contemporary delinquency theory and research, perhaps none is so pervasive as the premise that certain general factors linked to the structure of American society promote relatively high rates of delinquency among some cohorts in the population (cf. Kobrin, 1951; Parsons, 1954; Cohen, 1955; Merton, 1957; Dubin, 1959; Cloward and Ohlin, 1961; Matza, 1964). The literature concerning the hypothesized linkage between socioeconomic status and delinquency is particularly voluminous, the most typical conclusion traditionally being that there is an inverse relationship between socioeconomic status and delinquency (cf. Sullinger, 1936; Warner and Lunt, 1941; Shaw and McKay, 1942; Wiers, 1944; Hollingshead, 1945; Dirksen, 1948; Glueck and Glueck, 1950; Wattenberg and Balistrieri, 1950; Burgess, 1952; Lander, 1954; Quinney, 1964; Short and Strodtbeck, 1965; Polk, 1967; Willie, 1967; Tribble, 1972). However, recent research findings have provided the foundation for substantial questioning of this presumed link. First, a relatively large body of literature which is derived from the use of self-report measures of delinquency rather than official statistics strongly suggests that the link, if it is

present, is certainly not as strong as has often been presumed (cf. Nye, et al., 1958; Dentler and Monroe, 1961; Reiss and Rhodes, 1961; Clark and Wenninger, 1962; Akers, 1964; Empey and Erickson, 1966; Hirschi, 1969; Williams and Gold, 1972). Second, a more recent but already sizeable body of literature has examined the impact of problems and pressures associated with experiences in school upon adolescents. Much of this literature indicates that school factors may deserve a higher priority in the development of causal models of delinquency than the class-based theories would imply (cf. Hirschi, 1969; Kelly and Balch, 1971; Polk and Schafer, 1972; Kelly and Pink, 1973).

Unfortunately, the preponderance of the literature in this area tends to be based either on those theoretical models which emphasize the influence of social class distinctions or on those which attempt to unravel the nature of the influence of the school factors. Researchers appear to have given insufficient attention to the seemingly obvious possibility that there is an interaction between such background characteristics as socioeconomic status and the more propinquitous factors associated with the school experience.

In an attempt to narrow this gap, this research represents the development and operational testing of a model which integrates relevant background characteristics with influences which emerge within the context of the

educational system. Specifically, this study explores the extent to which such factors as socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and family background characteristics set a process in motion that renders some juveniles more responsive than others to problems which they confront in school, a responsiveness which may so weaken their bond to the social order that the probability of delinquency is increased. This study is thus intended to provide a meaningful elaboration and extension of the earlier work of such researchers as Hirschi (1969), Polk and Schafer (1972), and Kelly and Pink (1973).

CHAPTER I

RESEARCH EVIDENCE ON THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND SCHOOL FACTORS UPON DELINQUENCY

As was noted in the introduction, the most influential theories of delinquency share a common theme: members of the lower class in American society either experience structurally-generated pressures that push them toward involvement in deviance, and/or they encounter relatively more opportunities that render deviance attractive (cf. Kobrin, 1951; Cohen, 1955; Merton, 1957; Miller, 1958; Dubin, 1959; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960). These theories differ, of course, in their interpretations of the ways in which delinquent groups develop, the norms which they engender, and the goals toward which delinquent behavior is directed. Nevertheless, each reflects the traditionally accepted notion that there is an inverse relationship between social class and delinquency. This belief had its origins in research which measured the incidence of delinquency through the use of official records of law enforcement agencies, juvenile courts, and juvenile correctional institutions. The studies of Warner and Lunt (1941), Shaw and McKay (1942), Hollingshead (1945), Glueck (1950), Burgess (1952), and Lander (1954),

Quinney (1964), Short and Strodtbeck (1965), Polk (1967), and Willie (1967) are salient examples of this methodological approach. Each concludes that delinquency is closely related to social status.

A fundamental flaw in much of the literature relating socioeconomic status to delinquency is that it has typically relied on such official reports as arrest and court records. The use of these official criteria as a defining characteristic of delinquency has come under heavy attack for at least two reasons. First, researchers who accept official definitions have often been led to compare delinquent and non-delinquent samples in the development of their models, the delinquents being drawn from institutionalized populations, and the non-delinquents from public school systems (cf. Healy and Bronner, 1936; Glueck and Glueck, 1950; Nye and Short, 1958a). This comparison was usually made in an attempt to uncover factors present in the delinquent sample, but absent in the officially non-delinquent group. The factors which would differentiate the two were assumed to have causal significance. However, not all of those confined in institutions are necessarily delinquent; conversely, many of those in school populations are or have been involved in delinquent behavior which simply never came to the attention of social control agencies. Thus, the two groups had more similarities than differences. As a result, the findings of com-

parison studies, conducted under the assumption that delinquents (juveniles populating correctional institutions) possess traits that differentiate them from non-delinquents (juveniles without official contacts), inevitably led to the successive rejection of several hypothesized discriminatory factors (for example, biological inferiority, mental defectiveness), and, more importantly, to the attribution of causality to factors such as social class which may in fact simply reflect the selection process which characterizes every step of law enforcement and judicial processing. The selectivity of this process illustrates the operation of sweeping discretionary decision-making that is often based on characteristics of juveniles not closely associated with their alleged involvement in delinquent behavior. (cf. Goldman, 1963; Piliavin and Briar, 1964; McEachern and Bauzer, 1967; Terry, 1967; Black and Reiss, 1970; Ferdinand and Luchterhand, 1970; Arnold, 1971; Weiner and Willie, 1971; Thornberry, 1973).

Second, and of at least equal importance, the adoption of official agency definitions of who is and who is not a delinquent undermines the autonomy of the research enterprise in the sense that researchers are not creating variables that are of significant scientific merit. Instead, they are simply accepting the definitions offered by such agencies as the police and the courts. By so

doing, they at least implicitly accept the assumptions of the existing system and deviate from a focus on the actual behavior which they initially set out to explain (cf. Phillipson, 1974: 1-21).

The limitations inherent in the use of official statistics have done much to stimulate the development of alternative techniques in delinquency research, particularly through increased reliance on self-reporting of behavior of non-institutionalized juveniles. The data which self-report studies have generated present a serious challenge both to the assumptions and to the findings of studies utilizing official criteria. In particular, they suggest that delinquency is better viewed as a variable associated with all youth, not as an attribute of only the few who are officially labeled. Further, these studies demonstrate that the relationship between social class and delinquency is neither as direct nor as simplistic as it has appeared. For example, Reiss and Rhodes (1961), Gold (1966), and Empey and Erickson (1966), utilizing self-reports obtained from interviews, found weak inverse relationships between class and delinquency. Similarly, Porterfield (1945), Murphy et al. (1946), Nye, et al. (1958), Dentler and Monroe (1961), Akers (1964), and Hirschi (1969), utilizing self-report checklists, reported little or no relation between class and delinquency.

Unfortunately, the self-report studies suffer from shortcomings of their own. The degree of association which they report between social class and delinquency obviously depends on characteristics of their sample populations, a source of limitation whose gravity has not always been afforded sufficient consideration. For example, in the Dentler and Monroe study, which reported no relation between social class and delinquency, samples were drawn from three small Kansas communities. On the surface, their results appear to be at odds with those of studies employing official criteria of delinquency. However, it must be kept in mind that those studies based upon official data which have found inverse relationships in accordance with the dominant delinquency theories were usually conducted in metropolitan areas where, it may be argued, the pressures of lower-class status are likely to be most severe. Indeed, if differential pressures do obtain in such settings, then unqualified generalizations beyond the sample population in the Dentler and Monroe study would result in a serious distortion of the actual relationship between class and delinquency. Significantly, Clark and Wenninger (1962), utilizing the self-report method, found that lower-class youth in metropolitan areas did have higher rates of illegal behavior, especially for the more serious offenses, while there were no class differences noted in rural and semi-urban areas.

The most serious shortcoming of these studies may well be the operational definition of delinquency that is typically employed. Children who are defined as delinquent by official criteria have committed the offense which led to their adjudication within a short time prior to court contact. Children included in the "delinquent population" according to self-report techniques, on the other hand, may have reported offenses which they committed years prior to their self-reporting. The Nye-Short scale, for example, is concerned with delinquent acts committed "since beginning grade school" (Nye and Short, 1958b: 209). Acts committed up to ten years prior to administration of the delinquency scale arguably should not be taken as an indicator of degree of present delinquent involvement. It is widely recognized that many children engage, at a very early age, in behavior which could be considered delinquent, but that they often discontinue such behavior prior to adolescence. Furthermore, self-report scales may not include items which accurately reflect the number and variety of offenses that actually occur. Scales typically list only seven to twenty delinquency items, of perhaps a hundred or more acts which could have been committed. Serious offenses, for example, are usually underrepresented. Further, it is difficult if not impossible to collect information regarding the incidence of offenses such as "beyond parental control"

and "incorrigible", both of which represent the cumulative property of acts of some number and variety. Thus, self-report studies provide no clue regarding the actual occurrence of a category of offenses which make up a significant proportion of officially recorded delinquency. Finally, a serious inconsistency of self-report studies is that they stratify their sample populations into such categories as "delinquent", "non-delinquent"; or "high delinquent", "medium delinquent", "low delinquent". The use of widely different definitions renders meaningful comparison almost impossible. In addition, oversimplified classification may distort the relationship between truly serious delinquency and the social class factor. Given only two or three categories of delinquents, serious offenders are necessarily grouped with other less serious delinquents. If it is true, as some contend, that youth from lower-class backgrounds are likely to constitute the most serious offenders (those who commit serious offenses repeatedly), this relationship may be obscured by the collapsing of categories. Significantly, in self-report studies where more precise classifications have been employed, lower-class youths have been found to be more involved in serious delinquencies than middle- and upper-class youths (cf. Clark and Wenninger, 1962; Gold, 1966).

Public Schools and Juvenile Delinquency

Although the self-report studies suffer from methodological hazards, they have presented a serious challenge to the findings of studies based upon official criteria. However, the relationship between social class and delinquency remains unclear. Several recent researchers have tried to reduce the level of this ambiguity by suggesting that the introduction of a third variable may serve to clarify the role of social class in the etiology of delinquency. More specifically, they have presented substantial evidence that the influence of the social class factor may be mitigated by the operation of factors related to the adolescent's experience in school. Given the critical importance of these school factors to this study, it is worthwhile to briefly review the pertinent literature on the topic before beginning the elaboration of the theoretical model that is examined in Chapter II.

The earliest evidence of the efficacy of an interaction between social class, school factors, and delinquency was presented by Stinchcombe (1964). In his study of 1600 high school students in a small California town, he reported no relation between social class and delinquency, yet he found a moderately high association between social class and the high school curriculum track to which a child is assigned and between curriculum track and delinquency. Similarly, Schafer, et al. (1972) reported

that socioeconomic status has a substantial effect on assignment to curriculum track, and that tracking is related to delinquency. Further, Hirschi (1969) reported no relation between social class and delinquency, although he found associations both between social class and academic performance and between academic performance and delinquency. Finally, Kelly and Balch (1971) reported a tendency for the effects of class and grades, class and academic self-evaluation, and class and school involvement to combine in an additive fashion and to have a strong and uniform effect upon delinquency.

Given these findings, it is important to inquire into the nature of the relationship between school factors and delinquency. There is a growing body of theoretical and empirical literature germane to this subject, but most studies in this area suffer from several limitations. First, as noted in the Introduction, they have generally failed to consider educational correlates of delinquency in light of relevant antecedent factors. Second, they have tended to examine the effects of highly interrelated school factors in isolation from one another, with little regard for interactive effects.

Initially, the sociologist's view of the relative importance of educational factors in the etiology of delinquent behavior tended to vary considerably. It was early recognized that the majority of delinquents are

characterized by school failure, but in the initial years of criminology's history, school failure was attributed to mental deficiency and "feeblemindedness". This supported the contention that hereditary degeneracy, both physical and mental, was responsible for the emergence of delinquent behavior patterns, because the degenerate was depicted as one who was unable to cope with life in a "normal" way (Dugdale, 1877; Goddard, 1912; Goddard, 1914; Estabrook, 1916).

The early studies that attributed school failure and delinquency to feeblemindedness were carried out without control group comparisons in the non-delinquent population. Confidence in the existence of an inverse causal relationship between intelligence and delinquency persisted only until techniques for more accurate measurement of intelligence were developed (Wooton, 1959). Embarrassingly, it was discovered that the criterion level used to define feeblemindedness in the delinquent population also resulted in the classification of a majority of the general population as feebleminded. Needless to say, the variable was quickly discarded as a causal factor, and sociologists' attentions shifted to other variables. Further, since school failure was presumed to be caused by low intelligence, attention was unfortunately diverted, at least for a time, from the relationship between school failure and delinquency. Thus, school failure came to take its place

among a host of such other factors as "minority group status" and "from broken home" that had been acknowledged as characteristic of delinquents, but whose underlying relation to delinquency remained obscure.

When interest in educational correlates of delinquency was renewed, attention shifted from school failure to school truancy (Johnson, 1942; Brownell, 1954; Frum, 1958; Reiss and Rhodes, 1959). By and large, these studies were limited to an examination of the relationship between truancy and the development of more serious patterns of delinquent behavior. A strong association between the two was generally discovered, but surprisingly, little effort was made to locate precipitating factors to truancy within the context of the interactions between youths and the school organization. Conjectural interpretations of the findings were usually given in terms of family environment and other conditions outside the educational system.

Later, the literature on school dropouts provided some evidence of the existence of a relationship between intra-school factors and delinquency. Most notable among these studies are those of Lichter, et al. (1962) and Elliott (1966). The former studied youths who had already dropped out of school, and concluded that dropping out was motivated by desire to run away from "an accumulation of school problems" (Lichter, et al., 1962: 248). Elliott (1966) examined both the in-school and out-of-school de-

linquency rates of 700 high school boys over a three-year period. He found that delinquency rates declined among lower-class boys after they dropped out of school. For boys from higher socioeconomic status backgrounds, the rate remained unchanged. More significantly, he found that delinquency rates declined after school dropout among the delinquent boys as a group. Interpreting his findings in light of Cohen's (1955) theory, Elliott contended that delinquency among lower-class boys is a consequence of pressure to compete for middle-class success goals, a situation in which they find themselves at a distinct disadvantage. Dropping out, a retreatist adaptation, may relieve frustration and reduce the motivational stimulus to engage in delinquent activities. These findings are extremely important to the theoretical model developed in this research, even though they are limited because no effort to determine the role of school factors in the decision to leave school was made.

N erous other studies have examined the relationship between intra-school factors and delinquency. For example, the list of studies reporting an inverse association between academic performance and delinquency is impressive. Among the most significant are those of Kvaraceus (1945), Toby and Toby (1961), Reiss and Rhodes (1961), Gold (1963), Short and Strodtbeck (1965), Polk and Halferty (1966), Hirschi (1969), and Kelly and Balch (1971). Although each

of these has uncovered evidence that delinquency and academic performance are related, perhaps the most significant study in terms of the focus of this research is that of Gold (1963) because he was able to demonstrate conclusively that academic failure precedes delinquency.

The finding that academic performance and delinquency are inversely related could reasonably be attributed to the antecedent operation of the social class factor, which might predispose a youth to academic success or failure, or to the operation of factors within the school itself, or to both. There is evidence to support both interpretations. With regard to the influence of social class, Hirschi (1969), for example, reported no relation between social class and delinquency, but he discovered a strong association between social class and academic performance, and between academic performance and delinquency. This, in turn, suggests that a portion of the variance in academic performance may be attributed to the influence of the social class factor. Unfortunately, Hirschi does not control for the influence of social class, so no definitive conclusions can be drawn from his findings concerning possible interactive effects. Schafer, et al., (1972) and Kelly and Balch (1971) reported findings similar to those of Hirschi.

There is also evidence that academic performance is directly related to delinquency as well. Polk and Halferty

(1966) reported that delinquency was uniformly low among white- and blue-collar youths who were doing well in school, but high among both groups where academic performance was low. These findings suggest that academic ability may be related to delinquency through the operation of intervening factors which originate within the school system. Vinter and Sarri (1965: 4) report observations that bear directly upon this issue. Identification of a student as an underachiever "has important implications for how the pupil is subsequently dealt with by the school, for how his school career is shaped, and, ultimately, for his life chances".

Because of the potential relevance of school factors, the remainder of this chapter is devoted to a discussion of those studies which have examined important aspects of the educational system which may have a bearing upon delinquency. It seems reasonable to consider two general types of literature: studies that focus on structural and processual features of the school organization, and examinations of pupil responses to the school organization that may prove pertinent for delinquency research.

Factors Related to the Organizational System of the School

The grouping of students according to ability levels and career orientations, often termed "tracking", is the

most visible structural feature of the school organization that is related to the handling of students. The formal or informal tracking system found in most high schools is designed to promote progress among students who are highly motivated and quick to learn, and, at the same time, to avert undue pressure, low motivation, and alienation among "slow learners" and those who are not academically oriented. The intent is to better meet the needs of all students, but tracking systems have some undesirable by-products. One salient problem is that tracking may permit differential positive reinforcement of the college-bound while withholding reinforcement from the noncollege-bound, thereby helping to produce the very problems which it was designed to prevent. However beneficent such a system may have been by design, in practice it may constitute a major source of stigmatization and frustration for the underachiever. Evidence is provided in the existing literature to substantiate this assertion. It is widely recognized that tracking becomes dangerous when it is too inflexible to permit the movement of students from one level to another (Goldberg, et al., 1966: 168). Sexton (1961) studied nearly 300 schools and accumulated relevant facts about 285,000 students and 10,000 teachers in Big City, a large, industrial area in midwest America. She reported that within the tracking systems in all of the high schools studied there was little movement of

students between curricula. Schafer, et al., (1972) conducted a study of 1,100 students in two high schools which were located in medium-size midwestern cities, utilizing a variety of data from official transcripts, court records, and interviews. Their findings regarding the inflexibility of the tracking system are consistent with Sexton's. They reported that only seven percent of those students who began in the college preparatory track moved into the noncollege preparatory track and that seven percent of those who began in the noncollege preparatory track shifted to the college preparatory track. They concluded that these figures indicate "a high degree of intraschool segregation and closedness" (Schafer, et al., 1972: 38).

These studies illustrate the importance of understanding how students are assigned to tracks, given that the decision, once it is made, appears to be largely irreversible in fact, if not in theory. According to the formal rationale for the tracking system, assignment should be dependent upon students' academic abilities as measured either by achievement tests, grades earned, or both, as well as student aspiration. However, there is substantial evidence which indicates that other factors enter into this decision. For example, Stouffer (1958) noted that working class boys who fail to achieve good grades are seldom advised to take college preparatory courses, but this is not equally true of white-collar boys.

Similarly, Sexton (1961) and Schafer, et al. (1972) found that racial and socioeconomic background have a substantial effect on track assignment. Finally, Cicourel and Kitsuse (1963) reported that subjective decisions regarding track assignment are made by counselors on the basis of a student's sex, race, parent's income level, perceived leadership potential, character, general demeanor, social adjustment, and so on. In each of these studies, the results were the same: members of racial minority groups, and members of the lower-class were disproportionately found in the noncollege preparatory tracks. The relevance of this to the life chances of students is attested to by the fact that students who are placed in the vocational track or the general or "basic" track have great difficulty qualifying for college entrance or remaining in college should they be admitted (Sexton, 1961: 152-53). Such findings as these have led Pearl (1965: 92) to argue that such tracks are means of systematically denying the poor adequate access to education.

Quite apart from long-term problems, the more immediate effects of tracking upon behavior have been found to be significant. Schafer, et al., (1972) reported that noncollege preparatory students experience considerable frustration and alienation as a result of their tracking experience. Such students receive lower grades than college preparatory track students, even when the effects

of father's occupation, I.Q., and grade point average before the onset of tracking are held constant. In addition, noncollege preparatory students tend to participate less in extracurricular activities; they have higher dropout rates (although this is characteristic of low achievers generally); and they have higher rates of delinquency (sixteen percent of the noncollege preparatory students were "officially" delinquent versus six percent of the college preparatory students).

Along the same lines, Hargreaves (1968), a student of the English secondary school system, investigated the effects of streaming (tracking) in some detail. He concluded that streaming constitutes a mechanism whereby the failure of low-stream boys is effected and institutionalized. Low-stream boys were held in low esteem by the school organization and segregated from boys in other streams. Hargreaves suggested that the stigmatization represented by low esteem and segregation promotes a collective rejection of the values of the school system and involvement in disruptive behavior. This conclusion is corroborated by Gold and Mann (1972). They reported that the stigma associated with negative school experience results in lowered self-esteem, and, further, that in an attempt to recoup this loss, students reject the school system.

Closely related to tracking is the topic of curriculum content. Sexton (1961) and Pearl (1965) maintained that many of the trades for which vocational training is provided are rapidly becoming obsolete and, to further compound the problem, that programs are so occupation-specific that students are "locked out" of opportunities for entrance into other fields. The general or basic curriculum is often a very diluted version of the college preparatory curriculum. Pearl (1965: 92) observed that the curriculum of the basic track rarely yields literacy, and that it most certainly does not prepare the student for any productive role in society. "Students assigned to the 'basic track' in most metropolitan schools are simply counted and kept in order; they have been relegated to the academic boneyard and eventual economic oblivion." Corroboratively, Sexton (1961), Toby and Toby (1961) and Gibbons (1970) also observed that low achievers are placed in situations where the instruction is irrelevant to their needs and interests.

The differential allocation of teachers also reflects the relative quality of curriculum tracks. "Upper" track teachers are more likely to be better educated, as well as more interested in both their subject matter and their students, many of whom they expect will be going to college, than are teachers of low ability groups (cf. Sexton, 1961; Coleman, et al., 1966; Hargreaves, 1968).

Tracking, of course, is not the only relevant organizational characteristic of the school system. Indeed, not all schools have employed a formal tracking system, and many which have experimented with such a system have not found tracking useful. Vinter and Sarri's (1965) three-year study of five Michigan school systems emphasizes the significance of sanctioning systems, record-keeping and teacher perceptions of students as characteristics of schools which affect the quality of the school experience that students will have. With regard to sanctions they noted that grades are the chief means of rewarding and recognizing acceptable conduct or achievement and of passing negative judgments on poor conduct or achievement. However, poor students are frequently subjected to further penalties:

> Those who perform below a certain standard receive adverse grades and might also be denied as a direct consequence, a wide variety of privileges and opportunities within the classroom. [They]...were seldom chosen for minor but prestigeful classroom or school assignments, and they were excluded from participation in certain extra-curricular activities.

Moreover:

> The linking of secondary rewards and sanctions to grades may result in far more than reinforcement of academic criteria, since it denies the poor performer legitimate alternative opportunities for recognition and success (Vinter and Sarri, 1965: 9).

A second organizational practice with which these authors were particularly concerned is record-keeping. They contended that it is much easier for pupils to acquire negative rather than positive formal reputations because schools tend to record negative behaviors, but not positive ones (with the exception of grades, when they are good). Records follow students from year to year, thereby making it difficult for a pupil to "live down his past" even if he has changed (Vinter and Sarri, 1965: 10). This assertion applies to academic performance as well as to social behavior. For example, Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) found that students who fail academically are expected to continue to fail academically. Lederer (1971: 182) went so far as to say that "Whenever a teacher inherits someone else's evaluation of a pupil, that teacher also inherits an expectation. This can come by way of grades, I.Q. tests, numerous achievement tests, and recorded comments by teachers and counselors on the pupil's personality and maturity." The implications of this statement are far-reaching and will be discussed in detail in Chapter II.

Finally, Vinter and Sarri (1965) examined teachers' perceptions of students who fail and who become involved in classroom misbehavior. They found that teachers perceive these students to be uncommitted to learning and believe that behavior may be changed by the application

of sanctions to the child. They fail to attribute failure and misbehavior to conditions within the school. For example, when teachers were asked what factor contributes most to problems of academic failure and misbehavior in school, less than ten percent responded "conditions and practices in the school". Instead, large numbers placed the blame upon family relations or emotional problems. (Vinter and Sarri, 1967: 221-27).

Pupil Responses to the School Organization

Reaction to perceptions of the school's provision of opportunities for conventional achievement is perhaps the most clearly documented pupil response to be associated with delinquent behavior. Stinchcombe (1964) examined the effects of students' perceptions of curriculum relevance in a six-month study of 1,600 high school pupils. One of three hypotheses which he tested through observation and exploratory survey research was that "expressive alienation" (rebellious behavior) occurs when future status is not clearly related to present performance. In particular, he postulated that

> if the school is well articulated with the labor market so that current performance is known by students to affect future status in a specifiable way, then conformity tends to be high - and the higher the post-educational status appears to the individual, the greater will be his motivation to conform.

(Stinchcombe, 1964: 59). Stinchcombe uncovered evidence strongly supportive of this hypothesis. He found that non-achievers are assigned to a condition of strain because they are compelled by law to continue in school even though they perceive their learning experiences to have little promise for them in the world of work. Stinchcombe concludes:

> Rebellious behavior is largely a reaction to the school itself and to its promises... High school students can be motivated to conform by paying them in the realistic coin of future adult advantages...but for a large part of the population, the school has nothing to offer (Stinchcombe, 1964: 179).

Corroborative support for Stinchcombe's conclusions is found in the work of Elliott (1962), Short (1964), and Pearl (1965). Elliott reported a strong association that crosses class lines between perceived lack of opportunity to achieve success goals and delinquent involvement. Short found that delinquents perceive educational and occupational opportunities as being more limited than do non-delinquents. Pearl observed that, "Students are oppressed by what is for them an alien imposition - dull and uninspiring at best...On the one hand, the school denies them education with any promise for access to success, yet they are urged and warned that they must stay on to graduation if they expect to get any job" (Pearl, 1965: 92-93).

In addition to these studies which bear upon student responses to the curriculum, there is pertinent literature for this research dealing with student responses to school authorities. Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) conducted a two-year study of pupil responses to teacher expectations in a controlled double-blind experiment utilizing grade school children and their teachers. As this study is of critical importance to the model to be tested in this research, it is discussed further in Chapter II. Briefly, teachers of children randomly assigned to experimental groups were told to expect unusual intellectual progress from their students; teachers of a control group were told nothing. In fulfillment of teacher expectations, students in the experimental group showed significant gains in I.Q. and grades, and they scored higher on a social adjustment dimension than did children assigned to the control group.

Along the same lines Davidson and Lang (1960) conducted a survey of approximately two hundred elementary school children in New York City in order to test the following hypotheses: (1) there is a positive correlation between students' perceptions of teachers' feelings toward them and students' perceptions of themselves; (2) there is a positive relationship between favorable perceptions of teachers' feelings and good academic achievement; and (3) there is a positive relationship between favorable perceptions of teachers' feelings and desirable classroom

behavior. Each of these hypotheses was strongly supported. In addition, the authors found social class to be directly related to both favorability of perceptions of teachers' feelings and to academic achievement. Both the Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) and the Davidson and Lang (1960) studies indicate that academic and social behaviors are, at least in part, a function of perceptions of teacher expectations. Vinter and Sarri (1965) have made similar observations with regard to high school pupils. They reported that students perceived as underachievers by teachers are likely to feel rejected by the school, to perceive (accurately) that they have poor reputations among teachers, to suspect that teachers try to minimize their actual accomplishments, and, presumably as a result, to behave disruptively.

The final area of student responses to be considered here is commitment or attachment to school. This aspect of student responses to the school has received considerable attention in the literature, and is most important to the development of the model to be tested in this research. Indeed, on the basis of past research it appears that the adolescent's commitment to school may constitute a particularly critical tie in his bond to the normative order.

Toby (1957) examined academic status as an indicator of commitment to school, and argued that failure serves

as a catalyst to delinquent involvement. He suggested that those who fail are rejected by the school and, as a consequence, turn to their peers for approval as a compensation for this rejection. This notion is supported by the findings of Sugarman (1967), who reported that underachievement is associated with both high involvement in a "youth culture" which rejects school values, and low commitment to the pupil role. Toby observed that the peers to whom unsuccessful boys turn offer an alternate and "heroic" basis for self-respect.

Polk and Halferty (1966) examined both academic performance and involvement in school activities as indices of commitment to school. The degree of commitment was found to be a correlate of delinquency. They argued that adequate academic performance constitutes "a minimum basic ingredient" of commitment, while involvement in school activities acts as a series of "side bets" which lock the student into the generalized success system of the school (Polk and Halferty, 1966: 79). They also noted that involvement in school activities gives the student "an increased stake in academic performance, since in all probability continued engagement in activities will depend to some degree on continued academic success" (Polk and Halferty, 1966: 79-80).

One could, of course, argue against the inclusion of academic performance as an index of commitment to

school because it is entirely possible that a student may be committed to school, yet not possess the academic capability to perform well. Although Polk and Halferty suggested that a child who receives low grades is not likely to retain commitment to school, and while Hirschi (1969) found some empirical evidence to support this contention, it nevertheless remains questionable to equate low grades with lack of commitment. Instead, commitment could be better measured in terms of affect toward school and voluntary participation in school activities, indices which more accurately take into account the expression of commitment to school. Hargreaves (1968), Schafer (1969), Hirschi (1969), and Kelly and Pink (1973), for example, have explored the concept of commitment and its relationship to delinquency in these terms. Hargreaves (1968), in his study of English secondary schools, noted that boys who spend little time on homework are more apt to become delinquent than those who show more interest in their studies. This notion is also supported by Hirschi's (1969) and Kelly and Pink's (1973) findings. It is suggested that the less time a child spends on homework, the less he is committed to the values and goals of the school. This lack of commitment is directly related to delinquency. Schafer (1969) examined athletic participation as a deterrent to delinquency among several hundred high school boys in two midwestern schools. His empirical findings

suggest that athletic participation is independently and negatively related to delinquent behavior. In addition, Schafer found that academic achievement was strongly and positively related to athletic participation. These findings suggest that those who do well in school are apt to be committed to school, and, as a result, to have less likelihood of becoming delinquent.

Hirschi (1969) reported that academic capability has a moderate correlation with affect toward school, an indicator of commitment, and that affect toward school is, in turn, related to delinquency. Although the correlation coefficient between affect toward school and delinquency was low, Hirschi maintained that it belies a very strong relationship given both the conceptual distance between liking school and delinquency and the strength of relations traditionally uncovered in delinquency research. Further, Hirschi found that boys who value the good opinion of middle class persons are less likely to become delinquent than those who do not value such opinions. He also reported that affect toward school and responsiveness to middle class persons were correlated substantially with feelings about the legitimacy of the authority of the school. Beginning with academic capability, Hirschi was able to trace a path through attachment to school and support of the school's authority to delinquency. His data were consistent with this causal sequence.

Finally, Kelly and Pink (1973) conducted an empirical study of the relationship between school commitment and delinquency among male sophomores in high schools in a medium-sized county in the Pacific Northwest. School commitment was measured by four unweighted, intercorrelated interview items designed to assess academic achievement, participation in extracurricular activities, college plans, and time spent on homework. They also included measures of students' allegiance to school versus peers, of students' associations with troublesome peers, and of general rebelliousness. The influence of social class upon school commitment, rebelliousness, and delinquency was also examined. Delinquency was measured through official reports. Kelly and Pink found that level of commitment to school is related to both rebellion and delinquency. Further, social class and school commitment do not combine to produce any noticeable differences in either rebellion or delinquency, and, finally, while social class and school commitment are both independently related to rebellion and delinquency, level of commitment serves as a much stronger predictor variable. Thus, they concluded, decreasing levels of school commitment are related to increasing rates of rebellion and delinquency.

In summary, the literature discussed in this chapter suggests that school commitment is related to delinquency; that the major temporal antecedents to commitment are

found in pupil-school interactions; and that background characteristics such as social class, ethnicity, and family environment may also be directly and/or indirectly related to delinquency. A detailed commentary on the ways in which these factors are expected to relate to one another is presented in the theoretical model which follows.

CHAPTER II

DELINQUENCY, SCHOOL COMMITMENT, AND COMMITMENT TO CONFORMITY

Subcultural interpretations of delinquency notwithstanding, few would question the assertion that the American public school system is a critically important factor that must be taken into account in any thorough analysis of juvenile delinquency. The reasons for the school's significance are legion. Initially, many aspects of the socialization process that were once viewed as the responsibility of the nuclear or extended family system have largely become the province of the school system. Even were such a shift not intentional, it seems inherent in the fact that children between the ages of six and sixteen spend the preponderance of their time either in school or in school-related activities. This, in turn, suggests that many, if not most, interpersonal relationships that children develop will be directly tied to their school experiences.

Second, and on a somewhat different level, the school generally represents the first structure to which the child must adjust that invests legitimated authority in the hands of individuals other than his family. One would

certainly expect some association between the manner in which this initial set of relationships with external authority is handled and subsequent responses to other social agencies, including those charged with responsibilities related to social control.

Finally, a child's success or failure in school is closely related to his future life chances. Because American society has become so highly technologized, it is characterized by movement of persons from one level of the social structure to another. The status of one's family is no longer sufficient to assure the status of succeeding generations. Instead, society relies increasingly upon achievement, particularly educational achievement, as a determinant of adult success. Consequently, the school can be said to be the "initial battleground where success struggles take place" (Polk and Richmond, 1972: 68).

It is clear from this brief discussion that the school constitutes a powerful force in the child's life; it seeks not only to educate him, but also to control him both by shaping his attitudes and behavior while he is a student and by functioning as the "gatekeeper" of his destiny. On the basis of the literature presented in the previous chapter, it is equally clear that school experiences for certain subelements of the school population are related to delinquency, thereby indicating that the school has somehow failed to adequately perform its social-

izing and controlling functions. One explanation of this failure might be that the school does not make educational goals, and the means of attaining them, sufficiently attractive to all students to induce their conformity to conventional organizational expectations. This is the theoretical position taken in this research. In particular, it is argued that students who are not provided with sufficient inducement to become committed to school have high probabilities of becoming delinquent. Moreover, it is suggested that several organizational features of the educational system which are viewed by the organization as conducive to the fulfillment of both its socializing and controlling functions are actually dysfunctional to these purposes. More specifically, some school-based influences inadvertently alienate children from school, neutralize the effects of the school's authority, and render some children uncommitted to the educational system. Under conditions which will be specified in more detail below, lack of commitment to school may constitute a sufficient condition to render the child uncommitted to the social order which the school represents. When this occurs, situational inducements to delinquency are likely to be acted upon.

The task of explicating the relationship between the school and delinquency is difficult because the relationship to be explained is quite complex. There are a variety

of elements within the educational system that must be considered and a number of external factors that must be held constant if the school's relationship to delinquency is to be isolated. The temptation to resort to an examination of static pupil characteristics which would indeed simplify the problem must be resisted because such an approach would obscure the dynamic processes of school-pupil interactions which are central to an understanding of the relationship between the school and the emergence of delinquent behavior. Thus, in weaving together findings of the previous literature in developing the theoretical model, I pay close heed to Cohen's (1965: 9) suggestion that we avoid constructing models "in terms of variables that describe initial states, on the one hand, and outcomes on the other, rather than in terms of processes whereby acts and complex structures of action are built, elaborated, and transformed". Instead, and in response to these criticisms, I shall attempt to develop a model which lends itself to the exploration of arrangements and practices of the school as they interact with the attitudes and behavior of students. Only through such an approach can one hope to determine how and to what extent the school system exerts pressure upon students to engage in delinquent behavior.

It will be recalled that numerous correlates of attachment or commitment to school are also predictors of

delinquency. Polk and Halferty (1966), for example, reported that grades, attitudes toward school, time spent on homework, and participation in extracurricular activities are related to delinquent behavior. Hirschi (1969) reported that attitudes toward school in general, attitudes toward teachers in particular, perceptions of the legitimacy of the school's authority, time spent on homework, and participation in school activities are related to delinquency. Schafer (1972) reported that participation in school athletics serves as a deterrent to delinquency. Finally, Kelly and Pink (1973) indicated that grades, college plans, time spent on homework, and participation in extracurricular activities are associated with delinquency. Although I would take exception with the inclusion of some of these variables as indices of commitment, there is little question that they point to an important linkage. Following the suggestions of Hirschi (1969) and Kelly and Pink (1973), I will interpret these and other findings relevant to aspects of the relationship between school and delinquency by utilizing arguments derived from control theory.

The basic assumption of the control theorist is that delinquency is the result of the breaking down of the personal and social controls which bind the individual to society. Such controls are viewed as the product of internalization of norms whose essence lies in the attach-

ment of the individual to others; "If a person does not care about the wishes and expectations of other people - that is, if he is insensitive to the opinions of others - then he is to that extent not bound by the norms" (Hirschi, 1969: 18). This theoretical formulation stresses the importance of the family, the school, and law enforcement agencies as sources of control over motives to deviate. It is argued that when the controlling potential of these institutions is not realized delinquency is likely to result. Thus, Reiss (1951), one of the major proponents of this view, hypothesized that delinquency is a product of failure of the ego, the primary group (the family), and the community to control the individual. In a comparative study of recidivists and non-recidivists, he found that each of these variables was a predictor of probation success. Nye (1958), likewise an adherent to this view, argued that absence of internal and external controls, particularly those related to affectional identification with the family, is related to delinquency. Reckless (1961), in the development of what he termed "containment theory", found that boys who had favorable self-concepts, and who were characterized by favorable perceptions of family and school, were unlikely to become delinquent. He theorized that such inner controls serve as "insulators" against delinquency (Reckless, et al., 1956).

Although there are numerous other related examples of this approach (cf. Redl and Wineman, 1951; Sykes and Matza, 1957; Gold, 1963; Briar and Piliavin, 1965; Ball, 1966), perhaps the most salient examples, in terms of the model to be tested here, are those of Toby (1957) and Hirschi (1969). Toby (1957) argued that delinquency is largely a result of ineffective parental and community controls. He introduced the concept of "stake in conformity" to refer to the behavioral consequences of internalization of social controls. He suggested that those youths who have little stake in conformity engage in delinquent behavior at minimal risk because they have little to lose by such behavior. By way of example, Toby contended that school is meaningless to students who fail academically because it is not instrumental to future success. Because they lack a stake in conformity, such students are likely to engage in delinquent activities as an alternate source of prestige among their peers. The student who succeeds in school, on the other hand, has a stake in conformity. Since future occupational opportunities are tied to school success, he has much to risk by becoming involved in delinquent behavior. Hirschi (1969), in a major empirical test of control theory, elaborated the issues raised by Toby. He presented a succinct description of the contingencies involved in "commitment", a concept which is closely akin to the "stake" concept employed by Toby:

> The idea, then, is that the person invests time, energy, himself, in a certain line of activity - say, getting an education, building up a business, acquiring a reputation for virtue. When or whenever he considers deviant behavior, he must consider the costs of this deviant behavior, the risks he runs of losing the investment he has made in conventional behavior (Hirschi, 1969: 20).

Thus, the decision to engage in deviant behavior is viewed as a rational one that is based upon what the individual perceives that he jeopardizes by engaging in that behavior. What he has to risk is determined by the attachments he has made to others (for example, love for his parents, desire to get an education) and the commitments that flow from those attachments (being an obedient child, working hard to achieve good grades in school). When agents of social control, such as the family and the school, do not induce commitment to conventional values, then youths can be said to be free of commitments to conformity. They are then free to deviate (Hirschi, 1969).

Let us examine the implications of these arguments for the theoretical model to be tested here. Since the school is a representative of the social order, an investment in school implies an investment in conventional behavior. Thus, school commitment has implications beyond the educational system. Particularly, to the extent that the child's bond to the school is weakened, it follows that his bond to the general social order is likely to be similarly

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affected. Further, if the arguments of control theory are valid, to the extent that the bond to the social order is weakened, the normative proscriptions against delinquent behavior are less apt to serve as constraints upon deviance. In order to make such inferences plausible, one must be able to demonstrate that commitment to school is a factor of sufficient potency to account for the emergence of delinquency. In this regard it can be said that all youths, regardless of race, income level, family environment, and so on, give at least verbal valuations to the notion of the importance of education in American society, and to the espousal of educational goals (cf. Reiss and Rhodes, 1959). Further, it can be said that most youths are at least initially committed to school, that is, they make investments in the conventional values of the educational system (Hirschi, 1969), and will therefore have sufficient reason to conform (Kelly and Pink, 1973). There are, of course, others who merely pay lip service to educational goals because they have been told that education is the avenue to success in American society by parents, school authorities, the mass media, and so on, but who nonetheless do not make substantial investments in the educational system because they lack sufficient means or motivation to do so.

But why should school experiences which reduce student commitments to school be associated with delinquency?

And why should the school experiences of those who are uncommitted to school from the start be associated with delinquency? In the case of students who make substantial initial investments in school, but who lose commitment as a result of negative school experiences, the answer would appear to lie in the notion of blocked goal attainment. Those who are committed to educational goals but who are unable to realize these goals are apt to experience frustration. Some of these students, to be sure, may remain tied to the legitimate system through commitments to conventional parents or peers while others, lacking substantial commitments to conventional others, will reject the values of the educational institution and turn to alternative avenues of success that may be either conventional or deviant. On the other hand, those students who lack substantial initial investments in the educational system are even more apt to become deviant. Their initial lack of commitment indicates that they probably have not made substantial investments in family as well, a matter to be further explored below. Further, they are compelled by law to continue in a system which is not and perhaps never has been relevant to them. The experiences that they are likely to encounter in school which are aimed at inducing student commitment are likely to be viewed as meaningless, unrewarding, and perhaps even hostile to them. These school pressures, it is argued, are likely to

contribute directly to the decision to engage in delinquent behavior.

To summarize, then, it has been said that the school is a dominant and powerful force in the child's life. Not only does it seek to socialize and control him while he is a student, it also serves as the "gatekeeper" of his adult status. Because the school is also the most formidable representative of the social order in his life, the student's bond to school is his most important bond to the conventional normative order. If the bond to the school becomes tenuous, a portion of the constraint upon him from engaging in delinquent behavior is effectively removed. Hence, he has an increased probability of becoming delinquent.

Because influences located within the immediate context of the school are not the only forces shaping his behavior, to say that a youth is uncommitted to school is not to imply that he will necessarily engage in delinquent behavior. The risks involved may be minimized, but they need not be nullified. External factors such as influences related to social status, strength of ties to family, nature of peer affiliations, religious beliefs, opportunities to drop out of school and form new commitments in the world of work, and, on another level, the presence of situational inducements to commit delinquent acts, exposure to delinquent subcultures, and so on, may either promote

or inhibit the development of delinquent behavior patterns independent of the influence of school experiences. Moreover, not only may some of these factors have a direct effect upon delinquency, but they may also directly contribute to the nature of the school experience which produces student commitment as well.

The literature regarding the social class factor provides an illustration of these associations. Prior research has indicated that socioeconomic status is associated with the probability that youths will become involved in delinquent behavior (cf. Warner and Lunt, 1941; Shaw and McKay, 1942; Hollingshead, 1949; Glueck and Glueck, 1950; Short and Strodtbeck, 1965; Tribble, 1972). In addition, socioeconomic status has been found to have a mitigating effect upon many of the factors associated with commitment to school (cf. Stinchcombe, 1964; Hirschi, 1969; Kelly and Balch, 1971; Schafer, et al., 1972). It is incumbent upon the researcher, then, to question whether social class is directly related to delinquent behavior or whether it operates primarily indirectly through the intervening influence of school experience. Therefore, the general argument regarding the relationship between school commitment and delinquency must be expanded to include both the varieties of school factors that may affect student commitment levels as well as numerous antecedent and external conditions which may also impinge upon this re-

lationship. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to an examination of these interrelationships.

The Relationship Between Background Characteristics, School Commitment and Delinquency

It would appear that the link between social class, race, family background and delinquency is one that operates both directly and indirectly through the influence of the school system. However, the indirect link seems to be by far the stronger of the two (cf. Stinchcombe, 1964; Hirschi, 1969; Kelly and Balch, 1971; Schafer, et al., 1972). In other words, the association between these antecedent factors and delinquency should obtain only in the presence of particular school experiences. On the basis of the prior literature, one would not expect a strong direct association because the bulk of the literature points to an indirect link. Indeed, even those studies which have reported a strong direct association between these background factors and delinquency are less salient to this determination for two reasons. First, the vast majority of them have employed official statistics as the measure of delinquency. This reflects selective biases, not the least of which is the influence of social class on the decision of social control agencies to react to delinquent behavior. Second, these studies have not controlled for intervening school influences. Thus, it seems reasonable to suggest that since adult status in American society

is determined increasingly by achieved as opposed to ascribed status, and, since the achievement struggle largely takes place within the context of the educational system, one can expect that influences within the school setting will overpower the antecedent influences of background factors in providing youths with orientations toward the conventional order. Further, one may postulate that the predisposing influences afforded by one's background will be mitigated by the effects of the school experience.

Let us proceed to explore the implications of this postulate in terms of the model to be tested in this research. The lower- or working-class child, due to his status position, is likely to have a lower initial investment in conformity than his middle- or upper-class counterpart. This is so because the conditions that are thought to inhibit commitment to conformity are more prevalent in the life experiences of lower-class youth. Briar and Piliavin (1965: 42), commenting on the relevant literature in this regard, have reported that:

> The lower class individual is more likely to have been exposed to punishment, lack of love, and a general atmosphere of tension and aggression since early childhood. Furthermore, his parents devote less time to supervising his activities, are less trusting of him, and are less likely to be viewed by him as legitimate authorities.

On the other hand, the middle-class child is apt to be more attached to the legitimate system as a consequence of greater parental love and pressure. In addition to these considerations, the lower-class child is apt to have more frequent exposure to delinquent peers (or at least those who have been so labeled by social control agencies). One may conclude on the basis of this evidence that members of the lower social strata are apt to have lower commitments to conformity, and, consequently, to have higher probabilities of becoming delinquent than middle- and upper-class children.

Conjunctively, it is important that we examine the literature regarding the interaction between the social class factor and school commitment. Ericson (1946), Davis and Havighurst (1947), MacDonald, et al. (1949), Luszki and Schmuck (1963), Hess and Shipman (1967), Hirschi (1969), and Kelly and Balch (1971), among others, have examined this relation. The evidence suggests that middle-class children are apt to have stronger commitments to school than are lower- and working-class children (as evidenced by both favorability of attitudes toward school, and by behavior indicative of commitment such as participating in school activities, doing homework, achieving good grades, and so on). This is explained, at least in part, by findings that middle class parents are apt to show greater interest in their children's schoolwork; to watch

their children's school advancement more closely; to provide more support of their children's school activities by helping with homework, participating in P.T.A., and so on; and to have higher expectations of their children in terms of advanced education than lower-class parents.

One can anticipate that the lower-class child will have a greater probability of becoming delinquent than the middle-class child even though they share similar school experiences because the lower-class child is apt to have a lower stake in conformity than the middle-class child, by virtue of his status position. Further, it is anticipated that the middle-class child who has negative school experiences is more apt to become delinquent than the lower-class child who has positive school experiences because school experiences exert a mitigating effect upon the prior influence of social class position.

It is suggested that the racial factor will have an influence upon both commitment to school and delinquency similar to that of the social class factor. It seems reasonable to argue that those who are rejected by the system are likely to have little stake in the system. Therefore, blacks, by virtue of their inferior status position in American society, are apt to have higher probabilities of becoming delinquent than whites. However, the black child's experiences in school can serve either to reinforce or to establish his stake in conformity by

providing him with attractive inducements to conform. Conversely, the nature of his school experiences may be such as to further reduce whatever stake in conformity he may have originally had. The preponderance of the evidence in this regard indicates that school experiences are likely to impinge upon blacks in a fashion which renders delinquency an attractive alternative (Sexton, 1961; Caplan, 1964; Jones, 1967; Hirschi, 1969).

It is important that considerations regarding the child's family environment be included in this discussion of background conditions since the family ranks high among the influences which shape the child's attitudes and behavior. Again deriving the general argument from control theory, it is contended that the stronger the relationship between the child and his parents, the lesser the likelihood that he will become delinquent and the more apt he will be to be committed to the conventional values of the school, to aspire to educational goals, and to view the school's authority as legitimate. A basic assumption of this argument, and of control theory generally, is that the bond to conventional persons acts as a deterrent to delinquency. One may question the plausibility of the argument just set forth if, in fact, some parents do not constitute conventional persons. Differential association theorists and cultural deviance theorists would submit that in cases where parents do not espouse conventional

societal values, but rather hold criminal values which may encourage delinquency, the stronger the tie between the child and his parents, the greater is the probability that the child will become delinquent.

There is, however, some evidence to refute this argument. Hirschi (1969) reported that the child attached to the low-status parent is no more likely to be delinquent than the child attached to the high-status parent. (If such theorists as Miller (1958) and Cloward and Ohlin (1960) are correct, then one would find that children attached to low-status parents would have a higher incidence of delinquency because the values of the subculture in which they live are hypothesized to be conducive to such behavior). Further, Hirschi (1969: 198) has argued that the parent who is himself committing criminal acts "is as likely to express allegiance to the substantive norms of conventional society as is the middle-class parent." Along the same lines, Sykes and Matza (1957: 665) reported that "the family of the delinquent will agree with respectable society that delinquency is wrong, even though the family may be engaged in a variety of illegal activities".

Whether or not these arguments are convincing[1] the fact remains that the strength of the relationship

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[1] It may be argued, for example, that parents may express verbal allegiance to conventional society, but certainly have no commitment to it, as evidenced by their illegal behavior.

between the child and his family, regardless of class position, is inversely related to delinquent behavior. Empirical evidence in this regard is voluminous (cf. Glueck and Glueck, 1950; Andry, 1957; Nye, 1958; McCord and McCord, 1959; Browning, 1960; Slocum and Stone, 1963; Jaffe, 1963; Gold, 1963; Hirschi, 1969). These studies uniformly indicated that delinquents are less likely than non-delinquents to have strong, stable relationships with their parents. This association is perhaps one of the most clearly documented findings of delinquency research. Thus, it can be concluded that the bond to the family acts as a deterrent to delinquency. However, what effect is the family environment likely to have upon the child's relation to school? And how are school experiences likely to affect commitment when the family environment influences commitment in the opposite direction? Hirschi (1969) and Palmore and Hammond (1964) presented findings which suggest an answer to the first question. Hirschi reported that children doing poorly in school are characterized by lack of close communication with parents. Palmore and Hammond suggested that a deviant family background increases the likelihood of delinquency more among those doing poorly in school than among those doing well in school. These findings point to the efficacy of a contributory condition between these factors. The second question requires a consideration of the relative importance of the family and the school in the adolescent's life. Socialization research

has indicated that, after the child enters school, the impact which the family has upon his life is greatly reduced (cf. Barber, 1957; Kerckhoff, 1972). The school assumes the majority of the responsibility for his socialization, then, from the time he is six years of age. It is the agency that links the child to the wider social order (Elkin and Handel, 1972) and thus may be more important than the family in patterning his relationships with others. Clausen (1968) goes so far as to suggest that children who become committed to school take teachers rather than their parents as primary models. In addition, because of the organizational structure of the school system, peer associates are likely to be those who share the child's status in the school system's hierarchy. Commitments to school, or the lack of them, are likely to be reinforced through such associations.

On the basis of these observations, it is theorized that school experiences constitute more powerful forces in the adolescent's life than the family. Consequently, it is hypothesized that the child with strong ties to family who has positive experiences in school is least likely to become delinquent. On the other hand, the child with weak ties to family who has negative school experiences is most likely to become delinquent. Finally, the child with strong ties to family, but who has negative school experiences (this may occur, for example, when a child, committed to his achievement-oriented family, becomes committed to school, but finds that he does not.

possess the academic capability to succeed in terms of educational goals), has a higher probability of becoming delinquent than the child who has weak ties to family, but who has positive school experiences (this contingency is represented by the child whose family environment is not conducive to the development of commitment to education, but for whom the school system provides sufficient inducement to make the commitment alternative attractive).

The Relationship Between School Experiences, School Commitment, and Delinquency

Moving past these antecedent conditions, we come to the central focus of the model: school-pupil interaction processes and the milieu in which they occur. Two general arguments form the basis of this discussion. First, the nature of school-pupil relations, at least for a certain subelement of the student population, is such as to weaken student commitment to school, and thus to conformity. Second, the educational system itself, through its value orientation and supportive organizational structure, is responsible in large measure for both the negative quality of school-pupil interactions and the weakening of student commitments to conformity.

The comprehensive high school is an eminently middle-class institution. Nearly all school personnel, including teachers and administrative staffs, are middle-class by income, residence, and self-identification (Fearl, 1965).

Most texts and other materials utilized embody the cultural patterns of the white suburban middle-class family (Schafer and Polk, 1967). The high school, in keeping both with this middle-class orientation and with its function as "gatekeeper" of adult statuses, is strongly biased in favor of identifying talent and increasing the proportion of college-bound students (Cicourel and Kitsuse, 1963). Middle-class success standards, which stress the value and importance of advanced education, are applied to students of all socioeconomic backgrounds, family environments, and so on (Kerckhoff, 1972). In support of this value orientation, the organization has developed an elaborate system of structural features and prescribed staff roles which serve to reward the high achiever and punish the low achiever.

When the child enters the high school, the organization reacts to his background characteristics (social class, race, family situation), and to his presumed academic ability. Through judgments made and responses issued on these bases, the school sets in motion a pattern of interaction between itself and the student which is largely irreversible and which affects the totality of the child's subsequent relations with the school.[2] In particular, the

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[2] I do not mean to imply that similar responses are not made to students by the school system in earlier years as well. However, the kind of response pattern peculiar to the high school makes its reaction to the student more significant than those made in earlier years.

school responds by labeling the child, either implicitly or directly, as "college preparatory material" or "non-college preparatory material", "bright" or "not bright", "fast" or "slow", "motivated" or "unmotivated", and so on. Once so labeled, the child is likely to be treated as he is initially perceived, regardless of how he may change, because there is little opportunity for the movement of students within the high school social system. Although the organization purports to make these judgments in order to fulfill its "gatekeeper" function more efficiently and to provide learning experiences which are tailored to the differential needs and interests of the variety of students whom it is mandated to educate, it may also inadvertently limit its potential as a controlling or socializing institution. Let us examine the process by which this occurs.

It is known, on the basis of past research, that considerations regarding the child's academic ability, as well as his social class, race, and family background, enter into the tracking decision. The rationale for this decision-making on the part of the school appears to emanate from two sources. First, school officials expect that students who have failed in the past will continue to fail in the future (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968), a not unreasonable assumption, but an extremely dangerous one in terms of its potential consequences. Second, as Stouffer (1958), Sexton (1961), Cicourel and Kitsuse (1963),

and Schafer, et al. (1972), among others, have indicated, social background characteristics are viewed as precursors of social adjustment, achievement motivation, learning potential, and so on.[3] Once the school makes the judgment concerning whether or not a student is college preparatory material, the student is usually powerless to reverse this decision (Sexton, 1961; Stinchcombe, 1964; Hargreaves, 1968; Schafer, et al., 1972). Students who are judged unqualified to take college preparatory courses are persuaded to take alternate courses or they are simply denied admittance to college preparatory courses. "The school's guiding hand is often firm and directive" (Sexton, 1961: 153). For the child who is bent upon college entrance and who has accepted the school's orientation toward conventional achievement, this may have serious dampening effects. Moreover, because class, race, and family considerations enter into track assignment, fewer of those from lower-class backgrounds, black children, or those from "poor" home environments are given an opportunity to enter the college preparatory track. Thus, it would appear that those who are likely to have lower initial stakes in

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[3] Although it is impossible to determine the relative weight allotted academic performance versus background factors in the decision-making process, I would hypothesize that background factors are less significant determinants of track position among students doing exceptionally poor or exceptionally good academic work, but they may be decisive among average students.

conformity are placed in situations in which their commitments to school are likely to be even further reduced.

The implications of tracking upon other aspects of the school experience are far-reaching. Whereas in grade school judgments regarding student competence are also made on the basis of both academic performance and background characteristics, the negative effects of these appraisals upon students who are judged less competent are not nearly as severe as in the high school. In the self-contained classroom of the grade school, all children, regardless of performance, social origins, or aspirations, proceed through the same curriculum with their peers.[4] In the high school, however, students are physically separated from those who formerly constituted their peers as various groupings of students come to occupy differential statuses in the school system's hierarchy. While tracking per se can probably do little harm, it is not accomplished in a value-free manner. As Stinchcombe (1964: 7-8) has pointed out, for example, "the school puts all who can do algebra into a class in algebra, but those who can do automobile mechanics are put into that class only if they cannot do algebra. Thus the school defines talent at algebra

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[4] Although in some schools ability groupings in such subjects as English and math are employed, the more rigid differentiation characteristic of most high schools is not found (Sexton, 1961).

as success, talent at auto mechanics as failure". In short, only traditional middle-class values are defined positively. As a consequence, the school organization becomes characterized by a stratification system which is likely to have negative effects for those at the bottom of the status hierarchy. Sexton (1961: 179) has presented a lucid description of the emergent system:

> Through the use of separate curriculums... the schools establish a class system which is more rigid in its way than the class system in the outside world, since all students have curriculum and "ability" levels which segregate them from other students in a clearly defined rank order. In this social system, the college preparatory curriculum is the upper class, the vocational curriculum the middle, and the general curriculum the lowest class. Within this class structure there is apparently little movement either up or down.

Schur (1971: 3), discussing the effects of labeling on deviants, has made the following observations which are analogous in many respects to the situation of lower track students in the high school social system: "efforts to 'treat' deviators, rather than to 'punish' them, may, depending on the nature of the setting and the 'treatment', be highly stigmatizing and may actually reinforce, rather than reduce, deviant behavior". The low achiever is a deviant in terms of the school's value system. He appears neither to espouse organizational goals nor to possess the means to attain them. Consequently, he is "treated" through placement in a non-college preparatory track where,

ostensibly, his needs can be better met. However, the effects of this track experience may be highly stigmatizing (Hargreaves, 1968; Schafer et al., 1972). The student is "almost completely isolated socially and intellectually from students in other 'ability' groups" (Sexton, 1961: 195), and those in other ability groups are judged superior to him. Furthermore, the value system of the school is so pervasive that it is espoused not only by school authorities, but also by many segments of the student body. The "in" group, as defined by both students and school officials, is typically made up of college-bound students (Sexton, 1961).

In addition to the effects of segregation and of negative evaluations, there are other features of the educational system which may impinge negatively on lower track students and on low achievers generally. They constitute salient sources of reduction of commitment to school and to conformity. One of these is differential curriculum relevance. Stinchcombe (1964) and Pearl (1965), whose works have been discussed earlier, indicated that the subject matter of various school curricula have differential value in terms of their utility in the labor market. The college preparatory track is most clearly articulated with avenues to conventional achievement because college is recognized as a legitimate avenue to high status, high-paying jobs. However, with the possible exception of secretarial or business classes, the occupational payoff to

be derived from the vocational track is less clearly recognized. Indeed, vocational training often has little transferability to the world of work, and is commonly too occupation-specific to provide opportunities for entrance into other vocational fields (Pearl, 1965). The relationship between the basic or general track and the job market is even less clear. One may argue, therefore, that to the degree to which students perceive that their current efforts are likely to have little occupational payoff, they are likely to view the school as having little instrumental value in terms of their occupational goals. They also may view legitimate avenues to achievement as blocked to them, and may be released to delinquent behavior as an alternate source of self-esteem among their peers. This argument is supported by the findings of Stinchcombe (1964) who reported that student's perceptions of occupational opportunities that stemmed from their high school experiences were clearly and directly related to delinquency.

In addition to that aspect of curriculum relevance reflected by perceptions of occupational payoff, the student is also apt to be affected by the relevance of the curriculum in terms of its relation to social issues which are important to him. Many have argued that the high school curriculum is "sterile", that it treats youth as children and avoids the discussion of important social problems of which students are likely to be aware and con-

cerned. If the school is to perform its socialization and controlling functions, it must treat the problems of the poor urban dweller as well as those of the middle-class suburbanite. It is argued that students who view the school curriculum as irrelevant in terms of becoming aware of the problems of others, learning to get along with others, and learning to think for themselves, are likely also to experience a reduction in commitment to school.

Aside from these considerations of organizational features of the school, it is recognized that the child's interactions with school authorities constitute a major component of his school experience. It is suggested that the nature of these interactions is also likely to be a consequence of his academic and social background characteristics. That is, low achievers, those from lower-class backgrounds, black children, and children from "poor" home environments are most likely to have negative interactions with school authorities. It has been found, for example, that school officials have patterned expectations of students who demonstrate differential performance characteristics. Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) conducted a landmark two-year study of an elementary school which brings this aspect of the school experience into sharp perspective. These authors administered a fictitious test to students which school authorities were told was able to predict which children were likely to show an "academic spurt" in

the near future. Teachers were told who the "spurters" were, but were advised not to pass this information on to the students or their parents. At the end of the study period, the authors collected information regarding the grades, behavior, and attitudes (as reported by teachers) of children in both the experimental and control groups. Their findings are extremely significant. The experimental group children made astonishing progress in grades and IQ scores (nearly half of this group gained twenty IQ points or more) and were judged, with the exception of minority group children, to be more appealing and well adjusted. Teachers' evaluative judgments of poor students among the controls indicated that they viewed them as "troublemakers". The operation of a self-fulfilling prophecy was convincingly demonstrated. There is reason to believe that this prophecy can operate just as effectively to produce negative as well as positive attitudes and behavior, although this has not been tested in controlled experimentation for obvious ethical reasons. The hypothesis to be tested in this research with regard to teacher expectations is slightly different from that of the Rosenthal and Jacobson study. It is that students perceive what is expected of them, and act in conformity with these perceptions. Thus, it is suggested that children who do poorly in school are apt to perceive that teachers expect little of them and do not like them.

These expectations are likely to serve as a form of rejection which may reduce student commitment to school. It is argued that teacher expectations of the high achiever are likely to constitute additional inducements to conform, and reinforcements to commitment.

In addition to the fairly subtle operation of teacher expectations as a referent to students of the school's appraisal of their destinies, the school uses other status signals which serve the same purpose. Differential concern for students is expressed in a variety of ways. Sexton (1961), Stinchcombe (1964), Pearl (1965), Hargreaves (1968), and Polk and Richmond (1972), whose studies have been discussed previously, have noted a lack of concern for low achievers on the part of teachers, counselors, and school administrators. Teachers of high achievers are apt to be better prepared for class, to show more interest in their students, and to be happier with their jobs than teachers of low achievers. Teachers of low achievers often view their function as one of controlling rather than educating (Pearl, 1965). Nor do these issues pertain solely to teachers. Counselors are apt to devote more attention to the career counseling of the college-bound. Their sessions with low achievers are often conducted for problem-solving or disciplinary purposes, a role for which counselors are commonly inadequately prepared. Administrators indirectly demonstrate their concern for high achievers by allocating

the best teachers to college preparatory classes. In addition to these signs, some of which may have a greater effect on students than others, such features as grade ceilings in modified and remedial classes, grade floors in accelerated classes, the honor roll and honorary societies, and prohibitions against participation in extra-curricular activities for students who do not attain a certain grade point average may be perceived as indices of differential rewards to the high achiever and punishments to the low achiever.

Still another important element in the school-pupil interaction process concerns sanctioning procedures. Initially, it seems reasonable to assume that those most likely to misbehave in school are those who are failing academically, and, more generally, those for whom the school experience has become boring and meaningless. How does the school react to misbehavior? It applies sanctions which are intended to facilitate the instructional process and to induce the deviant to conform. However, those sanctions most frequently employed (denial of scholastic rewards, denial of classroom privileges, assignment to special classrooms, denial of opportunity to participate in student activities, suspension, and expulsion) are actions which exclude students from the mainstream of student life. Such exclusion-oriented sanctions are likely to reinforce the very behavior which they are designed

to extinguish. Furthermore, these are not applied only to misbehavior. The regulation prohibiting participation in extra-curricular activities for students who do not achieve a certain grade point average is a case in point. Vinter and Sarri (1965) correctly observed that such sanctions serve as blocks to alternative routes to success in school among those who are incapable of achieving success according to academic criteria. Moreover, they are apt to result in further reductions in student commitment to school.

Summary

It is hypothesized that the cumulative effects of academic performance, curriculum tracking, perceptions of curriculum relevance, perceptions of teacher expectations, and perceptions of school officials' concern for students are likely to converge in a fashion that determines levels of student alienation and levels of student commitment to school. In the first instance, it is suggested that students who have negative school experiences (that is, those who fail, who are assigned to noncollege preparatory tracks, and who have negative perceptions of curriculum relevance, teacher expectations, and school officials' concern) are apt also to experience feelings of powerlessness. Because they are doing poorly and are relegated to an inferior status in the school system's hierarchy, they are likely to perceive (perhaps accurately) that there is

little chance for them to enter the mainstream of student life, to make their voices heard regarding school rules and policies, to get a "fair shake" from teachers and administrators, or, more generally speaking, to alter the negative quality of their school experiences. This sense of powerlessness is predicted to be directly related to levels of student commitment to school. Students who experience high levels of powerlessness are apt to dislike school, to neutralize educational goals, to view the school experience as meaningless, and, thereby, to free themselves of bonds to the conventional order which the school represents. It is suggested here that the critical link between the school experience and delinquency is the status of this bond of commitment to school.

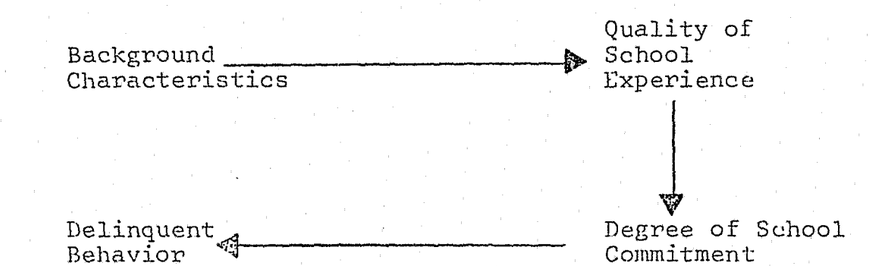
In particular, it is argued that the student who has positive experiences in school will have a higher level of commitment to school than the child who has negative experiences in school. The child who has positive school experiences must contend with both internal pressures to remain committed to conformity which flow from his self-concept as a good student as well as with externally-generated pressures from parents, school authorities, and similarly situated peers with whom he has established friendships. In addition to the benefits of constant reinforcement within the immediate context of the school, he has the promise that his investment will yield hand-

some dividends in the world of work. However, the child who has negative experiences in school is likely to experience a reduction in school commitment. Moreover, he may perceive that he has little to lose, and perhaps something to gain, through involvement in delinquent behavior. Should this occur, his parents, as well as school authorities, are likely to disapprove (Vinter and Sarri, 1965), but "for a boy disapproved of already, there is little incentive to resist the temptation to do what he wants to do when he wants to do it" (Toby, 1957: 17). No longer sensitive to the demands of parents and school authorities, he is likely to turn to his similarly situated peers for support, and to become involved in rebellious or delinquent behavior as a source of self-esteem.

A schematic presentation of the conceptual model described in the preceding paragraphs is presented in Figure I:

FIGURE I

A SCHEMATIC PRESENTATION OF THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL



The background factors to be examined include socio-economic status, race, and the quality of family environment. The factors which will be explored with regard to the quality of school experience are academic performance, curriculum tracking, perceptions of curriculum relevance, perceptions of teacher expectations, perceptions of school officials' concern for students, and school powerlessness.

The following propositions may be derived from this model:

Proposition I: The lower the child's class background, the more negative the quality of the school experience.

Proposition II: Black children will be more negatively affected by the quality of the school experience than white children.

Proposition III: The poorer the quality of the child's family environment, the more negative the quality of the school experience.

Proposition IV: The more positive the quality of the school experience, the greater the degree of commitment to school.

Proposition V: The lesser the degree of commitment to school, the greater the degree of delinquent involvement.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in a medium-size city in the Southeastern United States.

The sample on which the study is based was drawn from the 10,000 students who were enrolled in the public senior high schools during the 1973-74 academic year. Of the city's five senior high schools, three were selected for study on the basis of their ability to provide the researcher with a sample which would maximally reflect the socioeconomic distribution of the student population. Since forced integration through busing has been in effect for several years, the racial composition of each of the high schools is very nearly equal, although ordinarily this would have constituted an additional consideration in the selection of schools.

In this research, then, the sampling unit was the school rather than the person, and a purposive selection of schools was made. Such a purposive selection is in keeping with the suggestions of Camilleri (1962), Elliott and Voss (1974) and others. It is argued that:

> it is more important to validate a theory on a limited population than it is to be able to generalize to a larger universe with a known degree of accuracy; representation of variables is more important that proportionate representation of a population through probability sampling (Elliott and Voss, 1974:41).

Within each of the three schools selected (which will subsequently be referred to as Schools A, B, and C), only tenth graders were included in the sample. This sampling design was utilized for two reasons. First, it was feared

that the impact of the curriculum tracking experience might not be felt by students at earlier grade levels. Tracking patterns are not even established prior to the senior high school level. Second, it was considered unwise to draw a sample of eleventh or twelfth graders because this procedure might result in the inadvertent exclusion of students who fail academically, those who repeat earlier grade levels, and those who drop out of school once they reach the age at which the compulsory school attendance law no longer applies. Thus, the optimum grade level for both observing the effects of tracking and averting the exclusion of some types of students appeared to be the sophomore year.

Even using students at this grade level, a problem existed which was not fully anticipated. It was learned during the course of questionnaire administration that many students who should have been included in the sample had left school for the year before the questionnaire was administered in May. It is known that many of these students were failing academically. They presumably left school because they saw no reason to continue due to the fact that they would be required to repeat the grade. Although this is not permitted by Virginia statutes for students under the age of seventeen, little if any action is taken against them.[1]

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[1] At least one teacher with whom the researcher discussed this matter reported that she had recorded as much as a 50 percent dropout rate in "modified" classes (the lowest ability grouping) since the beginning of the spring term. Unfortunately, the school administration did not compile adequate records regarding dropouts. An estimated rate was computed by subtracting the number of sophomores present on the days the

A comparison of the sample with the recorded student population at the beginning of the school year allows us to estimate the dropout rate at 10 - 15 percent of the sophomore class population. Of course this rate is likely to vary considerably within the various cohorts of students. For example, failing students are apt to have a much higher dropout rate than those doing well in school. Thus, dropout patterns are likely to bias the sample in favor of the average and above average student. It can be argued, however, that the dropout problem in some ways enhances the faith one can have in the study results (Hirschi, 1969). It is known, for example, that those who drop out of school are likely to be school failures and to have numerous other school problems as well (cf. Lichter, et al., 1962; Motz and Weber, 1969; Elliott and Voss, 1974). Further, Reiss and Rhodes (1961), Elliott (1966), and Elliott and Voss (1974) have indicated that those who drop out of school are most likely to have been delinquent. Thus, the exclusion of these out-of-school groups would only serve to underestimate rather than overestimate the effect of the variables focused on in this analysis.

At the beginning of the 1973-74 academic year, there were 540 sophomores enrolled in School A, 579 in School B, and 632 in School C. The high schools in the city have an average daily absentee rate of 15 percent, a rate which is slightly elevated toward the end of the school year. Given

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questionnaire was administered from the recorded student population enrolled in September. Allowances were made for an absentee rate of 15 percent.

this rate, the approximate sample size which could be obtained on a given day from School A was 459, from School B, 492, and from School C, 537. The researcher did not have follow-up access to those students who were absent from school on the days the questionnaire was administered. In Schools A and C all of the sophomores present on the days the questionnaire was administered were included in the sample. School A yielded a sample of 363; School C, 449. The difference between the potential and the actual sample size is due, of course, to the exclusion of dropouts and absentees.

Unfortunately, the researcher was permitted to administer the questionnaire to only about one-fourth of the sophomores in School B. The method by which the sample was drawn was not a random one, and thus represents a potential source of bias about which the researcher may only speculate. The school administration selected two teachers who taught required sophomore English classes, and the questionnaire was administered to each of their classes. The researcher was assured by the school administration that these students did in fact constitute a "representative" group, but there were no "accelerated" classes (the highest ability grouping) included in the sample. This biases the sample in favor of average and above average students, but the extent of the bias is considered minimal. School B yielded a sample of 154. Since only one in every eight classes is an accelerated one, only about nineteen students of the 154 should have been in accelerated classes. Because the total sample to be subjected to analysis in this study is quite large, the extent

of bias introduced through this sampling error can be deemed negligible.

Of the 966 questionnaires that were obtained from all three schools, forty-three were subsequently eliminated due to: (1) insufficient completion of the questionnaire (unless a student completed at least eighty percent of the items, his responses were not included in the analysis); (2) random completion of the questionnaire (inclusion of interlocking items and juggling of item response patterns facilitated the detection of respondents who did not take the questionnaire seriously), and (3) obvious falsification of delinquency items (respondents who indicated that they had committed each offense a maximum number of times were eliminated). The analysis is based on 923 adequately completed questionnaires, a completion rate of 95.5 percent.

The sample has the following characteristics: 42 percent of the students are male, 58 percent female; 47 percent are black, 53 percent white. These rates do not differ significantly from the parameters of the universe from which the sample was drawn, so there is no reason to believe that the sample is affected by any major bias in these respects. Utilizing the classification schema developed in the Hollingshead Index of Social Position, the social class hierarchy of the sample is as follows: 5 percent of the students fall in Class I (the highest social class), 5 percent in Class II, 16 percent in Class III, 42 percent in Class IV, and 32 percent in Class V.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 131 restricted choice items (see Appendix A for the exact items employed). It was administered by the researcher and as many as three assistants who had previously been given detailed instructions regarding the directions that were to be given to students. No school personnel were permitted to assist in giving directions or in answering students' questions, and most teachers left their classrooms during questionnaire administration.

The questionnaire required approximately fifty minutes to complete, including the time required for instructions. The total time required was estimated on the basis of an earlier administration of a similar questionnaire by the researcher to a sample of sixty sophomores in a northern California high school. Still, during the administration of the questionnaire, it was recognized that some students, expecially those in "modified" classes, were having difficulty reading the items. The researcher and her assistants attempted to help these students by reading items aloud to them, but many were unable to complete the entire form because of time pressures.

With the exception of School C, the questionnaire was administered to groups of approximately twenty students at a time. It must be noted that of the forty-three questionnaires that were subsequently eliminated from the analysis, twenty-eight of these were from School C. Here the questionnaire was administered under far less than ideal conditions. Groups of from forty to fifty students were brought together in the

gymnasium due to lack of classroom space. Students filled out the questionnaire while sitting on bleachers or on the floor, rendering it difficult to maintain a serious atmosphere. Consequently, many students failed to complete the required number of items.

Operationalization of Major Variables

Social Class

The concept of social class is significant to this research because a major concern of the study is to explore the relationships between class and delinquency and between class and the nature of student school experiences. The argument was presented in Chapter II that one's status position is a determinant of one's stake in conformity. However, since adult status in American society is increasingly dependent upon achievement as opposed to ascription, and since the school provides the major avenue to achievement, it is expected that school factors mitigate the influences of social class position. That is, one's school experiences may either inhibit or promote retention or reinforcement of the stake in conformity induced by one's socioeconomic status.

Social class denotes a group of individuals who share a common status by virtue of their sharing a similar position along a socioeconomic continuum. The measure of this variable, the Hollingshead Two Factor Index of Social Position, utilizes a weighted combination of educational attainment and occupational level of the head of the student's household.

Race

Race is another background characteristic whose effects on delinquency, and whose relationship to the intervening school variables, is likely to operate in the same manner as the social class factor. The study is limited to an examination of black-white differences. It is suggested that blacks have lower initial stakes in conformity than whites because blacks hold an inferior status position in American society. Further, it is expected that blacks are more apt to have negative school experiences than whites since the school carries a strong white middle-class orientation. Given both of these contingencies, it is argued that blacks have a higher probability of becoming delinquent than whites. The student's self-report of his race was employed as the index of this factor.

Family Environment

There have been numerous previous attempts to include family characteristics as etiological factors in studies of delinquent behavior. Although the primary concern of this research is the quality of family interaction (it is in this interaction that the bond between the child and his family is developed), because many researchers have suggested that family structure is related to delinquency, this factor will also be explored. The absence of at least one natural parent is the most popular definition of the "broken home." Nevertheless, this definition is considered inadequate. There are many dimensions involved in the concept of "broken home" including the presence or absence of step-parents or other

parent-figures, the reason for the break (for example, death or divorce, and, in the latter case, the reasons for and emotional climate surrounding the divorce), and the duration of the break, which are obscured by a simplistic definition (Rosen, 1970). Recognizing the limitations noted in this discussion, the absence of at least one parent or parent-figure was defined as the indicator of the structurally broken home and the student's self-report of his family structure was utilized as the measure of this variable.

As discussed in the previous chapter, there is also considerable evidence that the quality of family interaction may be a key to delinquency. It is suggested here that the strength of the child's tie to his family predisposes him toward a certain level of commitment to conformity. To the extent that a child's bond to his family is a tenuous one (resulting from lack of intra-family communication, parent-child conflict, and so on), the child's bond to the social order is also apt to be tenuous. However, the child's school experiences can affect his level of commitment to conformity and thus serve as an important intervening factor between family environment and delinquency.

An eight-item scale was developed to measure the strength of the parent-child relationship. It was discovered that there was a wide differential in the item-to-scale-score correlations between items pertaining to the mother-child relationship and those regarding the father-child relationship.

Thus, only one of the sub-scales, the father-child relationship measure, was utilized in the analysis which follows. In this scale, as in all other attitude scales, item selection was accomplished by correlating each item score with the summated scale score. Any item-to-scale-score correlation that did not allow the rejection of the null hypothesis that the true correlation was equal to zero at the .001 confidnece level was defined as nondiscriminatory and was not included in the analysis.

The higher the score on this scale, the weaker the relationship between the parent and the child. The mean of the scale is 30.167, and the standard deviation, 22.703. (For a complete list of both the items used and the item-to-scale-score correlations relevant to this and subsequent scales, see Appendix B).

Academic Performance

Academic performance is one of the most critical of the school variables to be examined in this study, as it is expected to be directly related both to curriculum track assignment and to the nature of students' subsequent interactions within the school setting. Most prior research which has dealt with academic performance has utilized student grade point averages that were obtained from official sources as the unit of measure (cf. Hirschi, 1969; Kelly and Balch, 1971; Polk and Schafer, 1972; Elliott and Voss, 1974). However, one of the conditions under which the School Administration granted permission for this study to be undertaken was that the

anonymity of student respondents be closely safeguarded. Thus, there was no means of connecting students' official records to their questionnaires. Consequently, an alternate measure of academic performance had to be devised. It was feared that students' self-reports of their cumulative grade point averages might prove unreliable because students were unlikely to have this information. Instead, students were asked to list both the courses in which they were enrolled during the previous term and the grade which they received in each course. Mean grades for the term were computed on this basis. The obvious limitation to this measure is that grades earned in a single term may not be representative of the student's usual level of performance.

Curriculum Tracking

It has been suggested that track assignments are made on the basis of the students' academic performance and social background characteristics. Tracking is, in turn, expected to have important consequences upon the nature of student school experiences. In particular, it is expected to have direct effects on perceptions of teacher expectations, perceptions of curriculum relevance, and perceptions of school officials' concern for students.

The participating public school system has been moving away from the utilization of formal track designations in the last two years. The remnants of the old system remain, however, as students are aware of the fact that they are in college preparatory, vocational, business, or general courses.

Further, the schools do employ a formal means of grouping students by ability levels. Students are assigned to either "accelerated", "regular", or "modified" classes in such basic subjects as English, methematics, science, and social studies.

As indicators of this variable, students were asked to report both the orientation of the classes in which they were enrolled (college preparatory, business, vocational, and so on), as well as the ability group to which they were assigned in each of the four basic subjects. It was later learned that many students, especially those in the vocational course, did not take each of these four classes, but that English was uniformly required of all students. Therefore, the child's report of his English group was used as the index of his ability level.

Perceptions of Teacher Expectations

The student's perception of teacher expectations is expected to flow directly from his academic performance and from his track assignment. That is, students who perform well academically and who are college-bound are apt to perceive higher teacher expectations than those doing less well academically and/or those who are not college-bound. Further, perceptions of teacher expectations are expected to have direct effects upon student powerlessness and levels of school commitment.

The concept of teacher expectations is defined here in a limited sense and refers only to how students perceive

teacher expectations in terms of academic performance. It was hoped that the inclusion of this measure would help to shed further light upon the operation of the self-fulfilling prophecy discussed by Rosenthal and Jecobson (1968).

A four-item scale was developed to measure student perceptions of teacher expectations. The higher the scale score, the lower the perceived expectations. The scale has a mean of 10.998 and a standard deviation of 3.344.

Perceptions of Curriculum Relevance

The concept of curriculum relevance is defined in the traditional sense utilized by Stinchcombe and refers to the degree to which students perceive that their future occupational status will be enhanced through their current labors in school. It is argued that the more visible the connection between the subject matter of the curriculum and its payoff in terms of either the post-high school job market or advanced education, the greater the student's commitment to school. A three-item scale was developed to measure perceptions of curriculum relevance. The higher the scale score, the lower the perceived relevance. The scale has a mean of 6.170 and a standard deviation of 2.911.

Perceptions of School Officials' Concern for Students

It is suggested that student responses to school are largely a reflection of their perceptions of teachers', counselors' and school administrators' attitudes and behavior toward them. Evidence was presented earlier that indicated differential concern on the part of school officials toward

those who aspire to the school system's achievement goals, particularly toward those who aspire to attend college and those who succeed academically. School officials' concern for students is thus apt to be differentially perceived and responded to by students who differ with respect to track assignment and academic performance.

A fifteen-item scale was constructed to measure student perceptions of the interest which school officials demonstrate with respect to their welfare, both academic and personal. The higher the scale score, the lower the perceived concern. The scale has a mean of 43.868 and a standard deviation of 10.025.

School Powerlessness

It is expected that students who have negative experiences in school are likely to feel alienated from the educational process and to perceive that they have little control over what happens to them in school. Further, it is suggested that school powerlessness is directly related to levels of student commitment to school. A twelve-item scale was developed to measure this dimension of student responses to school. The higher the scale score, the lower the degree of powerlessness. The scale has a mean of 34.764 and a standard deviation of 7.780.

School Commitment

It is hypothesized that the effects of academic performance, curriculum tracking, perceptions of teacher expectations, perceptions of curriculum relevance, perceptions of school officials' concern for students, and school

powerlessness converge in a more generalized response of the student to the school that may be conceptualized as school commitment. School commitment denotes student attachment or affect toward school and espousal of the school's value orientation. Commitment is expected to be directly related to delinquent involvement.

A ten-item scale was constructed to measure school commitment. The higher the scale score, the lower the level of commitment. The mean of the scale is 24.753, the standard deviation, 7.813.

Delinquency

Delinquency was measured through responses to self-report items. Although the use of self-reports raises certain methodological questions, it is maintained that this method is far superior to the use of official statistics. Official statistics obscure the continuity and distribution of the actual incidence of delinquent acts and reflect instead the response of those in authority to those who violate the law.

The primary methodological issues surrounding the use of self-reports concern their reliability and validity. However, some researchers have recently broached both of these subjects with encouraging results. For example, Clark and Tifft (1966) compared a series of measures of the frequency of delinquent acts and found that 81.5 percent of the responses in successive measures were identical. Along the same lines, Dentler and Monroe (1961) administered their Theft Scale in a test-retest situation and reported that

responses were identical in at least 92 percent of the cases. These studies indicate that self-report measures are indeed reliable.

The subject of the validity of such measures has been the subject of more frequent attention. Comparison of self-reports of arrest or police records with official police records is the most common technique employed (cf. Reiss and Rhodes, 1961; Erickson and Empey, 1963; Voss, 1963; Christie, 1965). These comparisons have indicated that self-report measures appear to be valid.

Another validation technique has been to compare groups believed to differ with respect to delinquent involvement (such as institutionalized and high school populations) in order to determine whether or not delinquency scale scores discriminate between them (cf. Nye and Short, 1957; Dentler and Monroe, 1961; Reiss and Rhodes, 1961; Voss, 1963). Self-reports have been used successfully to differentiate between these groups, and this provides additional support for the validity of the technique.

In this research, data were collected regarding delinquency utilizing a modification of the Nye-Short technique (Nye and Short, 1957). The scale was revised to reflect only those offenses committed since beginning junior high school because it is the researcher's belief that the Nye-Short scale, by including offenses since beginning grade school, overestimates the actual number of delinquents. The scale used in this research also included a greater number of serious offenses which, it is felt, are underrepresented in

the Nye-Short scale. These modifications should in part compensate for the limitations noted here.

The structure of the delinquency instrument employed is similar to the delinquency check-list developed by Nye and Short. Of the thirteen delinquency items appearing in the questionnaire, ten were among Nye and Short's original items. The thirteen items pertained to driving without a license, purchasing and/or drinking liquor, petty theft (worth less than $2), truanting from school, running away from home, having sexual relations with a person of the opposite sex, smoking marijuana, petty theft (objects valued at between $2 and $50), destroying property, experimenting with drugs other than marijuana, sale of drugs, auto theft, and grand theft (over $50).

The scale construction procedure can be briefly outlined. To score the frequency of delinquent acts, the response categories of the items were transformed as follows: "Never" equals 0; "Once or twice" equals 1; "Three or four times" equals 2; "Very often" or "Five or more times" equals 3. Each of the offenses was weighted according to its comparative severity among other items in the checklist. Driving a car without a license, purchasing and/or drinking liquor, petty theft (under $2), and school truancy were each assigned a value of 1. Running away from home, having sexual relations, and smoking marijuana were given a weight of 2. Petty theft (medium value), destroying property, and experimenting with drugs other than marijuana were assigned a weight of 3. Sale

of drugs, auto theft, and grand theft were assigned a value of 4. In order to compute the scale, the frequency of each offense was multiplied by the weight of each of each offense, and each respondent was assigned a delinquency scale score based on the summation of these calculations. The higher the scale score, the greater the degree of delinquent involvement. The scale has a mean of 13.428 and a standard deviation of 12.805.

Statistical Tests

The theoretical model requires that attention be given to the adequacy of both the direct and indirect linkages shown in Figure I. In addition, the possibility of spurious linkages must be considered. The analytical technique described by Blalock (1964) is appropriate for problems of this general type and it will be employed in this research. Thus, all the data are treated as though they met the assumptions of interval level measures, and correlation and regression coefficients are obtained in an effort to predict changes in successive dependent variables in the model using relevant independent variables. Through the introduction of controls for antecedent and intervening influences, the original model can be modified and simplified by making appropriate changes in the causal linkages originally predicted.

Although the researcher is aware that this technique assumes an interval scale level of measurement, recent thinking on the magnitude of errors that follows the violation of this

assumption suggests that the technique is sufficiently robust to overcome many of the problems inherent in ordinal level data (cf. Burke, 1953; Lord, 1953; Boneau, 1960; Anderson, 1961; Baker, et al., 1966; Kerlinger and Pedhazur, 1973).

The following classifications will be utilized to interpret the magnitude of the correlations: a correlation coefficient of less than .150 is indicative that no substantively significant relationship exists between the variables; a correlation coefficient of .150 to .250 indicates the existence of a weak linkage; .250 to .500 indicates a moderate association; .500 and above indicates a strong relationship between the variables.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses, derived from the model presented in Figure I, will be tested in the analysis which follows:

1. There is a negative correlation[2] between race and academic performance.

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[2] It may be useful to indicate the direction in which the variables and scale measures were scored in order to facilitate interpretation of the predicted directionality of these hypotheses. The scoring was as follows: Race - "Black" equals 1, "White" equals 2; Social Class - The lower the score, the higher the class position; Father - Child Relationship - The lower the score, the stronger the relationship; Academic Performance - The lower the score, the higher the performance level; Curriculum Track - "College Preparatory Track" equals 1, "Noncollege Preparatory Track" equals 2 (The alternate measure, with respect to ability grouping, was scored as follows: "Accelerated" equals 1, "Regular" equals 2, "Modified" equals 3); Perceptions of Curriculum Relevance - The lower the score, the greater the perceived relevance; Perceptions of School Officials' Concern For Students - The lower the score, the

2. There is a negative correlation between race and the type of curriculum track to which the child is assigned.

3. There is a positive correlation between social class and academic performance.

4. There is a positive correlation between social class and the type of curriculum track to which the child is assigned.

5. There is a positive correlation between the strength of the father-child relationship and academic performance.

6. There is a positive correlation between the strength of the father-child relationship and the type of curriculum track to which the child is assigned.

7. There is a positive correlation between academic performance and the type of curriculum track to which the child is assigned.

8. There is a positive correlation between academic performance and perceptions of curriculum relevance.

9. There is a positive correlation between academic performance and perceptions of school officials' concern for students.

10. There is a positive correlation between academic performance and perceptions of teacher expectations.

11. There is a positive correlation between the type of curriculum track to which the child is assigned and perceptions of curriculum relevance.

12. There is a positive correlation between the type of curriculum track to which the child is assigned and perceptions of school officials' concern for students.

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greater the perceived concern; Perceptions of Teacher Expectations - The lower the score, the higher the perceived expectation; School Powerlessness - The lower the score, the higher the powerlessness; School Commitment - The lower the score, the higher the level of commitment; Delinquency - The lower the score, the lesser the degree of delinquent involvement.

CONTINUED

2 OF 4

13. There is a positive correlation between the type of curriculum track to which the child is assigned and perceptions of teacher expectations.

14. There is a negative correlation between perceptions of curriculum relevance and school powerlessness.

15. There is a positive correlation between perceptions of curriculum relevance and school commitment.

16. There is a negative correlation between perceptions of school officials' concern for students and school powerlessness.

17. There is a positive correlation between perceptions of school officials' concern for students and school commitment.

18. There is a negative correlation between perceptions of teacher expectations and school powerlessness.

19. There is a positive correlation between perceptions of teacher expectations and school commitment.

20. There is a negative correlation between school powerlessness and school commitment.

21. There is a positive correlation between school commitment and delinquency.

The findings of the operational testing of these hypotheses are presented in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS, SCHOOL FACTORS, AND DELINQUENCY

The theoretical model proposes that such social background characteristics as race, socioeconomic status, and family environment, provide children with, among other things, some initial levels of commitment to the conventional order. More specifically, it is postulated that whites, youths from middle- and upper- class backgrounds, and youths with strong ties to their families have higher stakes in conformity than do blacks, lower - class youths, and those with weak ties to family. However, it is also suggested that school-pupil interactions take place within the context of the educational system in a way which alters this commitment to conformity.

Although there are a myriad of school features and student responses to school which could be explored, the factors isolated for this study include academic performance, curriculum tracking, student perceptions of curriculum relevance, student perceptions of school officials' concern for them, student perceptions of teacher expectations, school powerlessness, and school commitment. It is hypothesized that academic performance and curriculum

pack assignment are influenced by students' social background characteristics; that performance and tracking are, in turn, determinants of students' responses to their school experiences; that the culmination of these responses is reflected in students' levels of commitment to school; and, finally, because the bond to school is viewed as the most critical tie between the adolescent and the conventional order, that school commitment is directly related to delinquent involvement. The model that reflects the pattern of relationships predicted between the social background characteristics, the school variables, and delinquency is presented in Figure II.

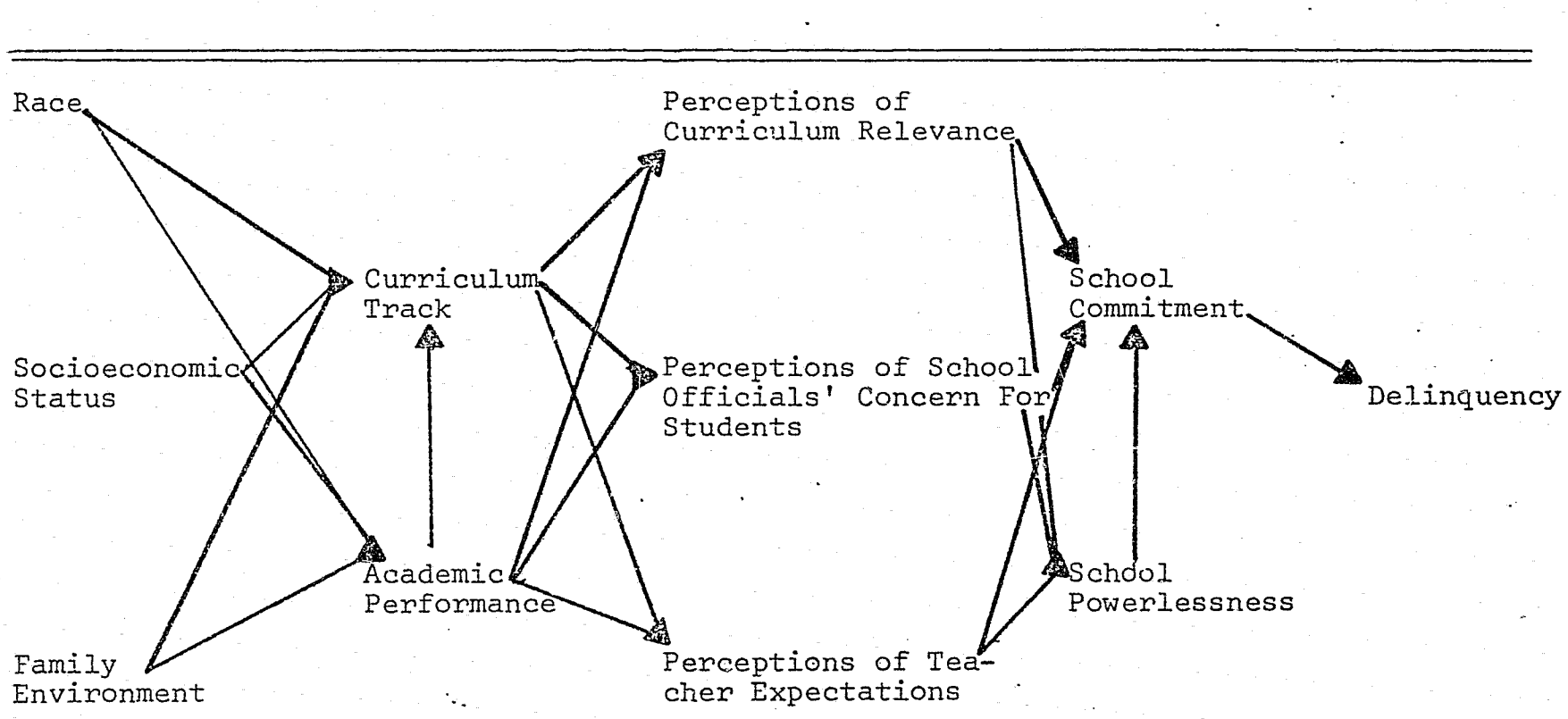
In order to assess the viability of this model, an assessment must be made of the possibility of direct, indirect, and spurious associations among the variables presented in Figure II. This task requires the use of both bivariate and multivariate analytical techniques. For purposes of simplification, the bivariate relationships will be briefly considered prior to discussion of results of the partial correlation and multiple regression analyses. The correlation matrix that provides these bivariate associations is presented in Table 1.

There are several important points to be derived from an examination of Table 1 with respect to the linkages proposed in the model. With respect to social background characteristics, we note that parent-child relationships

FIGURE II

PREDICTED LINKAGES BETWEEN SOCIAL BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS,

SCHOOL FACTORS, AND DELINQUENCY



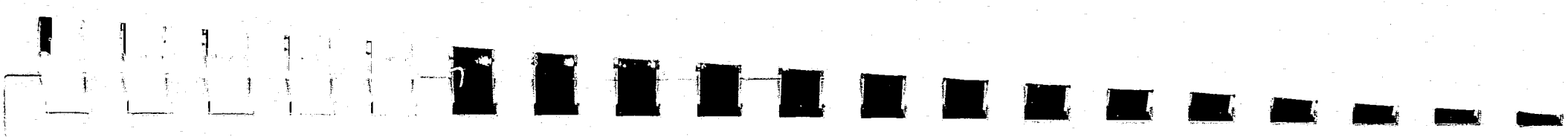


TABLE 1

CORRELATION MATRIX

	X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5	X_6	X_7	X_8	X_9	X_{10}	X_{11}
X_1	1.000	-.401	-.251	-.207	-.188	-.007*	.095*	-.125	.177	-.086*	.175
X_2		1.000	.268	.327	.185	.004*	-.088*	.173	-.055*	.039*	-.095*
X_3			1.000	.101	.116	.078*	.075*	.091*	.052*	-.072*	.021*
X_4				1.000	.281	.092*	.048*	.320	.104	-.098*	.099
X_5					1.000	.127	.073*	.390	.127	-.089*	.111
X_6						1.000	.276	.256	.384	-.245	.169
X_7							1.000	.251	.516	-.556	.260
X_8								1.000	.310	-.217	.211
X_9									1.000	-.428	.342
X_{10}										1.000	-.259
X_{11}											1.000

* Not significant at .001 confidence level

X_1 = Race

X_2 = Socioeconomic Status

X_3 = Father-Child Relationship

X_4 = Curriculum Track

X_5 = Academic Performance

X_6 = Perceptions of Curriculum Relevance

X_7 = Perceptions of School Officials Concern for Students

X_8 = Perceptions of Teacher Expectations

X_9 = School Commitment

X_{10} = School Powerlessness

X_{11} = Delinquency

are not related to academic performance (r = .116), tracking[1] (r = .101), or, indeed, to any of the other variables in the model. Socioeconomic status has a weak correlation with academic performance (r = .185) and a moderate association with curriculum track (r = .327), while race is weakly correlated with both academic performance (r = -.188) and tracking (r = -.207). Thus, the lower the child's socioeconomic status, the lower the status of the curriculum track to which he is assigned. Black children are more apt than white children both to do poor academic work and to be assigned to the noncollege preparatory track. Children with weak ties to family, however, are no more likely either to exhibit low performance characteristics or to be assigned to a noncollege preparatory status than children with strong ties to family.[2]

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[1] The measure of track reported throughout this analysis is college preparatory versus noncollege preparatory track. Although indicators of ability group were included in the questionnaire schedule as well, the corrleations between track as indicated by ability group and the remainder of the variables in the model are very similar to those obtained using the alternate indicator reported here. Thus, for the purpose of simplifying the analysis, I have chosen to report findings regarding only the course orientation indicator.

[2] This finding holds whether one utilizes the relationship between the child and both parents (r = .109), the mother-child relationship (r = .013), or the father-child relationship (r = .116) as the indicator of family environment in its association with academic performance. The corresponding correlation coefficients with regard to the association between the family environment and curriculum tracking are .126, .082, and .101, respectively. Nor does the relationship between family structure and either academic performance (r = .089) or curriculum track assignment (r = .103) appear to be substantively significant.

Moving past these antecedent conditions to the main focus of the model, we find that academic performance and curriculum tracking are moderately related (r = .281), but that neither academic performance nor tracking are the salient determinants of students' school experience that were predicted. Both the correlations between academic performance and perceptions of curriculum relevance (r = .127) and between curriculum track and such perceptions (r = .092) indicate that there is virtually no relation between these variables. The lack of an association between curriculum track and perceptions of curriculum relevance is particularly surprising in that it contradicts the observations of Stinchcombe (1964) and Pearl (1965), both of whom argued that curriculum tracks possess differential utility in terms of their payoff in the labor market and that students perceive these differences and respond to them. Although perceptions of curriculum relevance are related to other aspects of the school experience which are, in turn, related to delinquency, these perceptions do not emanate from either academic performance or track assignment.

The findings indicate that the relationships between the independent variables, academic performance and curriculum track, and the dependent variable, perceptions of school officials' concern for students, are virtually nonexistent. This is also somewhat inconsistent with evidence

presented from the previous literature. Sexton (1961), Stinchcombe (1964), Pearl (1965), Polk and Richmond (1972), and others have noted differential lack of concern on the part of school officials toward low achievers and toward the noncollege-bound. The zero-order correlations are not sufficiently powerful to indicate the viability of a link between academic performance and perceptions of school officials' concern for students ($r = .073$) or between track assignment and such perceptions ($r = .048$). It may be that school officials do communicate differential concern for students with differing ability levels, but one thing is clear: neither performance characteristics nor tracking patterns are predictors of student perceptions of such differential concern.

There are several possible interpretations of the inconsistency between these and previous findings regarding the salience of the curriculum track factor. One tenable hypothesis is suggested here. The predicted relationships do not appear because tracking patterns in the school system in which this study was conducted are not very meaningful. As discussed in Chapter III, the school system did not differentiate students in terms of rigid course classifications, and, while ability groupings were employed, these did not produce rigid differentiations among students. For example, English was the only subject in which students were uniformly differentiated. Not all students

were enrolled in other classes where ability groupings were found. In elective subjects a heterogeneous ability grouping of students was practiced. Moreover, even in English classes, only about one student in four was assigned to either "accelerated" or "modified" classes. Seventy-five percent of students were assigned to "regular" classes.

Further examination of the data presented in Table 1 shows that the remainder of the linkages proposed in the model presented in Figure II are at least weakly supported. First, the associations between both academic performance and curriculum track and the dependent variable, perceptions of teacher expectations, are moderate. (The correlations are .390 and .320, respectively). Thus, students in a college preparatory status and those who are academically successful perceive that teachers expect them to do well; those who fail and those who are non-college-bound perceive that teachers expect them to do poorly. Second, perceptions of curriculum relevance, perceptions of school officials' concern for students, and perceptions of teacher expectations are all at least weakly related to both school powerlessness and school commitment. The correlations between perceptions of curriculum relevance and school powerlessness and school commitment are -.245 and .384, respectively. Perceptions of teacher expectations is weakly related to school

powerlessness (r = -.217) and moderately related to school commitment (r = .310). The findings are particularly marked with regard to perceptions of school officials' concern for students. Such perceptions are strongly associated with both school powerlessness (r = -.556) and school commitment (r = .516). Third, we observe that school powerlessness is clearly related to school commitment (r = -.428). It is apparent from the data that students who have negative perceptions of their experiences in school are apt also to feel powerless to improve the quality of their school experiences. Further, students who view their school experiences negatively, and those who feel powerless to alter their experiences, are apt also to dislike school and to reject the educational system's achievement orientation.

The final association to be examined with respect to Table 1 is that between school commitment and delinquency. The relationship is a moderate one (r = .342). This finding supports the hypothesis that those who are committed to school are unlikely to become delinquent. Note that the school commitment factor is the strongest predictor of delinquency found in the matrix. The other

school variables are less clearly associated with delinquency. Further, the zero-order correlation between race and delinquency is weak ($r = .175$), while the correlations between socioeconomic status and delinquency ($r = -.095$) and between family environment and delinquency ($r = .021$) are both so weak that we may conclude that there is virtually no association between these variables. The finding of no relation between social class and delinquency is supportive of the results of earlier studies which have utilized self-reports as the measure of the dependent variable. However, the lack of a relationship between family environment and delinquency is contradictory to the preponderance of evidence on this subject (cf. Nye, 1958; Hirschi, 1969). The findings of this research lead to the interpretation that the family's influence as a controlling institution is so diminished by the time the child reaches adolescence that the relationship between the child and his family is not an important etiological factor in delinquency. Further research utilizing longitudinal data which explores the relationship between family environment and deviant behavior over the course of several years would be instrumental in determining the validity of this interpretation.

Let us turn our attention now to an examination of the multivariate associations between the variables. Blalock (1964) has suggested that the task of evaluating

complex causal models may be considerably simplified by breaking the total set of variables into more easily managed segments. In keeping with the suggestion that it may be useful to consider only three or four causally prior variables in a given portion of the analysis, the analysis which follows has been divided into four segments. In the first section the focus is upon those school experiences which are thought to be associated with student background characteristics. The second and third segments examine predictions involving the relationship between the school experiences discussed in Segment One and student perceptions of and responses to the school system. In the final segment attention shifts to the relationship between student responses to school and delinquent behavior.

Segment One: Student Background Characteristics, Academic Performance, and Curriculum Tracking

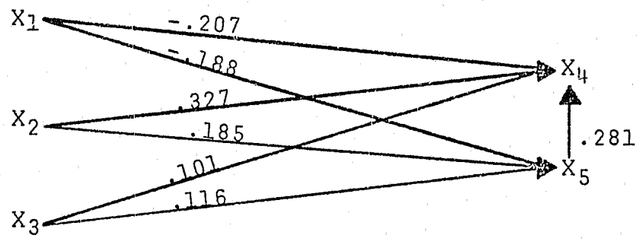
It has been predicted that each of the background characteristics examined will be directly related to both academic performance and curriculum tracking. Based on the hypothesis that blacks, lower-class youths, and those lacking strong ties to family are likely to have lower initial stakes in conformity than whites, middle- and upper-class youths, and those with intimate ties to family, it is expected that blacks, lower-class youths, and those lacking strong ties to family are less apt to succeed academically because they are less likely to work hard

to achieve good grades. Second, we expect that these children are more likely to be placed in a noncollege preparatory status because the prior literature suggests that considerations regarding students' social background characteristics enter into the school's decision with regard to track assignments. In addition, since the academic performance factor is expected to weigh heavily in the track assignment decision, a direct link is predicted between performance and curriculum track.

If the initial relationships reported in Table 1 are valid, the introduction of test variables should not alter the strength of the relationships. If these relationships alter appreciably, they would indicate that the possibility of indirectness or spuriousness must be considered. With regard to the initial set of variables, Table 2 contains the statistical information which is required for an evaluation of the validity of the predicted linkages.

TABLE 2

THE PREDICTED LINKAGES BETWEEN RACE (X_1), SOCIAL CLASS (X_2), PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP (X_3), CURRICULUM TRACK (X_4), and ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE (X_5) WITH THE OBSERVED ZERO AND FIRST ORDER CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS



Partial Correlation Coefficients

Control Variable: Socioeconomic Status (X_2)	Control Variable: Academic Performance (X_5)
$X_1X_4.X_2 = -.078$	$X_1X_4.X_5 = -.154$
$X_1X_5.X_2 = -.129$	$X_2X_4.X_5 = .297$
$X_5X_4.X_2 = .251$	

As shown in Table 2, race and socioeconomic status are depicted as independent variables. In the bivariate analysis, both race and socioeconomic status are weakly related to academic performance, while race is weakly related to curriculum track and socioeconomic status is moderately related to curriculum track. Although there are no relevant antecedents for which to control with regard to the influence of these two independent variables, we are interested in stratifying the relationship between

race and the dependent variables by social class in order to determine the possible conjoint influence of these factors. When we examine the relationship between race and academic performance controlling for social class, we find that the original bivariate association ($r = -.188$) is reduced to a level indicative that the hypothesized direct linkage between these variables must be interpreted as untenable ($r = -.129$). Moreover, the bivariate association between race and curriculum track ($r = -.207$) is sharply reduced when the influence of socioeconomic status is held constant ($r = -.078$).

The bivariate findings suggest that socioeconomic status is directly related to both academic performance and curriculum track. Table 2 shows that socioeconomic status is weakly associated with academic performance ($r = .185$) and moderately associated with curriculum track ($r = .327$). However, in order to determine the viability of the link between socioeconomic status and curriculum track, it is necessary that the possible intervening influence of academic performance be controlled. Under controlled conditions, we find that the original association ($r = .327$), although reduced somewhat, remains moderate ($r = .297$). Thus the direct linkage between these two variables is upheld.

Family environment, on the other hand, is not meaningfully related to either academic performance (r = .116) or to curriculum track (r = .101) in the bivariate analysis, and the introduction of controls would be superfluous. Finally, academic performance is moderately related to curriculum track in the bivariate analysis (r = .281) and neither controls for race, socioeconomic status, nor family environment result in an appreciable reduction in the original association.

A number of interesting findings may be derived from this segment of the analysis. Initially it seems clear that the relationship between race and the school variables is indirect and that the socioeconomic status factor serves as an intervening link. This finding, while unexpected, is not particularly surprising given that the correlation between race and socioeconomic status is -.401. Thus, black youths are apt to do poorly in school and to be assigned to a noncollege preparatory status more often than whites because blacks are more likely to hold lower socioeconomic status positions than whites and socioeconomic status is directly related to both academic performance and tracking.

Second, although there is no relationship between the quality of the child's family environment and either academic performance or curriculum track, there is a relationship between family environment and socioeconomic

status (r = .268) and, as we have seen, between socioeconomic status and both of these dependent variables. A plausible interpretation of this unanticipated finding is that children with weak ties to family are more likely to fail academically and to be assigned to the noncollege preparatory track not because the quality of their family relationships has anything to do with the likelihood of these effects, but because children with weak ties to family are also apt to come from lower-class backgrounds, and those from lower-class backgrounds are, in turn, more likely to fail and to be assigned to the noncollege preparatory track.

Finally, the hypothesized direct links between socioeconomic status and both academic performance and curriculum track, and between academic performance and curriculum track, are supported. Thus, the higher the child's socioeconomic status, and the more academically successful he is (which itself is directly related to his status position), the greater the probability that he will be assigned to the college preparatory track. Moreover, we have observed that socioeconomic status is more strongly associated with curriculum track than with academic performance. On the basis of these findings and the corroboration provided by the findings of previous research, we may conclude that considerations regarding both student background characteristics and academic performance are

likely to enter into the school's decision with regard to students' track assignments.

The partial correlations examined in this and the other segments of the analysis do not, of course, allow us to determine the total amount of variance in the relevant dependent variables that may be accounted for by the predictor variables when the predictors are taken in a set rather than independently. For this reason a multiple regression equation was computed for this segment of the analysis in an attempt to better clarify the proportion of variance in both academic performance and curriculum track that may be explained by the predictor variables noted in Table 2. As might have been expected on the basis of the weak correlations between the three independent variables and academic performance, the results of this multiple regression analysis indicates that only 6 percent of the variance in academic performance is accounted for in terms of the combined effects of race, socioeconomic status, and family environment ($R = .237$); however, 17 percent of the variance in the curriculum track variable is accounted for by the effects of race, socioeconomic status, family environment, and academic performance ($R = .413$)[3].

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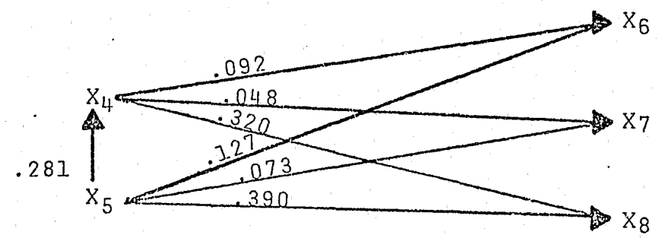
[3] The regression equations are as follows: $X_5 = 2.648 - .129\ X_1 + .128\ X_2 + .053\ X_3$; $X_4 = 1.003 + .047\ X_1 + .271\ X_2 + .235\ X_5$ (X_1 = Race; X_2 = Socioeconomic Status; X_3 = Parent-Child Relationship; X_4 = Curriculum Track; X_5 = Academic Performance).

Segment Two: Academic Performance, Curriculum Tracking, and Student Perceptions of The School Experience

The second segment of the analysis shifts attention to the consequences of the academic performance and curriculum track variables. The model predicts direct linkages between these two variables and perceptions of curriculum relevance, perceptions of school officials' concern for students, and perceptions of teacher expectations. Table 3 provides the necessary statistical information for the test of the predictions made in this segment of the model.

TABLE 3

THE PREDICTED LINKAGES BETWEEN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE (X_5), CURRICULUM TRACK (X_4), PERCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM RELEVANCE (X_6), PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL OFFICIALS' CONCERN FOR STUDENTS (X_7), AND PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER EXPECTATIONS (X_8) WITH THE OBSERVED ZERO AND FIRST ORDER CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS



Partial Correlation Coefficients

Control Variables: Academic Performance (X_5), Curriculum Track (X_4), Socioeconomic Status (X_2)

$X_4X_8.X_5 = .222$	$X_5X_8.X_4 = .378$	$X_4X_8.X_2 = .282$
$X_2X_8.X_5 = -.101$	$X_2X_8.X_4 = -.107$	$X_5X_8.X_2 = .417$

In order for the predicted linkages to be upheld, the associations between academic performance and the dependent variables should not alter appreciably when the intervening variable, curriculum track, is controlled, nor should the associations between curriculum track and the dependent variables be substantially reduced when the antecedent variable, academic performance, is held constant. Further, we must test for the possible spuriousness of either or both of these associations by controlling for the antecedent influence of socioeconomic status, which was previously observed to be directly related to both academic performance and curriculum track.

The zero-order correlations in Table 3 indicate that curriculum track is not related to either perceptions of curriculum relevance or perceptions of school officials' concern for students. It is, however, moderately related to perceptions of teacher expectations according to the bivariate analysis ($r = .320$). This relationship remains moderate when socioeconomic status is controlled and, although it is reduced by the control for academic performance ($r = .222$), the stability of a direct, though weak, relationship between track and perceptions of teacher expectations is indicated.

Turning our attention now to the academic performance variable, we observe that the relationship between academic performance and perceptions of curriculum relevance is not

sufficiently powerful to support the viability of a direct linkage between these variables (r = .127). Second, it is clear that academic performance is not related to perceptions of school officials' concern for students (r = .073). Finally, we observe that the hypothesized direct linkage between academic performance and perceptions of teacher expectations is supported. The zero order correlations between these variables indicates a moderate association (r = .390). Controlling both for the antecedent influence of social class and the intervening influence of curriculum track, the moderate association is upheld.

The analysis thus indicates that both academic performance and curriculum track are directly related, as predicted, to perceptions of teacher expectations. These findings suggest that students who fail academically and those who are assigned to noncollege preparatory tracks tend to perceive that teachers expect them to do poorly, while those who are academically successful and who are college-bound perceive that teachers expect them to do well. We have also found, contrary to the hypothesized linkages, that neither academic performance nor curriculum track is associated with either perceptions of curriculum relevance or perceptions of school officials' concern for students. Revisions in the model are therefore required. The subject of the viability of alternate linkages will be explored in Segment Three.

Regression analysis relevant to this section of the model confirms the expectation that we have been unable to provide links to two of the three dependent variables. Only 2 percent of the variance in perceptions of curriculum relevance has been accounted for by the effects of academic performance and curriculum track (R = .157). Less than 1 percent of the variance in perceptions of school officials' concern for students has been explained (R = .093). However, 23 percent of the variance in perceptions of teacher expectations is attributable to the combined effects of academic performance and curriculum track (R = .481)[4].

Segment Three: Student Perceptions of the School Experience and Student Responses to School

In this section we are concerned with school powerlessness and school commitment as responses of students to their experiences in school. In addition, following an analysis of the predicted linkages in this segment, we will explore the viability of alternate modifications in the model made necessary on the basis of the findings in Segment Two.

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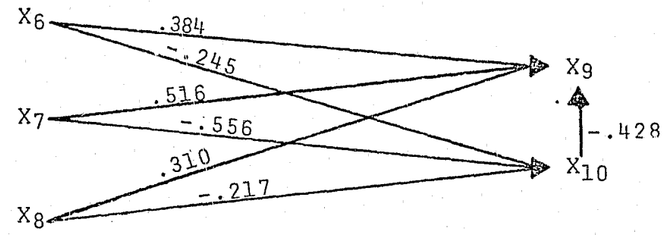
[4] The regression equations are as follows: $X_6 = 4.471 + .051\ X_4 + .134\ X_5$; $X_7 = 40.422 + .032\ X_4 + .079\ X_5$; $X_8 = 4.756 + .209\ X_4 + .375\ X_5$ (X_4 = Curriculum Track; X_5 = Academic Performance; X_6 = Perceptions of Curriculum Relevance; X_7 = Perceptions of School Offcials' Concern for Students; X_8 = Perceptions of Teacher Expectations).

The model predicts direct linkages between perceptions of curriculum relevance, perceptions of school officials' concern for students, perceptions of teacher expectations, and the dependent variables, school powerlessness and school commitment. In addition, a direct link has been proposed between school powerlessness and school commitment. Table 4 provides the data required for an assessment of this portion of the model.

TABLE 4

THE PREDICTED LINKAGES BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM RELEVANCE (X_6), PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL OFFICIALS' CONCERN FOR STUDENTS (X_7), PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER EXPECTATIONS (X_8), SCHOOL POWERLESSNESS (X_{10}), AND SCHOOL COMMITMENT (X_9) WITH THE OBSERVED ZERO AND FIRST ORDER CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS



Partial Correlation Coefficients

Control Variables: Academic Performance (X_5), Curriculum Track (X_4), Perceptions of Curriculum Relevance (X_6), Perceptions of School Officials' Concern for Students (X_7), Perceptions of Teacher Expectations (X_8), School Powerlessness (X_{10}).

$X_8X_9.X_4$ = .292	$X_{10}X_9.X_6$ = -.373	$X_6X_9.X_{10}$ = .314
$X_8X_{10}.X_4$ = -.200	$X_{10}X_9.X_7$ = -.199	$X_7X_9.X_{10}$ = .369
$X_8X_9.X_5$ = .271	$X_{10}X_9.X_8$ = -.389	$X_8X_9.X_{10}$ = .243
$X_8X_{10}.X_5$ = -.195		

The zero-order correlations indicate that perceptions of school officials' concern for students is strongly related to both school powerlessness and school commitment, while perceptions of curriculum relevance and perceptions of teacher expectations are weakly associated with school powerlessness and moderately related to school commitment. An adequate test of the linkages between perceptions of teacher expectations and these dependent variables demands that both academic performance and curriculum tracking be controlled. (In the case of both perceptions of curriculum relevance and perceptions of school officials' concern for students there are no relevant antecedent controls since the earlier predicted linkages were not supported by the data). Table 4 shows that the original association between perceptions of teacher expectations and school powerlessness is a weak one ($r = -.210$). Controls for both academic performance and curriculum track do not affect this association. Similarly, application of controls for these antecedents have but slight effect upon the originally moderate association ($r = .310$) between perceptions of teacher expectations and school commitment.

In order to test the viability of the linkages between all three of the perception variables and school commitment, it is appropriate that the intervening influence of school powerlessness be held constant. An examination of the results of partial correlation analysis indicates

that the moderate association between perceptions of curriculum relevance and school commitment (r = .384) remains moderate (r = .314), the strong association between perceptions of school officials' concern for students and school commitment (r = .516) is reduced to a moderate association (r = .369), and the moderate association between perceptions of teacher expectations and school commitment (r = .310) is reduced to a weak association (r = .243) by the intervening effect of the school powerlessness variable. It appears that the linkages between all three of the perception variables and school commitment are both direct and indirect.

In order to assess the viability of the link between school powerlessness and school commitment, we must control for the antecedent influence of the three perception variables. We find that the moderate bivariate association between school powerlessness and school commitment (r = -.428) remains unchanged when perceptions of curriculum relevance and perceptions of teacher expectations are controlled, but is reduced sharply to a weak association (r = -.199) by the control for perceptions of school officials' concern for students. We may conclude that perceptions of school powerlessness emanate largely from perceptions of school officials' concern for students, although both factors remain independently related to school commitment.

We have yet to uncover the determinants of perceptions of curriculum relevance and perceptions of school officials' concern for students. The model proposed that these perceptions were likely to flow from academic performance and curriculum track assignment, but the data simply do not support these links. We note, however, that Table 1 shows a moderate correlation between perceptions of teacher expectations and perceptions of school officials' concern for students ($r = .251$), and a similar level of association between perceptions of curriculum relevance and perceptions of school officials' concern for students ($r = .276$). In addition we note that perceptions of teacher expectations are moderately associated with perceptions of curriculum relevance ($r = .256$). Because all three of these variables are interrelated we must determine the logic of their associations with one another in order to propose plausible revisions in the model. Initially it seems reasonable to suggest that perceptions of school officials' concern for students are likely to emanate from both perceptions of curriculum relevance and perceptions of teacher expectations. Students who perceive that teachers expect much of them may interpret these expectations as signs of interest in their welfare. Similarly, students who perceive that the curriculum is relevant to their post high school goals are likely to feel that the school is responsive to their interests, and, hence,

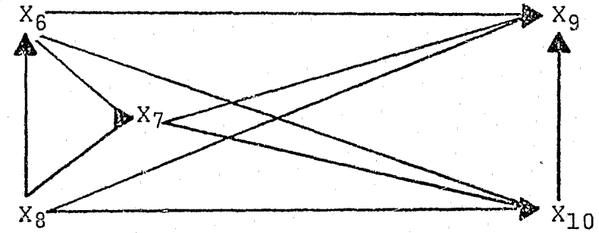
concerned for their welfare. Thus, it is suggested that both perceptions of teacher expectations and perceptions of curriculum relevance are antecedent and causally related to perceptions of school officials' concern for students.

The relationship between perceptions of teacher expectations and perceptions of curriculum relevance is somewhat more difficult to interpret. However, it is suggested that because perceptions of teacher expectations flow from curriculum track and academic performance characteristics (students who are academically successful and who are college-bound tend to perceive that teachers expect them to do well while students who fail and who are noncollege-bound perceive that teachers expect little of them), the connection between perceptions of teacher expectations and perceptions of curriculum relevance may be due to the fact that students who are college-bound and who work hard to achieve good grades and to earn the approval of their teachers are likely to justify their efforts in terms of the meaningfulness of their educational pursuits to their occupational goals. On the other hand, in order to resolve the dissonance between failure, perceptions of low teacher expectations, and their learning experiences, students who fail and who perceive low teacher expectations are apt also to perceive their education as irrelevant to future occupational goals. It is proposed, then, that perceptions of curriculum relevance emanate from percep-

tions of teacher expectations, and that both perceptions of curriculum relevance and perceptions of teacher expectations are causal antecedents to perceptions of school officials' concern for students. A schematic presentation of the proposed revisions in this segment of the model is provided in Figure III.

FIGURE III

A SCHEMATIC PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSED REVISIONS IN THE THEORETICAL LINKAGES BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM RELEVANCE (X_6), PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER EXPECTATIONS X_8), PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL OFFICIALS' CONCERN FOR STUDENTS (X_7), SCHOOL POWERLESSNESS (X_{10}), AND SCHOOL COMMITMENT (X_9)



In order to assess the viability of these proposed linkages, some additional controls are required. We find that the originally moderate association between perceptions of teacher expectations and perceptions of curriculum relevance ($r = .256$) is slightly reduced (to a weak association) by the control for both relevant antecedents, curriculum track and academic performance. Further, the associations between perceptions of curriculum relevance and perceptions of school officials' concern for students,

and between perceptions of teacher expectations and perceptions of school officials' concern for students are upheld despite the application of relevant controls, although the latter is reduced to a weak association.' Thus, we may conclude that the suggested linkages between the three perception variables are supported.

In light of these findings, let us reexamine the linkages between the perception variables, school powerlessness, and school commitment. We find that the relationships both between perceptions of curriculum relevance and school powerlessness and between perceptions of teacher expectations and school powerlessness are blocked by the intervening influence of perceptions of school officials' concern (the partial correlation coefficients are -.115 and -.100, respectively). We can interpret these findings as indicative that students who perceive that teachers expect little of them and students who perceive that their school experiences will have little occupational payoff are apt also to feel powerless to alter their negative school experiences if they also perceive that school officials are not concerned about them, which is, of course, likely because both perceptions of teacher expectations and perceptions of curriculum relevance are associated with perceptions of school officials' concern. The presence of a contributory condition is therefore indicated. Further, we find that the relationship between

perceptions of school officials' concern for students and school powerlessness remains strong through controlled analysis.

Reexamining the relationships between the perception variables, school powerlessness, and the dependent variable, school commitment, we observe that all four of the independent variables in this segment of the model are directly related to school commitment. The strongest of these linkages is that between perceptions of school officials' concern for students and school commitment, which remains moderate through all relevant controls. The relationship between perceptions of curriculum relevance and school commitment also remains moderate, while the levels of association both between teacher expectations and school commitment, and between school powerlessness and school commitment, are rendered weak by the control for perceptions of school officials' concern for students. These findings indicate that the associations between both perceptions of curriculum relevance and perceptions of teacher expectations and the dependent variable, school commitment, are both direct and indirect through the influence of perceptions of school officials' concern for students (in both cases the bivariate association is reduced approximately 25 percent by the control for perceptions of school officials' concern). Furthermore, the findings indicate that the relationship between school

powerlessness and school commitment is largely spurious since the original bivariate association ($r = -.428$) is reduced to -.199 by the control for perceptions of school officials' concern.

Application of multiple regression to this segment of the analysis indicates that 33 percent of the variance in school powerlessness is accounted for by the joint effects of the three perception variables ($R = .578$). Moreover, 37 percent of the variance in school commitment is attributable to the effects of the three perception variables and school powerlessness ($R = .608$).[5]

Segment Four: School Powerlessness, School Commitment, and Delinquency

The final segment of analysis shifts the focus of attention from intraschool factors to the relationship between school factors and delinquency. It has been predicted that the link between the student's school experiences and delinquency is the school commitment factor. School powerlessness is viewed as another by-product of the school-pupil interaction process and is thus included

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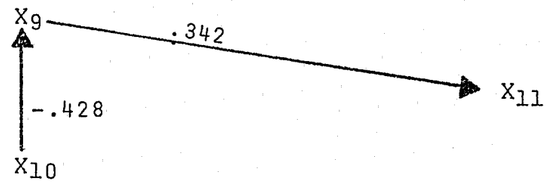
[5] The regression equations are as follows: $X_{10} = 55.876 + .096\ X_6 + .523\ X_7 + .059\ X_8$; $X_9 = 9.447 + .215\ X_6 + .335\ X_7 + .136\ X_8 - .161\ X_{10}$ (X_6 = Perceptions of Curriculum Relevance; X_7 = Perceptions of School Officials' Concern for Students; X_8 = Perceptions of Teacher Expectations; X_9 = School Commitment; X_{10} = School Powerlessness).

in this segment of the analysis, although its connection with the dependent variable, delinquency, is expected to be indirect through its contribution to the school commitment variable. Particularly, it is hypothesized that students who experience a sense of powerlessness to control or to alter their school experiences are also apt to experience a reduction in their levels of commitment to school.

A direct relation is predicted between school commitment and delinquency. It is postulated that if the normative constraints against deviance implied by the child's bond to school are rendered impotent, then the child is to some extent free to engage in delinquent behavior. Table V provides the statistical information which is required for an evaluation of the predicted linkages between the variables in this segment of the analysis.

TABLE 5

THE PREDICTED LINKAGES BETWEEN SCHOOL POWERLESSNESS (X_{10}), SCHOOL COMMITMENT (X_9), AND DELINQUENCY (X_{11}) WITH THE OBSERVED ZERO AND FIRST ORDER CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS



Partial Correlation Coefficients

Control Variables: School Commitment (X_9), Perceptions of Curriculum Relevance (X_6), Perceptions of School Officials' Concern for Students (X_7), Perceptions of Teacher Expectations (X_8)

$X_9X_{11}.X_6 = .305$	$X_6X_{11}.X_9 = .044$
$X_9X_{11}.X_7 = .251$	$X_7X_{11}.X_9 = .107$
$X_9X_{11}.X_8 = .298$	$X_8X_{11}.X_9 = .120$
$X_9X_{11}.X_{10} = .265$	$X_{10}X_{11}.X_9 = -.133$

The statistical data provided in Table V indicate that the link between school powerlessness and delinquency is, as was predicted, an indirect one. The original bivariate association between school powerlessness and delinquency ($r = -.259$) is effectively blocked by the influence of the school commitment factor ($r = -.133$).

It remains to be established that the relationship between school commitment and delinquency is not a spurious one. In order to assess the validity of this linkage,

appropriate controls must be introduced for the perception variables discussed in Segment Three and for school powerlessness. Introduction of each of these controls reduces the level of association between the variables somewhat, but in no instance does the correlation fall below the moderate level. Thus the prediction that school commitment is directly related to delinquency is upheld.

Application of multiple regression to this segment of the model shows that 14 percent of the variance in delinquency is accounted for by the joint effects of school powerlessness and school commitment (R = .377).[6]

Summary: Revised Model and Interpretation of the Findings

Before proceeding to a discussion of the analysis, it will be useful to examine the revised model, which reflects the modifications appropriate to our findings. This model is presented in Figure IV.

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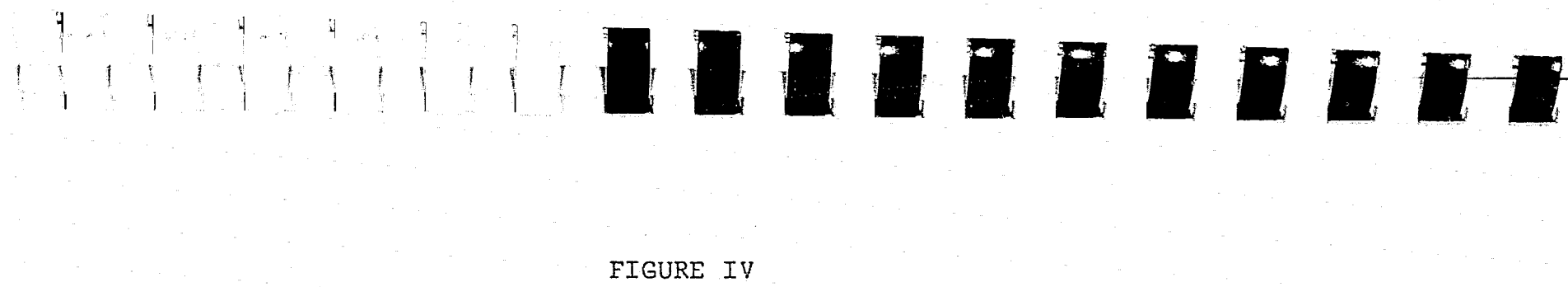
[6] The regression equation is as follows: $X_{11} = 8.797 + .296\ X_9 - .139\ X_{10}$ (X_9 = School Commitment; X_{10} = School Powerlessness; X_{11} = Delinquency).

FIGURE IV

A SCHEMATIC PRESENTATION OF THE PREDICTED LINKAGES BETWEEN SOCIAL BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS, SCHOOL FACTORS, AND DELINQUENCY



The linkages which have been upheld are largely supportive of the arguments on which the original model was based. The general proposition that one's social background characteristics are related to school experiences has been substantiated. Likewise the relationship between school experiences and commitment to school has been upheld. Further, we have uncovered some indication that school commitment is causally related to delinquency. The combined effects of the background characteristics and the school variables on delinquency is examined through multiple regression analysis. The findings of the regression analysis are presented in Table 6.

The data appear to support the theoretical orientation developed in this research. School commitment has the strongest predictive power, while the combined set of variables provides a substantial increase in predictability. The combined set of predictors is able to account for 18 percent of the variance in delinquency ($R = .427$). Although this predictive power is not great, it is considered quite substantial in light of the fact that this research has attempted to account for delinquency in terms of commitment within a single context. The effects of commitment in a number of contexts (particularly, it is suggested, with regard to peer associations) may well serve to enhance the explanatory power of commitment as an etiological variable. However, this matter must

TABLE 6

STEPWISE MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS: ALL PREDICTOR VARIABLES ON DELINQUENCY

Step Number	Variable	R	R^2	R^2 Change	Beta Weight
1	School Commitment	.356	.127	.127	.206
2	School Powerlessness	.377	.142	.016	-.093
3	Race	.393	.154	.012	.130
4	Perceptions of Teacher Expectations	.412	.170	.015	.102
5	Socioeconomic Status	.416	.173	.003	-.090
6	Curriculum Track	.422	.178	.005	.074
7	Perceptions of School Officials' Concern	.423	.179	.001	.052
8	Academic Performance	.425	.181	.001	.040
9	Parent-Child Relationship	.426	.182	.001	.032
10	Perceptions of Curriculum Relevance	.427	.182	.000	.016

await subsequent research.

Let us proceed to a further examination and interpretation of the linkages presented in the revised model. We have found that there is no direct relationship between the social background characteristics examined (race, socioeconomic status, and family environment) and the dependent variable, delinquency. Although it can be said that blacks, youths from lower-class backgrounds, and youths lacking strong ties to family are more likely to become delinquent than whites, youths from middle- or upper-class backgrounds, and those with strong ties to family, such an assertion reflects the fact that social background characteristics are related to school factors which are, in turn, related to delinquency. Thus, the central proposition derived from the theory on which this research was based, that school-pupil interaction processes act as salient intermediaries between social background characteristics and delinquent involvement, has been empirically supported.

We have observed that race and social class are related to both academic performance and curriculum track, although we have interpreted these findings in terms of the conjoint influence of the two independent variables. When social class was controlled, the relationship between race and the two dependent variables was considerably minimized. A plausible interpretation of this result is

that blacks indeed are more likely to fail academically and to be in noncollege preparatory tracks than whites, but that this is due to the fact that race and class are closely related in the sample population. Particularly, most of the blacks in the sample, as might be expected in a metropolitan area, are lower class. It is suggested that race is related to the school variables only as a function of its association with social class. Thus, we would anticipate that upwardly mobile blacks would be less likely to fail academically and to be assigned to noncollege preparatory tracks than lower-class whites. However, we must make this interpretation with caution since the sample does not afford a sizeable group of middle-class blacks which would be required for an adequate test of this hypothesis.

We have also observed that, although family environment is related to social class, it is not directly related to academic performance or curriculum track. That is, youths who lack strong ties to family are more prone to fail academically and to be noncollege-bound than youths who are strongly attached to their families not because these family attachments, per se, predispose them toward working less diligently to achieve good grades, for example, but because youths lacking strong family attachments are apt to come from lower-, rather than middle- or upper-class backgrounds. A modification in the theoreti-

cal argument set forth in Chapter II is, therefore, required. It will be recalled that the argument was made that youths who lack commitments to parents (who represent conventional others) are likely to have lower stakes in conformity than youths who have made such commitments. Consequently, it was postulated that youths who lack strong ties to parents are more likely to have lower commitments to school. Implicit in this is the notion that attachments made to the conventional order in one context tend to spread to other contexts as well. The findings do not support this notion, at least with regard to commitments made to family. We have observed that youths lacking strong ties to family are more likely to do poorly in school only because of the association between family environment and social class. Therefore, attachments to parents are not strong predictors of school performance, which, in turn, affects school commitment. It is suggested that the lack of a connection between family attachment and school commitment is explained in part by the minimized role of the family as a socializing and controlling institution in a complex society.

Looking now to the school variables, it appears that both academic performance and curriculum track set in motion a process of school-pupil interactions through which we are able to trace a path to the dependent variable, delinquency. However, whereas it was predicted that

curriculum track would serve as a strong determinant of student school experiences, we have found instead that curriculum track has little predictive utility in terms of student responses to school. In particular, students in noncollege preparatory tracks are no more likely to perceive their learning experiences as irrelevant to future occupational goals or to perceive that school officials are not concerned about them than students in the college preparatory track. These findings are quite surprising, especially in light of their inconsistency with the findings of previous research. Further, we have found that tracking is only weakly related to perceptions of teacher expectations. It is suggested that tracking may have constituted a more potent predictor had more rigid differentiation of students been employed in the school system studied. Contrary to this interpretation, one could argue, of course, that the noncollege preparatory curriculum actually is relevant to future occupational goals of the noncollege-bound. More than a decade has elapsed since the data were collected for the studies of Sexton, Stinchcombe, Hargreaves, and Polk and Richmond. One could also argue, perhaps, that school officials do not show differential concern to the college-bound student or the high achiever. It is recognized, for example, that in recent years the trend in education has been to shift attention from the "gifted" to the "culturally deprived"

and "disadvantaged" child (as evidenced by the volume of literature in this regard and by the outpouring of federal, state, and local funds to remedial and vocational program development). Although the possibility of these contingencies must be recognized, it seems more plausible to this researcher to conclude that our failure to observe a correlation between track and student perceptions of their school experiences is more correctly viewed as a result of the absence of clearcut tracking patterns in the schools studied (which may in itself be indicative of educators' sensitivities to the problems resulting from tracking).

We have observed a direct relationship between academic performance and perceptions of teacher expectations. This finding indicates that those who perform well in school perceive that teachers expect them to do well, while those who fail perceive that teachers expect little of them. It also provides at least partial support for the findings of Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), who concluded that teacher expectations have an effect upon student performance which acts as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Although we are not able to fully substantiate these conclusions because we have not collected data from teachers which would show the accuracy of student perceptions, and because we do not have time-series data through which to demonstrate the causal order of the variables, related findings of this research have a bearing

upon our interpretation. When asked what grades they felt they were capable of achieving, high achievers reported substantially higher academic self-evaluations than low achievers. The correlation between these items is moderate ($r = .348$). Further, academic self-evaluation is moderately related to perceptions of teacher expectations ($r = .425$). In addition, students were asked to indicate whether their grades had improved, remained unchanged, or declined since they entered junior high school. Weak, though substantively significant, correlations were obtained both between grade change and current academic performance and between grade change and perceptions of teacher expectations. The findings indicate that those who do well tend to do better, while those who do poorly tend to do more poorly. Moreover, these changes are associated with perceptions of teacher expectations. It may be that problems are exacerbated as one proceeds through higher grade levels. The findings of studies which report that delinquency declines with school dropout (cf. Elliott and Voss, 1974) lend credence to this interpretation.

As shown in the revised model, both perceptions of curriculum relevance and perceptions of teacher expectations influence perceptions of school officials' concern for students. Further, perceptions of teacher expectations are directly related to perceptions of curriculum relevance.

Thus, we may conclude that students who perceive that teachers expect little of them tend also to perceive that their learning experiences will not enhance their future occupational opportunities. Both of these negative attitudes are related to the perception that teachers, counselors, and school administrators are not concerned for either their academic or personal welfare.

In addition, perceptions of school officials' concern for students is a powerful predictor of the two more generalized student response patterns, school powerlessness and school commitment. The more strongly a student perceives that he is not the object of the concern of those school officials with whom he is forced to interact, the more apt he is also to feel alienated from school, to view school as boring and meaningless, and to reject the educational system's achievement orientation. One key to an explanation of why this occurs is found in student responses to related questionnaire items regarding the relative concern which students perceive for themselves vis á vis other students. There is a strong correlation ($r = .545$) between student perceptions of the concern shown toward them and a related scale designed to measure student perceptions of the equality of treatment of students. That is, students who feel that school officials are not concerned about them also perceive that they are the objects of discriminatory treatment. The connection

between perceptions of school officials' concern for students and school commitment may be interpreted in terms of students' reactions to the prejudicial treatment which they perceive. Those who feel discriminated against "reject the rejectors". Finally, once students become insensitive to the demands of conventional authority represented by the school, there is less risk involved in engaging in delinquent behavior because they lack the investment in conventional action which would be jeopardized by such behavior.

The causal sequence is thus complete. It runs from low social status to poor school performance to negative perceptions of school-pupil interactions and feelings of powerlessness to alter the situation to lack of commitment to school to the commission of delinquent acts. All statistical relations relevant to this chain are consistent with it.

The general conclusion is the following: the absence of commitment to conventional action is directly related to delinquent involvement. In the life of the adolescent the school acts as a more powerful determinant of commitment to conventional action than either the family or the influences concomitant with race or social class position. However, to say that a child is not committed to school is not to say that he will become delinquent. (It will be recalled that the entire set of predictor variables

included in this research is able to account for only 18 percent of the variance in delinquency.) It is suggested that commitments made to conformity within other relevant contexts serve to hold youths into the legitimate system. On the other hand, the lack of commitment to conventional others within other relevant contexts, as well as the existence of commitment to nonconventional others (particularly, it is suggested, to delinquent peers) may also serve as precursors of delinquent involvement.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

In this study a theoretical explanation of delinquency has been tested which constitutes a modification of the formulation set forth in control theory. An explanation of delinquent behavior has been developed that places heavy emphasis on commitment to school. It has been suggested that the critical conditions for the emergence of delinquent behavior are academic failure and negative interactional outcomes between the student and the school which culminate in the student's loss of, or failure to develop, school commitment. In addition, it has been suggested that social background characteristics, especially social class, provide the student with a certain initial commitment to conformity which affects the likelihood that he will develop commitment within the school context.

In this research the basic sampling unit was the school. A purposive selection of three public schools was made in order to provide the researcher with a population of students reflecting a maximum range of social, economic, and racial characteristics. The schools were

located in a medium-size city in the Southeastern United States. Sophomores enrolled in the school system during the 1973-74 school year comprised the target population. Following the exclusion of forty-three students from the sample on the basis of their failure to provide usable questionnaires, the study population consisted of 923 students.

A cross-sectional design was employed, and data were gathered in the three schools on several days approximately one month prior to closing of the school year. No effort was made to follow up on absentees, and a sizeable proportion (approximately thirty percent) of the potential study population was lost to absenteeism and dropout. However, it is felt that the inclusion of these students would only have served to enhance the confidence one could have in the study results, as previous literature on the subject suggests that these students are most likely to be characterized by school failure, school-pupil interaction problems, and delinquency.

As conceptualized in this study, delinquency refers to a class of behavior. That is, the concern was with the incidence of delinquent acts rather than with individuals who have been labeled delinquent by official agents of social control. The measure of delinquency employed provided an estimate of the number and severity of delinquent acts committed by each respondent since entering

CONTINUED

3 OF 4

junior high school. A self-report instrument, a modification of the Nye-Short delinquency checklist, was included in the questionnaire. The response categories were transformed into frequencies, and classification of offenses with regard to seriousness was accomplished utilizing a simple and conservative weighting technique. The thirteen items which were included in the delinquency scale represented a range of illegal behavior from use of intoxicants and school truancy to grand theft.

The guiding proposition for this study was that delinquent behavior is a product of failure to develop commitment to conventional values and goals. It was hypothesized that the school is a critical social context for the development of such commitment, although it is submitted that commitment to conventional action developed in other contexts may serve a similar controlling function. It was proposed that social background characteristics would have differential impact upon commitment to conventional action, but that commitment developed in the school context would exert a mediating effect upon the influences of social background factors.

The findings confirmed the central proposition. The predictors derived from the school context produced the highest levels of association with delinquency. However, some of the hypotheses were not confirmed.

First, it was predicted that the strength of the parent-child relationship would be positively correlated with the nature of the child's school experiences. This expectation was based on the assumption that commitments made in one context were likely to spread to other contexts as well. However, it was found that the quality of the family environment was not directly related to either the school variables or to delinquency. We must seriously consider whether the family constitutes a potent socializing and controlling force in the adolescent's life. The evidence presented here suggests that it does not.

Second, it was predicted that race would also be directly related to the quality of the school experience because blacks, by virtue of their inferior status position in American society, have lower initial stakes in conformity than whites. However, we have found that race is related to school experiences, and thus to delinquency, largely through its association with social class.

Third, the interrelationships among the school variables also diverge somewhat from the predicted linkages. The most important of the revisions made in the theoretical model with regard to the school factors concerns curriculum tracking. It was predicted not only that students who are not provided with sufficient inducement to become committed to school have high probabilities of becoming

delinquent, but also that organizational features of the school system which are viewed by the organization as conducive to the fulfillment of its socializing and controlling functions are actually dysfunctional to these purposes. The primary organizational feature with reference to which this latter prediction was made was the curriculum tracking system. For all intents and purposes, we have been unable to test this hypothesis because the school system studied did not employ a rigid tracking system. The ability grouping system which was employed did not result in a clearcut differentiation of students. We have concluded that the failure of tracking to emerge as a salient predictor variable is due to this fact, rather than the alternative interpretation that tracking patterns do not impact negatively upon noncollege-bound segments of the student population.

Finally, another revision in the predicted linkages among the school variables regards student perceptions of school officials' concern for students. We have found that these perceptions do not flow from academic performance characteristics or from curriculum track assignment, but rather from perceptions of teacher expectations and perceptions of curriculum relevance in terms of occupational payoff. We have suggested that these perceptions are also associated with perceptions of discriminatory treatment at the hands of school authorities.

However, in accordance with the overall theoretical orientation of the model, we have uncovered a causal chain which leads from low social status to poor performance to negative interactions with school authorities (indications are that academic failure and negative interactions with school authorities may be mutually reinforcing) and school powerlessness to lack of school commitment to delinquency. The strongest predictor variable is that most proximate to delinquency in this sequence, the school commitment factor. The data thus support the hypothesis that the school is a critical social context for the generation of delinquent behavior.

These findings allow a variety of interpretations. However, it is suggested that delinquency is, in part, a reflection of the adolescent's failure to develop commitment to school, on the one hand, and, on the other, of the school's failure to provide sufficient inducement to some students to make such commitment attractive and rewarding. Students who fail and who have negative interactions within the school setting are likely to neutralize or reject the values of the educational system, and to turn toward those of their peers who share their attitudes. As a release from boredom, at the very least, and perhaps as an alternate source of the self-esteem which they are likely to lack because of their negative experiences in school, these youths are apt to act upon situational in-

ducements to delinquent involvement. Particularly, it is suggested that they are apt to perceive that they are disapproved of already by school authorities, the "in group" of students, and by their parents (largely as a result of their in-school difficulties). Once their attachments to these conventional persons are impaired, the normative constraints against deviance are also apt to be weakened.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this study is to gather information on a variety of topics that involve and are important to many students. As you will see, we have included questions on such topics as your educational and occupational plans, course offerings, your feelings about school, and many other things that are related to student life. It is important that you understand that most of the questions do not have either right or wrong answers. Instead, most of the questions pertain to your own feelings and opinions. For that reason, we hope that you will carefully consider each question before answering it in the way that best expresses your personal opinion.

You will notice that we have not asked for your name anywhere in our questions. The reason is simple. Some of the questions we ask are about personal information that you may not wish others to know about and we want to be certain that your right to privacy is carefully protected. We hope that this will allow you to answer each question with complete honesty. Of course, should you choose not to answer one or more questions for any reason whatsoever, that is certainly another of your rights which we wish to

respect.

Once all of the questionnaires have been completed we will take them back to our office at the College of William and Mary where we will count and compare answers we get from several hundred students who attend this as well as other schools in the Norfolk area. We hope this will give us a better idea about how students in the Norfolk area feel about a number of important issues.

If you have any trouble understanding any of our questions, please raise your hand and someone will be glad to help you in any way they can.

Thank you for your time and your cooperation.

INSTRUCTIONS

After each question, there are several answers to choose from. Each answer has a number beside it. Find the answer to the question that seems best for you. Write the number of that answer in the space provided on the right-hand side of the page. Two examples are provided below:

1. Are you a student in high school?

   1. Yes
   2. No 1

Since you are a high school student, the appropriate answer is "1", and a number "1" should be recorded in the space just as we have shown in this example.

2. How old are you?

   1. 14
   2. 15
   3. 16
   4. 17
   5. 18 or above

Just as before, you should choose the answer that is appropriate and write the number of the answer that corresponds to your age in the blank on the right-hand side of the page. Thus, if you are 15 you would put the number "2" in the blank space; if you are 18 you would put a "5" in the blank space; and so on.

Sometimes you will be asked to explain an answer in your own words. When you come to these questions you will find a space in which to write your answer below the question. Ignore the numbers that appear in parentheses on the right-hand margins of each page, and do not write in the boxes that appear to the right of some of the questions.

Remember, there are usually no right or wrong answers. Always give the answer that seems best to you.

1. Race

   1. Black
   2. White
   3. Other

2. Sex

   1. Male
   2. Female

3. What grade are you in?

   1. Freshman
   2. Sophomore
   3. Junior
   4. Senior

4. Does your father, or the male head of your house, work?

   1. Yes
   2. No
   3. There is no male head of my house.

   If he does work, describe as best you can exactly what he does. (For example, milkman, high school teacher, cabinet maker, Navy Seaman, Army Lieutenant, hardware store manager.)

   _____

5. As far as you know, how much schooling did your father, or the male head of your house, complete?

   1. Completed 6th grade or less
   2. Completed 7th-9th grade
   3. Completed 10th or 11th grade
   4. Graduated from high school
   5. Completed 1-3 years of college
   6. Graduated from four-year college
   7. Completed graduate professional training leading to a master's degree, Ph.D., M.D., or other advanced degree
   8. Other (Please explain) _____
   9. There is no male head of my house.

6. Does your mother, or the female head of your house, work?

   1. Yes
   2. No
   3. There is no female head of my house.

If she does work, describe as best you can what she does.

_____

_____

7. As far as you know, how much schooling did your mother, or the female head of your house, complete?

   1. Completed 6th grade or less
   2. Completed 7th-9th grade
   3. Completed 10th or 11th grade
   4. Graduated from high school
   5. Completed 1-3 years of college
   6. Graduated from four-year college
   7. Completed graduate professional training, leading to a master's degree, Ph.D., or other advanced degree
   8. Other (Please explain) _____
   9. I have no mother or female head in my house.

8. With whom do you live?

   1. Mother and Father
   2. Mother and Stepfather
   3. Father and Stepmother
   4. Mother only
   5. Father only
   6. Other (Please explain) _____

Please answer the following questions by thinking about the mother or mother-figure in your home, and the father or father-figure in your home. If one of these is not present, do not answer about that parent. You should mark two answers for each of these questions, one for your mother (or mother-figure), and another for your father (or father-figure).

9. How well do you get along with your parents?

   1. Very well
   2. Quite well
   3. Not so well
   4. Not well at all

10. How much interest do your parents take in the things you do?

    1. Too much. I think he (she) is overly protective.
    2. Enough. He (she) lets me know he (she cares

without being nosy.
3. Very little
4. None

11. Do you think your parents would stick by you if you got into really bad trouble?

1. Certainly
2. Probably
3. Maybe
4. I doubt it
5. I don't know

Write the number of the answer that best expresses the way you feel about the following statements. Remember to mark one answer for each parent.

12. My parents make rules that seem unfair to me.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Uncertain
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

13. I think my parents understand me.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Uncertain
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

14. I would turn to my parents for help with a personal problem.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Uncertain
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

15. I feel unwanted by my parents.

1. Often
2. Sometimes
3. Seldom
4. Never

16. My parents help me when I come across things I don't understand.

    1. Often
    2. Sometimes
    3. Seldom
    4. Never

17. I share my thoughts and feelings with my parents.

    1. Often
    2. Sometimes
    3. Seldom
    4. Never

18. How well do your parents get along with each other? (Give only one answer.)

    1. Very well
    2. Quite well
    3. Not so well
    4. Not well at all

19. List the subjects you took last term, and the grade you received in each. Put a "1" for your grade if you received an "A", a "2" for a "B", a "3" for a "C", a "4" for a "D", and a "5" for an "F".

For each of the following subjects, indicate which class you are in. If you are in an accelerated class mark a "1"; if you are in a regular class, mark a "2"; if you are in a modified class, mark a "3".

20. English

21. Science

22. Math

23. Social Studies

24. Which of the following do you usually take?

    1. College preparatory classes
    2. Business classes
    3. Vocational classes
    4. A general course
    5. Other (Please explain) _____

25. Do you plan on going to college?

1. Yes, I definitely will
2. I'm pretty certain I will
3. I'm completely uncertain
4. I'm pretty certain I won't
5. No, I definitely will not

26. In general, how do you decide what classes to take?

1. My personal preference
2. Teachers' suggestion
3. Counselor's suggestion
4. Other (Please explain) _____
5. Parents suggestion
6. I don't know

27. What kind of work do most of your teachers seem to expect from you?

1. Excellent work
2. Good work
3. Fair work
4. Poor work
5. They don't seem to care
6. I don't know

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Mark a "1" if you strongly agree.
Mark a "2" if you mildly agree.
Mark a "3" if you are uncertain or don't have an opinion.
Mark a "4" if you mildly disagree.
Mark a "5" if you strongly disagree.

28. If I received a grade of A or B on an important test, most of my teachers would be surprised.

29. I am smarter than most teachers give me credit for.

30. If I received a grade of D or F on an important test, most of my teachers would be surprised.

31. Most teachers expect me to do excellent work.

32. School isn't going to have any payoff for me. No matter how hard I try, or how well I do in school, my high school education isn't going to help me to get a good job later.

33. What I am learning in school is going to be useful to me in the work I would most like to do eventually.

34. My high school education is helping to prepare me for the kind of work I would most like to do eventually.

35. School is preparing me to make decisions for myself.

36. School is helping me to get along with others.

37. School is helping me to become a better citizen.

38. The things we learn in school help me to understand what is going on around me.

39. School is helping me to better understand why other people behave the way they do.

40. School is giving me an ability to think clearly, which will be useful to me in day to day living.

41. School is so boring that I'd drop out if I could.

42. I can think of very little to say that would be favorable about this school.

43. High school is a waste of time.

44. In general, I would say that I like school.

45. School is dull and boring.

46. School is an enjoyable experience for me.

47. School is frustrating.

48. I'd rather be doing just about anything instead of going to school.

49. I can't think of anything I'd rather be doing instead of going to school.

50. Teachers don't care about students. They're just doing a job.

51. The only reason I stay in school is so that I can participate in extracurricular activities (clubs, athletics, student government, band, etc.).

52. How involved would you say you are in extracurricular activities?

    1. Very involved
    2. Somewhat involved
    3. Not very involved
    4. Not involved at all

53. If you didn't have to attend school until you were seventeen, do you think you would

    1. Have dropped out of school already?
    2. Drop out between now and the time you turn seventeen?
    3. Stay in school anyway?

54. Would you say that most of your teachers

    1. Enjoy having you in their classes?
    2. Don't care whether you're there or not?
    3. Wish you'd leave and not come back?

    1=strongly agree
    2=mildly agree
    3=uncertain or no opinion
    4=mildly disagree
    5=strongly disagree

55. Counselors don't care about students. They're just doing a job.

56. Principals don't care about students. They're just doing a job.

57. Teachers try to understand students.

58. My school counselor has been a help to me.

59. Most of my teachers take a personal interest in helping me learn.

60. I would feel comfortable talking to most of my teachers about a personal problem.

61. I would feel comfortable talking to my school counselor about a personal problem.

62. I would feel comfortable talking to school principals about a personal problem.

63. It's hard to have much respect for this school, after the way I've been treated here.

64. Teachers pick on me.

65. Sometimes I get into trouble unfairly because of things that happen in school.

66. I think school counselors try to help all kids equally.

67. Teachers show favoritism toward kids that get good grades.

68. Teachers take it out on a student if they know he's gotten in trouble with the law.

69. Counselors take it out on a student if they know he's gotten in trouble with the law.

70. Principals take it out on a student if they know he's gotten in trouble with the law.

71. Teachers mostly care about students who are going to go to college.

72. Counselors mostly care about students who are going to go to college.

73. Most teachers couldn't care less about me.

74. My counselor shows a lot of interest in me.

Other studies have found that everyone breaks some laws, rules, and regulations during his lifetime. Some break them regularly. Below are some that are frequently broken. Mark those that you have broken since beginning junior high school.

75. Driven a car without a license or permit.

1. Never
2. Once or twice
3. Several times
4. Very often

76. Taken little things (worth less than $2) that did not belong to you.

1. Once or twice
2. Several times
3. Very often
4. Never

77. Bought or drank beer, wine, or liquor

1. Very often
2. Several times
3. Never
4. Once or twice

78. Hooked school

1. Very often
2. Several times
3. Once or twice
4. Never

79. Had sexual relations with a person of the opposite sex.

1. Never
2. Once or twice
3. Several times
4. Very often

80. Smoked marijuana

1. Very often
2. Several times
3. Once or twice
4. Never

81. Run away from home

1. Never
2. Once or twice
3. Several times
4. Very often

82. Taken things of medium value (between $2 and $50)

1. Never
2. Once or twice
3. Several times
4. Very often

83. Experimented with drugs other than marijuana

1. Never
2. Once or twice
3. Several times
4. Very often

84. Purposely damaged or destroyed public or private property that didn't belong to you

1. Never
2. Once or twice
3. Three or four times
4. Five or more times

85. Take a car for a ride without the owner's permission

1. Never
2. Once or twice
3. Three or four times
4. Five or more times

86. Sold drugs

1. Never
2. Once or twice
3. Three or four times
4. Five or more times

87. Taken things of large value (worth more than $50)

1. Never
2. Once or twice
3. Three or four times
4. Five or more times

88. Have you ever been suspended from school?

1. Never
2. Once or twice
3. Three or four times
4. Five or more times

89. Have you ever been expelled from school?

1. Never
2. Once
3. Twice
4. Three or more times

90. Have you ever been picked up by the police?

1. Never
2. Once or twice
3. Three or four times
4. Five or more times

91. If you have ever been picked up by the police, when was the last time this happened?

    1. Never
    2. In the last year
    3. More than a year ago, but less than two years ago
    4. More than two years ago

92. Have you ever been brought before a juvenile court?

    1. Never
    2. Once
    3. Twice
    4. Three times
    5. Four times
    6. Five or more times

93. If you have ever been brought before juvenile court, please state when (as best you can remember), for what offenses, and what the judge decided to do about it (for example, put me on probation, fine me, dismiss the case, etc.)

94. Since grade school, have your grades

    1. Improved?
    2. Stayed about the same?
    3. Gotten lower?

95. What kind of grades do you think you are capable of getting?

    1. Mostly A's
    2. Mostly B's
    3. Mostly C's
    4. Mostly D's
    5. Mostly F's

96. If you could go as far in school as you would like, how far do you think you would go?

    1. Drop out of high school
    2. Graduate from high school
    3. On-the-job apprenticeship after graduation from high school
    4. Trade or business school after graduation from high school
    5. Some college or junior college
    6. Graduate from four-year college
    7. Master's degree, Ph.D., law degree, or other advanced degree

8. Other (please explain) _____

98. Some students feel that the school should offer a wide selection of subjects to fit the interests of more students. Below is a list of subjects. If any of them are not now taught at your school, but you feel that you would like to take them, mark them in the spaces at the right. Do not mark more than three subjects. You do not have to mark any if you do not feel that you would take them if they were offered. There is a line provided for you to enter a subject of your own choosing, if you desire.

1. Drafting
2. Gardening
3. Practical budgeting
4. Automotive mechanics
5. Carpentry
6. Child care
7. Plumbing
8. Hairdressing
9. Nurse's aide training
10. Electronics
11. _____

99. What kind of work would you most like to do when you complete your education and training? Please be as specific as you can, so that we can understand exactly what you mean.

100. Do you ever think of yourself as a "bad person", or as a delinquent?

1. Never
2. Once in a while
3. Often
4. All the time

101. Does anyone else ever think of you as a "bad person", or as a delinquent?

1. Never
2. Once in a while....who?_____
3. Often.....who?_____
4. All the time.....who?_____

102. Does anyone who is really important to you ever think of you as a "bad person", or as a delinquent?

1. No one who's really important to me ever thinks of me that way.
2. Yes, maybe once in a while
3. Yes, often
4. Yes, all the time

103. Do your friends ever do things that could get them into trouble with the police?

1. Yes, many of them do pretty often
2. Yes, but not very often
3. No, my friends seldom do things that could get them into trouble

104. If you have friends that do things that might get them into trouble, have any of them every been arrested by the police?

1. Yes, several times
2. Yes, but only once or twice
3. No, none of them have been arrested

105. Is getting good grades important to you?

1. Yes, very important
2. Yes, somewhat important
3. No, not very important
4. It doesn't matter to me at all
5. I don't know

106. Try to look into the future and think about the kind of job you expect you will have in ten years or so after you've completed your education and gotten as much training as you expect you'll need. About how much money would you expect to make a year in this job?

1. $5,000 or less
2. $5,000 to $8,000
3. $8,000 to $12,000
4. $12,000 to $20,000
5. $20,000 or more

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

1=strongly agree
2=mildly agree
3=uncertain or no opinion
4=mildly disagree
5=strongly disagree

107. The longer I'm in school the more I realize how little control I have over things that happen here.

108. Teachers and administrators make an effort to relate to each student as a unique human being.

126. The opinions and desires of students don't seem to make any difference in the way this school is run.

127. There's not much I can do about the way I'm treated here whether I like it or not.

128. You can't help feeling helpless when you see what's going on in the world today.

129. An average citizen can have an influence in things like government decisions if he makes himself heard.

130. Nobody here will let us make decisions for ourselves.

131. The views of high school students don't really count very much in our society.

APPENDIX B

SCALE ITEMS

The following is a complete list of all scale items employed in this research.

Teacher Expectation Scale

Item Content	Item to Scale Score Correlation
*If I received a grade of A or B on an important test, most of my teachers would be surprised.	.709
*I am smarter than most teachers give me credit for.	.530
If I received a grade of D or F on an important test, most of my teachers would be surprised.	.741
Most teachers expect me to do excellent work.	.546
Statistical summary:	mean=10.998; standard deviation= 3.344; all items are significant at the .001 level

*Indicates reversed item scoring

Curriculum Relevance Scale

Item Content	Item to Scale Score Correlation
School isn't going to have any payoff for me. No matter how hard I try, or how well I do in school my high school education isn't going to help me to get a good job later.	.618
*What I am learning in school is going to be useful to me in the work I would most like to do eventually.	.828
*My high school education is helping to prepare me for the kind of work I would most like to do eventually.	.842
Statistical summary:	mean=6.1701; standard deviation= 2.911; all items are significant at the .001 level

School Officials' Concern Scale One

Item Content	Item to Scale Score Correlation
*Teachers don't care about students. They're just doing a job.	.546
*Counselors don't care about students. They're just doing a job.	.539
*Principals don't care about students. They're just doing a job.	.603
Teachers try to understand students.	.574
My school counselor has been a help to me.	.532
Most of my teachers take a personal interest in helping me learn.	.595
I would feel comfortable talking to most of my teachers about a personal problem.	.476
I would feel comfortable talking to my school counselor about a personal problem.	.572
I would feel comfortable talking to school principals about a personal problem.	.457
*Most teachers couldn't care less about me.	.505
My counselor shows a lot of interest in me.	.511
Teachers and administrators make an effort to relate to each student as a unique human being.	.515
*When all is said and done, our teachers don't really care what we think.	.499

*Most high school teachers don't really care whether their students do well or not.	.564
*Usually our teachers don't really listen to our views in class.	.488
Statistical summary:	mean=43.868; standard deviation= 10.025; all items are significant at the .001 level

School Officials' Concern Scale Two

Item Content	Item to Scale Score Correlation
*It's hard to have much respect for this school, after the way I've been treated here.	.588
*Teachers pick on me.	.532
*Sometimes I get into trouble unfairly because of things that happen in school.	.522
I think school counselors try to help all kids equally.	.383
*Teachers show favoritism toward kids that get good grades.	.494
*Teachers take it out on a student if they know he's gotten in trouble with the law.	.710
*Counselors take it out on a student if they know he's gotten in trouble with the law.	.666
*Principals take it out on a student if they know he's gotten in trouble with the law.	.667
*Teachers mostly care about students who are going to go to college.	.618
*Counselors mostly care about students who are going to go to college.	.618
Statistical summary:	mean=27.077; standard deviation= 7.166; all items are significant at the .001 level

School Commitment Scale

Item Content	Item to Scale Score Correlation
School is so boring that I'd drop out if I could.	.690
I can think of very little to say that would be favorable about this school.	.609
High school is a waste of time.	.603
*In general, I would say that I like school.	.700
School is dull and boring.	.723
*School is an enjoyable experience for me.	.722
School is frustrating.	.544
I'd rather be doing just about anything instead of going to school.	.688
*I can't think of anything I'd rather be doing instead of going to school.	.467
Is getting good grades important to you?	.520
Statistical summary:	mean=24.753; standard deviation=7.813; all items are significant at the .001 level

School Powerlessness Scale

Item Content	Item to Scale Score Correlation
The longer I'm in school, the more I realize how little control I have over things that happen here.	.432
It's futile for a student to try and express his own views in the classroom.	.415
*Students have an important voice in the policies and rules of this school.	.465
Around here you have to do what the faculty and administration want you to do, not what you think is best.	.470
People like me have little influence on how this school is run.	.563
If a student disagrees with the views of his teacher, his grades in that class will probably suffer.	.515
*When all is said and done, you can really trust a teacher to be fair in his grading.	.392
High school students here are generally treated like children.	.569
The opinions and desires of students don't seem to make any difference in the way this school is run.	.649
There's not much I can do about the way I'm treated here whether I like it or not.	.606
Nobody here will let us make decisions for ourselves.	.602

The views of high school students don't really count very much in our society.

.641

Statistical summary:

mean=34.764
standard deviation=
7.780; all items
are significant
at the .001 level

Self-Reported Delinquency Scale

Item Content

Driven a car without a license or permit.

Takenlittle things (worth less than $2) that did not belong to you.

Bought or drank beer, wine, or liquor.

Hooked school.

Had sexual relations with a person of the opposite sex.

Smoked marijuana.

Run away from home.

Taken things of medium value (between $2 and $50).

Experimented with drugs other than marijuana.

Purposely damaged or destroyed public or private property that did not belong to you.

Taken a car for a ride without the owner's permission.

Sold drugs.

Taken things of large value (worth more than $50).

Statistical summary:

mean=13.428; standard deviation= 12.805; all items are significant at the .001 level

Father-Child Relationship Scale

Item Content	Item to Scale Score Correlation
How well do you get along with your father?	.752
Do you think your father would stick by you if you got into really bad trouble?	.703
*My father makes rules that seem unfair to me.	.550
I think my father understands me.	.790
I would turn to my father for help with a personal problem.	.770
*I feel unwanted by my father.	.679
My father helps me when I come across things I don't understand.	.714
I share my thoughts and feelings with my father.	.720
Statistical summary:	mean=30.167; standard deviation=22.703; all items are significant at the .001 level

Mother-Child Relationship Scale

Item Content	Item to Scale Score Correlation
How well do you get along with your mother?	.717
Do you think your mother would stick by you if you got into really bad trouble?	.599
*My mother makes rules that seem unfair to me.	.583
I think my mother understands me.	.796
I would turn to my mother for help with a personal problem.	.768
*I feel unwanted by my mother.	.639
My mother helps me when I come across things I don't understand.	.691
I share my thoughts and feelings with my mother.	.691
Statistical summary:	mean=18.636; standard deviation= 10.862; all items are significant at the .001 level

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