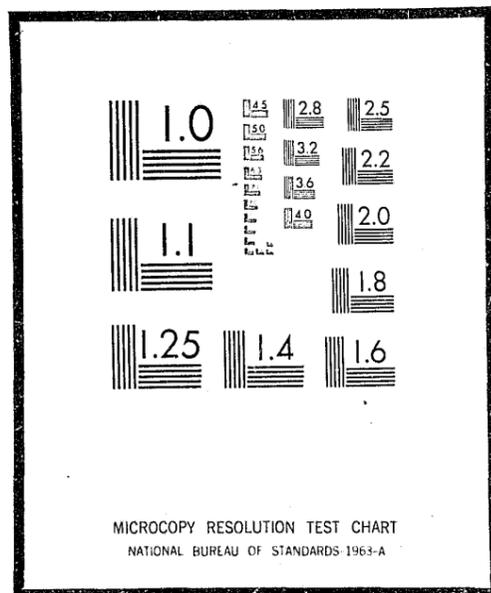


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## THE APPLICATION OF COMPLIANCE THEORY TO THE STUDY OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY\*

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### ABSTRACT

Although previous criminological research has related involvement in juvenile delinquency to numerous factors associated with school experience, insufficient attention has been devoted to the application of organizational theory as a means by which the quality of school experiences might be better interpreted. This study, based on an analysis of data obtained from 923 high school sophomores in 1974, evaluates the applicability of one such organizational model, Etzioni's compliance theory, to the study of that aspect of delinquency that is associated with school experiences. The findings suggest that the public schools, in attempting to assure desired levels of social control over student populations, exercise sufficient degrees of what Etzioni has termed coercive power that they stimulate relatively high levels of alienative involvement among the students over whom they have control. This alienative involvement is shown to be a predictor of responses among students which imply reduced organizational effectiveness with regard to the probability of attaining the formal goals of the school organization as well as being directly related to the probability of involvement in delinquency.

### THE APPLICATION OF COMPLIANCE THEORY TO THE STUDY OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Research reflects a continuing awareness of the relevance of school involvements, experiences, and performance in attempts to both predict juvenile delinquency and better understand its consequences. Considerable attention has been focused on such specific variables as truancy (Johnson, 1942; Brownell, 1954; Frum, 1958; Reiss and Rhodes, 1959), school drop-outs (Lichter, et al., 1962; Elliott, 1966; Elliott and Voss, 1974), academic performance (Kvaraceus, 1945; Toby and Toby, 1961; Reiss and Rhodes, 1961; Gold, 1963, 1970; Short and Strodbeck, 1965; Polk and Halferty, 1966; Hirschi, 1969; Kelly and Balch, 1971; Gold and Mann, 1972), curriculum tracking (Sexton, 1961; Goldberg, et al., 1966; Hargreaves, 1968; Schafer, 1972), sanctioning systems and school record keeping procedures (Vinter and Sarri, 1965; Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968; Lederer, 1971), pupil perceptions of curriculum relevance (Elliott, 1962; Short, 1964; Stinchcombe, 1964; Pearl, 1965), and pupil commitment to the school (Toby, 1957; Polk and Halferty, 1966; Sugarman, 1967; Hargreaves, 1968; Schafer, 1969; Hirschi, 1969; Kelly and Pink, 1973).

Despite the fact that several organizational characteristics of the public school system have been linked to

delinquent involvement in this body of literature, and despite the equally obvious fact that students are participants in school organizations, attempts to examine the impact of the school organization on delinquency are lacking. Indeed, even in the field of the sociology of education, examinations of public schools as formal organizations have been scarce until relatively recently (Bidwell, 1965; Corwin, 1967, 1970, 1974; Herriott and Hogkins, 1973). Even in those organizational analyses that are available, insufficient attention has been shown to the influences of formal organizational characteristics on the attitudes and behavior of organizational participants. This shortcoming in both the criminological and organizational research is, perhaps, related to an emphasis on comparative structural analyses in the field of organizational research over the past decade or so (cf. Pugh, et al., 1963, 1969a, 1969b; Hickson, et al., 1969; Blau and Schoenherr, 1971), an emphasis that has been pursued at the expense of more social psychologically oriented research.

The reasons for the paucity of research on the affect of the school organization on student attitudes and behavior notwithstanding, the relevance of this issue for the study of juvenile delinquency has been clearly demonstrated in those studies that have incorporated pertinent organizational variables in more explicitly criminological research. This suggests that theoretical models that have been employed in organizational analyses might provide useful means by which we

can approach the explanation of that aspect of delinquency that is associated with school experience. Toward that end, the purpose of this research is to evaluate the extent to which Etzioni's compliance theory (1961, 1965) provides a conceptual model that facilitates a movement toward a more thorough understanding of the influence of the school organization on juvenile delinquency. Moreover, in attempting to apply the basic structure of compliance theory to the study of juvenile delinquency, we are equally interested in non-delinquent consequences of organizational influences on the attitudes and behavior of students, consequences that reflect on the success of the public school system in attaining the change-oriented goals that are typically reflected in formal statements of the purposes of public schools.

#### The Theoretical Model

Compliance theory directs attention "both to a relation in which an actor behaves in accordance with a directive supported by another actor's power, and to the orientation of the subordinated actor to the power applied" (Etzioni, 1961: 3). Three basic types of power are delineated, each of which is distinguished on the basis of the means that are employed in obtaining compliance. Coercive power relies on the threat or actual use of physical sanctions, restrictions placed on freedom of movement, or an exercise of control over the means of satisfying basic needs; remunerative power flows from control over such reward systems as salaries

and wages; and normative power is derived from the capacity to allocate and manipulate symbolic reinforcers (Etzioni, 1961: 4-6). Although Etzioni has noted that each type of power may be exercised by a single organization, he has also observed that there is a tendency for each organization to rely more heavily on one type of power in order to avoid the conflict and neutralization of power which might result should equal emphasis be placed on more than one type of power.

The exercise of any one of these types of power within an organization implies something about the orientation that organizational participants will or do have toward the organization. The orientation of participants may be described in terms of their intensity of involvement in the organization and their degree of commitment to the organization. Etzioni has described three basic patterns of involvement in his development of compliance theory. Alienative involvement reflects an intense negative orientation toward the organization; calculative involvement is associated with either a weak positive or negative involvement; and moral involvement implies an intensively positive orientation. Etzioni argues that the exercise of coercive power typically leads to alienative involvement among the participants of the organization; remunerative power to calculative involvement; and normative power to moral involvement (Etzioni, 1961: 8-22). The rationale for predicting congruency between type of power exercised and type of participant involvement

is that congruency is viewed as more effective for the organization than is incongruency.

Compliance theory has generally depicted schools as having dual compliance structures which reflect elements of both normative power and coercive power, normative power being the more heavily emphasized. Our application of compliance theory to the study of the relationship between school organizations and delinquency, however, is premised on our hypothesis that coercive power is often more heavily emphasized in this type of organization than is normative power. We readily acknowledge the fact that schools have and employ the power to manipulate such symbolic rewards as grades, academic honors, and other symbols that reflect the exercise of normative power. Moreover, we note the importance of school organizations being able to stimulate moral involvement of the students who are cast as the lower participants in the school organization if the school is to effectively and efficiently move toward the acquisition of its change-oriented goals. Nevertheless, we are suggesting that care must be taken in distinguishing between the type of power that school officials might claim to exercise on a formal level (normative power) and the type that is actually reflected in their daily activities (coercive power). It is worth noting that the rigorous control structure of schools has been the topic of considerable philosophical debate (Goodman, 1964; Silberman, 1970; Jencks, et al., 1972). In any event, this type of distinction has proven useful in other

areas of organization research, particularly the distinctions that have been drawn between formal and operational goals (Perrow, 1961; Simon, 1964). It appears to us that many public schools represent organizations not so unlike what Goffman (1961) has described as "total institutions" and what compliance theory would refer to as dual compliance structures within which coercive power finds relatively greater emphasis than does normative power.

Although our suggestion that schools may be properly viewed as analogous to total institutions or coercive organizations may, at least initially, appear to be an overstatement of the manner in which public schools are organized, the notion that such a conceptualization may prove fruitful is not new (cf. Nelson and Besag, 1970). The general logic that can be advanced in support of this position with regard to its utility for students of juvenile delinquency has been well-stated by Kassebaum:

"The school, being nearly inescapable, becomes an institutional setting for not only education but for the struggles waged by youth against what they often experience as the heavy hand of adult control. The school, being required by law, must exert whatever control is necessary to maintain order and continuity from one day to the next, one year to the next...on the one hand, the schools are obliged to provide direction

and maintain sufficient order that instruction and learning can take place; on the other hand, the application of controls can transform the schoolroom into a battleground of clashing age-sets, cultures, and classes...The possibility then exists for school to be a compulsory custodial institution for many children." (Emphasis added.)  
(Kassebaum, 1974: 157-158)

Our position, then, can be succinctly stated: schools represent organizations which purport to use normative power, largely because normative power facilitates their acquisition of change-oriented goals through stimulating the moral involvement of students. Not really so unlike such coercive organizations as prisons, however, schools must be able to maintain some basic level of control over the students prior to being able to move toward the types of changes in capabilities and world-views which they would like to stimulate. Control cannot be simply assumed to flow from the characteristics of the lower participants in the school organization as might be the case in such normative organizations as churches. Schools are simply not in a position to rely upon either recruitment standards set by the organization or the self-selectivity exercised by students (cf. Carlson, 1964). Further, schools cannot exercise any significant degree of after-the-fact selectivity by removing students who do not reflect the desired level of moral involvement in the school

organization. These and other factors force school organizations to so structure their operations that the desired level of control over those being processed within the organization can be assured. This, in turn, implies that the exercise of any normative power will often take place within an organizational structure that is primarily designed to achieve social control, a structure that is not nearly so dissimilar to that of a total institution or coercive organization as many previously have assumed.

To the extent that the structure of public schools does reflect a greater emphasis on the exercise of coercive power, we would expect to find increasing degrees of negative commitment among student populations. Negative commitment, moreover, would be expected to stimulate student responses to the school organization that would impair the success of the school in attaining its change-oriented goals. Unfortunately, the exact causal sequence has not been carefully specified in existing formulations of compliance theory. It seems possible, however, to attempt to reduce the relatively complex notion of commitment to the school organization to more manageable components. The hypothesized ordering of these components that we propose to examine in this research is presented in Figure 1.

//INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE//

Initially, we are suggesting that the coercive elements of the structure of school organizations systematically deprives students of any significant degree of control over that segment of their lives which falls within the scope of control that is exercised by the school. The scope of control and degree of coercion that an organization can apply vary, of course, both between and within types of organizations. A maximum security penitentiary, for example, has a far greater scope of control and is legally empowered to exercise more coercive power than is the case with a public school. One can, nevertheless, conceive of a continuum of organizational types along which public schools might represent a more narrow scope of control and in which the degree of coercion employed is relatively slight. Private boarding schools would then represent organizations with a somewhat greater scope of control and in which greater degrees of coercion are allowed. Military prep schools and academies would represent an even greater movement along the continuum, (although we recognize that private schools and academies have significantly greater powers of selectivity in recruiting members). Prisons and custodially-oriented mental hospitals would fall at the extreme of the continuum. In all such organizations, however, participants lack the power to meaningfully influence the policies, rules, regulations, and programs that are established by the organization as means by which the organizational goals are to be pursued. Thus, the potential for positive involvement in

and commitment to the organizations is viewed as being initially broken by the alienation of participants that follows the adoption of a basically coercive organizational structure. The key dimension of this structurally-generated alienation is defined in this research as powerlessness, but by this we mean feelings of powerlessness that are specific to the organization rather than the more general notion of powerlessness that has been described by Seeman (1959). This conceptualization is consistent with examinations of contextual powerlessness that have been reported elsewhere (cf. Thomas and Zingraff, 1975).

The alienation of students in school organizations is viewed as a determinant of other responses to the school organization which imply that the effectiveness of the organization in attaining change-oriented goals will be impaired. Specifically, as can be seen in the schematic presentation of our model that is provided in Figure 1, alienation is directly linked to affect toward school personnel, evaluations of organizational goals, and affect toward the school organization. Our hypothesis is that increasing levels of powerlessness will be related to negative affect toward teachers, negative evaluations of the formal goals of the school organization, and negative affect toward involvement in the school organization. Each of these consequences of powerlessness are viewed as impairing the success of the school in attaining its goals and, of equal importance to the present research, each is viewed as a predictor of delinquency. The

exact nature of these expectations can be best expressed in the following propositions:

- Proposition 1: The greater the degree of structurally-generated powerlessness, the more negative the affect expressed toward school personnel.
- Proposition 2: The greater the degree of structurally-generated powerlessness, the more negative the evaluation of organizational goals.
- Proposition 3: The greater the degree of structurally-generated powerlessness, the more negative the affect expressed toward involvement in the school organization.
- Proposition 4: The more negative the affect expressed toward school personnel, the more negative the evaluation of organizational goals.
- Proposition 5: The more negative the affect expressed toward school personnel, the more negative the affect expressed toward the school organization.
- Proposition 6: The more negative the evaluation of organizational goals, the more negative the affect expressed toward involvement in the school organization.

Proposition 7: The more negative the affect expressed toward school personnel, the greater the degree of involvement in delinquency.

Proposition 8: The more negative the evaluation of organizational goals, the greater the degree of involvement in delinquency.

Proposition 9: The more negative the affect expressed toward involvement in the school organization, the greater the degree of involvement in delinquency.

In short, our conceptual model suggests that schools are appropriately viewed as formal organizations which must pursue both control and change goals within a single organizational structure. On a formal level, schools would prefer to present themselves as what Etzioni has termed normative organizations. On an operational level, however, the requirement that an adequate level of social control be maintained over those who are required by law to remain as organizational participants dictates the incorporation of elements of coercive power in school organizations. Our hypothesis is that the coercive elements of the organizational structure are more emphasized than are the normative elements. Following the orientation of compliance theory, we are led to conclude that, to the extent that our hypothesis that coercive power is more heavily emphasized than normative power is valid, the exercise of coercive power will set a

process in motion that will both impair organizational effectiveness through stimulating negative commitment to the organization and increase the probability of delinquent involvement.

#### Research Design and Methodology

In order to operationally test the implications of this theoretical model, data were obtained from a sample of 966 public school sophomores who were attending school in an SMSA located in the southeastern section of the United States in 1974. Properly completed questionnaires were returned by 923 students, 95.5 percent of those contacted. Because the sampling unit was classes rather than individual students, and because we were not able to control such factors as absence from school on the days during which the data were collected, we cannot argue that our sample is fully representative, but we are not aware of any major biases that would significantly affect the quality of our analysis. Indeed, we would argue that those who either were not in school or that refused to cooperate were quite probably less committed to the school than those from whom we did obtain data. This would tend to make our findings more conservative than would have been the case had we been in a position to draw a purely random sample.

Perhaps a more important sampling consideration is that, while we collected data in three of the five high schools in the metropolitan area where the research was

conducted, the organizational structures of the three schools were very similar. This, in turn, precludes any comparative organizational analysis that would have otherwise allowed us to examine the assumption that variations in the degree of reliance on coercive power will affect the levels of structurally-generated alienation that can be found among organizational participants. On the other hand, tests of the implications of our propositions do not require comparative analyses. Instead, the basic issue revolves around whether or not levels of alienation detected among students can be linked to feelings of powerlessness that are linked to the nature of the school organization. Because our contextual measure of powerlessness was designed to examine this linkage, the purpose of the present study is not impaired by the absence of comparative data.

The manner in which the major concepts in our propositions were operationalized is described below and sample indicators from the attitudinal measures are provided in Appendix A.

#### Alienation

Measures of alienation that have been reported in prior organizational research often differ considerably from the conceptual definitions of alienation that are available in much of the sociological literature. Etzioni (1961), for example, describes alienation as negative involvement in an organization; Aiken and Hage (1966) refer to it as a feeling

of disappointment or dissatisfaction with work. Our conceptualization, despite our intent to evaluate the applicability of compliance theory to the study of juvenile delinquency, follows Seeman's (1959) discussion of powerlessness rather closely with the exception that our intent is to employ a contextual rather than a societal referent for levels of alienation. We do not, however, feel that our emphasis on the notion of structurally-generated powerlessness is at all inconsistent with the basic assertions of compliance theory. Instead, it represents an attempt on our part to more clearly delineate the manner in which components of negative involvement in an organization are interrelated. Thus, each of our predictors of delinquency may be viewed as components of negative involvement in the school organization, but powerlessness is viewed as the most direct effect of the adoption of a dual compliance structure within which the primary emphasis is placed on the exercise of coercive power. Our contextual measure of powerlessness contains seven Likert-type attitude items that were selected from a larger pool of potential items. In this and the other attitudinal measures, final item selections were accomplished by correlating each item score with an initial summated scale score. Unless the item-to-scale correlations obtained were equal to or greater than .50, the item was defined as non-discriminatory and therefore deleted from the computation of a final scale score (for a more complete discussion and evaluation of this method of item selection

see Thomas, et al., 1974). The higher the scale score on this variable, the higher the level of structurally-generated powerlessness. The scale has a mean of 21.545 and a standard deviation of 5.491.

#### Affect Toward School Personnel

Our conceptual model suggests that three interrelated consequences flow directly from levels of powerlessness that are generated by the organizational structure of the school. Of these three consequences, the level of affect expressed toward school personnel is particularly important in that it is, in turn, a determinant of the other two consequence variables. Teachers were chosen as the most relevant object toward which affect could be measured, and the content of the operational measure focuses on the extent to which the students feel teachers are concerned about students. The final scale contains ten items. The lower the scale score on this measure, the more negative the affect toward teachers. The mean of the scale is 23.038 with a standard deviation of 7.116.

#### Evaluations of Organizational Goals

The formal goals of school organizations call for changes in the attitudes, values, and capabilities of students which will allow them to better understand and succeed in the adult world into which they will move following graduation. Attainment of such goals requires a substantial level of positive commitment to these goals on the part of students, but we have suggested that structurally-generated alienation

reduces commitment. Thus, we would expect alienated students to negatively evaluate the change-oriented goals of the school and to negatively evaluate the quality of their school experiences. An eight-item attitude measure was developed for this important variable. The lower the scale score on this variable, the more negative the evaluation of organizational goals. The mean of this measure is 30.382 with a standard deviation of 6.868.

#### Affect Toward Involvement in the School Organization

Feelings of powerlessness, negative affect toward school personnel, and negative evaluations of organizational goals are all viewed as determinants of levels of affect toward involvement in the school organization. Our measure of affect toward the school organization focuses on general positive and negative aspects of involvement in the school organization. The lower the scale score on this measure, the more negative the affect toward involvement. The mean of this eight-item measure is 28.388 with a standard deviation of 6.884.

#### Juvenile Delinquency

Our measure of degree of involvement in juvenile delinquency was derived from self-report items similar to the scale reported by Nye and Short (1957). This technique has numerous advantages over using such alternative indicators as official records, and the reliability and validity of the self-report approach has been supported in a considerable body of research (cf. Nye and Short, 1957; Dentler and Monroe,

1961; Reiss and Rhodes, 1961; Erickson and Empey, 1963; Voss, 1963; Christie, 1965; Elliott and Voss, 1974). Our intent was not to simply note whether or not each respondent had or had not been involved in various delinquent acts, but to attempt to construct a measure of degree of involvement in delinquency that would reflect both the seriousness of the delinquency that was reported and the frequency of delinquent behavior. In order to do so, the following weighting system was employed. Driving a car without a license, purchasing and/or drinking liquor, petty theft, and school truancy were assigned a seriousness weight of 1; running away from home, having sexual relations with a member of the opposite sex, and smoking marijuana were assigned a weight of 2; theft of objects valued at between \$2 and \$50, destroying property, and experimenting with drugs other than marijuana were given a weight of 4; and sale of drugs, auto theft, and grand larceny were given a weight of 8. The frequency of each type of behavior was coded in the following manner: never was set equal to 0; once or twice to 1; three or four times to 2; and very often or five times or more to 3. The frequency weights were then multiplied by the seriousness weights for each of the thirteen offense types and the products were summed. Each respondent's scale score was set equal to this sum. The higher the scale score, the greater the degree of delinquent involvement. The mean of this measure is 16.170 with a standard deviation of 18.085.

### Analysis and Findings

The model which is outlined in Figure 1 predicts a number of direct and indirect linkages both among the variables that represent responses to the structural organization of the school and between these variables and levels of involvement in juvenile delinquency. Because of the complexity of these linkages, our analysis is divided into three segments. In the initial section we will review the findings relevant to the interrelationships between structurally-generated powerlessness, affect toward school personnel, evaluation of organizational goals, and affect toward involvement in the school organization. The second portion of the analysis focuses on the linkages between these variables and delinquency involvement. The final segment reports on the findings derived from a multiple regression analysis that was designed to determine the proportion of the variance in delinquency involvement that can be accounted for by our predictor variables as well as our evaluation of the relative importance of the several independent variables.

#### Segment I: Student Responses to the School Organization

The logic of this aspect of our analysis may be simply summarized. If, as we have predicted, powerlessness is both directly and indirectly linked to affect toward involvement in the school organization, the introduction of both affect toward school personnel and evaluations of organizational goals as control variables should not significantly alter the magnitude of the zero-order correlations between

powerlessness and affect toward involvement. Should the zero-order correlations be significantly reduced, we would have to question the viability of our prediction of a direct linkage, and a modification of the model outlined in Figure 1 would have to be considered. Similarly, the direct and indirect linkage predicted between affect toward school personnel and affect toward involvement in the school organization should not be significantly effected when the evaluation of organizational goals variable is held constant. Finally, the zero-order correlation between evaluation of organizational goals and affect toward involvement in the school organization should not be significantly diminished when the antecedent effect of both powerlessness and affect toward school personnel are held constant nor should the magnitude of the initial linkage between affect toward school personnel and affect toward involvement be reduced when the antecedent effect of powerlessness is controlled. Should these controls for antecedent variables yield major reductions in the respective zero-order correlations, spuriousness would be indicated, and a modification in the basic theoretical model would be necessitated. The statistical information required for an assessment of these several possibilities is provided in Table 1.

//INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE//

The zero-order correlations reported in the upper-half of Table 1 provide substantial support for Propositions 1-6. Relatively strong linkages are noted between powerlessness (X1) and both affect toward teachers (X2) and affect toward involvement in the school organization (X4). Further, both affect toward teachers (X2) and evaluations of organizational goals (X3) are strongly related to affect toward involvement variable (X4). Thus, the zero-order correlations that are presented in Table 1 are sufficiently substantial that no immediate modifications in our theoretical model are indicated.

The initial support for our propositions that was derived from an examination of the zero-order correlations must be qualified by the findings of our controlled analysis. The hypothesized linkages between affect toward school personnel (X2) and both evaluations of organizational goals (X3) and affect toward involvement in the school organization (X4) are supported by the controlled analysis. The introduction of relevant intervening and antecedent variables does not significantly influence the magnitude of the zero-order correlations. Similarly, the linkage between evaluations of organizational goals (X3) and affect toward involvement (X4) does not appear to be significantly altered when the antecedent effect of powerlessness (X1) is held constant. On the other hand, the initial levels of association between powerlessness (X1) and both evaluations of organizational goals (X3) and affect toward involvement (X4) are reduced

when the effect of affect toward school personnel (X2) is controlled. A comparable reduction in the zero-order correlations is also noted when the association between evaluations of organizational goals (X3) and affect toward involvement (X4) are examined after the introduction of affect toward school personnel (X2) as a control. These findings, in turn, imply that our measure of affect toward school personnel is a particularly important variable both because it appears to mediate the linkage between powerlessness and the other consequence variables and because it significantly influences the relationship between evaluations of organizational goals and affect toward involvement in the school organization. Thus, although all of the direct and indirect linkages that were predicted are supported by the controlled analysis, the strength of several of the linkages is revealed to be less than what we would have expected from an examination of the zero-order correlations.

These qualifications notwithstanding, this segment of our analysis rather clearly shows that levels of powerlessness that are associated with the structure of these public schools are determinants of three interrelated consequences that imply reduced effectiveness of the school organization in attaining its change-oriented goals. As levels of powerlessness increase, our respondents appear to develop negative attitudes toward their instructors, a rejection of the meaningfulness of the formal goals of the organization, and negative evaluations of the nature of their involvement in the

organization. Further, when such factors as powerlessness stimulate the development of negative affect toward school personnel, the probability that they will devalue organizational goals and their involvement in the organization appears to be considerably increased. Thus, quite apart from any linkages between the variables examined in this segment of our analysis and the degree of delinquent involvement, we must conclude that (1) there is evidence in support of the hypothesis that the structure of public school organizations generates important degrees of alienation among the student population; (2) alienation is significantly related to consequences that imply reduced levels of organizational effectiveness with regard to attaining the formal goals of the organization; and (3) that the consequences of alienation are interrelated in such a manner as to further inhibit the effectiveness of the school organization.

#### Segment II: School Involvement and Delinquency

The previous segment of our analysis presents findings that are of direct relevance to those interested in the school as a formal organization, but they shed no light on whether or not the structure of the school and the consequences of that structure enable us to better predict the involvement of public school students in juvenile delinquency. Our theoretical model, however, hypothesizes an indirect linkage between powerlessness and delinquent involvement; both direct and indirect linkages between affect toward school personnel and evaluations of organizational

goals and delinquency; and a direct link between affect toward involvement in the school organization and delinquency. Having already evaluated the structure of the initial segment of our model, a replication of that aspect of our analysis is unnecessary. We do, however, need to evaluate the nature of linkages between each of the initial four variables in our model and degree of delinquent involvement. The major elements of these linkages are presented in Table 2.

//INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE//

Although the zero-order correlations provided at the top of Table 2 show that there are low to moderate correlations between the four independent variables and delinquent involvement, the partial correlations provided at the base of the table show that there is not a direct link between each of these variables and delinquency. Further, these partial correlations imply the need for changes in the structure of the theoretical model which is outlined in Figure 1.

First of all, our model suggests that the influence of structurally-generated powerlessness (X1) on degree of delinquent involvement (X5) operates indirectly through the linkages between powerlessness and the three consequence variables (X2, X3, and X4). When the influence of these intervening variables is held constant, however, we note a reduction but not an elimination of the association between powerlessness and delinquency. This requires that we revise our

model in such a way as to reflect both a direct and an indirect effect of powerlessness on delinquency.

Second, although we had predicted a direct link between affect toward school personnel, evaluations of organizational goals, and level of delinquent involvement, these predictions do not appear to be supported by our controlled analysis. With regard to the affect toward school personnel variable, the zero-order correlation with delinquent involvement ( $r = -.271$ ) was reduced significantly when the relevant first-order partial correlations were calculated, but the hypothesized direct link remained present. When, however, second-order partial correlations were computed, the correlation between affect toward school personnel and delinquency net of both powerlessness and affect toward involvement approaches zero ( $r = -.067$ ). This, in turn, implies the need for a revision of our theoretical model. Similarly, although a direct link was predicted between evaluations of organizational goals and delinquent involvement, the zero-order correlation ( $r = -.198$ ) was reduced to zero when the intervening influence of affect toward involvement in the school organization was held constant ( $r = -.049$ ). Thus, a further modification in the structure of our model is dictated.

In brief, the analysis of this segment of our model shows that the propositions which relate affect toward school personnel and evaluations of organizational goals to involvement in juvenile delinquency (Propositions 7 and 8) are not

supported. Instead, the influence of these variables on delinquency operates through affect toward involvement in the school organization. Further, the fact that our controlled analysis did not eliminate the initial association between powerlessness and delinquent involvement requires the incorporation of an additional proposition:

Proposition 10: The greater the level of structurally-generated powerlessness, the greater the degree of involvement in delinquency.

### Segment III: Multiple Regression Analysis

The previous sections of our analysis provide us with a means to refine and reformulate the structure of our theoretical model, but not with any ability to evaluate the relative importance of the several predictors of delinquency nor with a specification of the proportion of the variance in delinquency involvement that may be attributed to the influences of the entire set of predictor variables. Further, at this point we have not attempted to ask whether the model will prove equally useful as we move from one cohort of the student population to another. It is toward these two important issues that we turn in this concluding segment of our analysis.

In order to determine the quality of the predictions of delinquency that may be obtained from our four independent variables, a stepwise multiple regression equation was computed. The results of this computation also provide us with an initial means of examining the relative importance of each

predictor variable. The multiple correlation coefficient we obtained was .352. Relative to the proportion of variance accounted for in contemporary analyses of delinquency (cf. Elliott and Voss, 1974), we interpret this level of correlation as quite good. Further, as would be expected from the modifications required in our model by earlier segments of our analysis, the relative importance of each predictor variable, as measured by the magnitude of the standardized regression coefficients, is supportive of the structure of the revised model. The most important variable is affect toward involvement in the school organization (Beta =  $-.208$ ); the second most important variable is level of powerlessness (Beta =  $.120$ ); the third most important is affect toward school personnel (Beta =  $-.080$ ); and the least important predictor is evaluations of organizational goals (Beta =  $-.026$ ). With the exception of the Beta reported for evaluations of organizational goals, all the regression coefficients are significant (i.e., each is greater than twice its standard error).

The fact that our revised model is supported and that a significant proportion of the variance in delinquency involvement can be accounted for by the predictor variables in our model does not, of course, demonstrate the applicability of the model for all categories of students. Thus, we computed separate multiple correlation coefficients for each of several separate categories of our sample to assess

the potential effects of sex, ethnicity, socioeconomic status of origin, the student's curriculum tract assignment, and academic performance. Each of these control variables were dichotomized. The results of controlled analysis show that the quality of the predictions obtained from our set of independent variables is not significantly altered as we move from one cohort of students to another: males ( $R = .320$ ), females ( $R = .382$ ); whites ( $R = .386$ ), blacks ( $R = .276$ ); high socioeconomic status ( $R = .339$ ), low socioeconomic status ( $R = .399$ ); college preparatory tract ( $R = .427$ ), non-college tract ( $R = .322$ ); above sample average grade point ( $R = .373$ ), below average grade point ( $R = .326$ ). These findings rather clearly demonstrate that the consequences of the exercise of coercive power in the schools from which we obtained data are significantly associated with degree of involvement in juvenile delinquency and that the magnitude of the associations observed do not vary greatly when specific cohorts of students are isolated.

#### Summary and Conclusions

The basic purpose of this paper has been to assess the extent to which student responses to their school experiences and involvements in juvenile delinquency can be accounted for by the application of Etzioni's compliance theory. Our extension of the basic structure of compliance theory suggests that as schools pursue their official change-oriented goals they operationally structure themselves to maintain a high level of social control. The development of formalized

means of assuring social control over students who are required by law to attend school regardless of their degree of commitment to the formal goals of education implies the exercise of coercive power. This can, in turn, stimulate relatively high levels of alienation among student populations, alienation which fosters negative affect toward school personnel, the formal goals of the school organization, and personal involvement in the school. These structurally-generated breaks in levels of commitment to the school not only inhibit organizational effectiveness, but also may lessen the student's commitment to the conventional order that the school represents. Thus, involvement in delinquency is viewed as a further consequence of the adoption of a dual compliance structure within which the exercise of coercive power is emphasized.

Our analysis, based on questionnaires obtained from a sample of 923 sophomores in 1974, provided a means by which the basic structure of our model could be examined and reformulated where necessary. The results of this analysis clearly demonstrate that a significant proportion of those in our sample perceived themselves to be powerless to control that segment of their lives related to school experiences. Feelings of powerlessness were found to be directly related to a series of consequences which imply reductions in levels of commitment to the school. Both powerlessness and the consequences of powerlessness were then shown to be predictors of degrees of involvement

in juvenile delinquency. The nature of the linkages between powerlessness and its consequences, moreover, was shown to account for significant proportions of the variance in delinquency involvement even when sex, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, curriculum tract, and academic performance were held constant.

These findings lead us to conclude that compliance theory can be usefully applied to that aspect of juvenile delinquency which is related to the school experience (Polk and Schafer, 1972). Thus, a theoretical model developed in the field of organizational research has proven quite relevant to a substantive area which has generally ignored organizational theory. Of equal importance, our findings clearly support those organizational researchers who argue that the social psychological consequences of structure be carefully studied (Lammers, 1974). In the case of schools, assessing the effects of organizational control on lower participants requires intensive case studies of student populations.

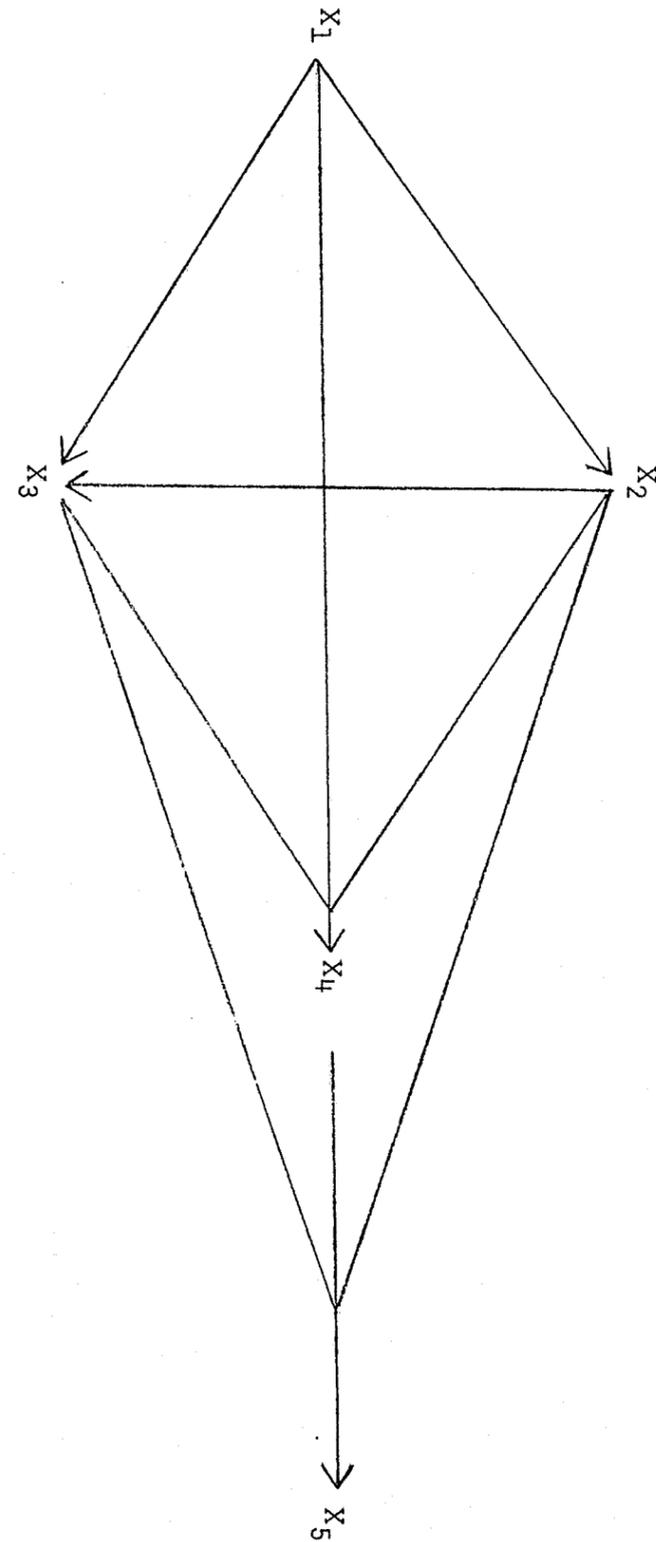
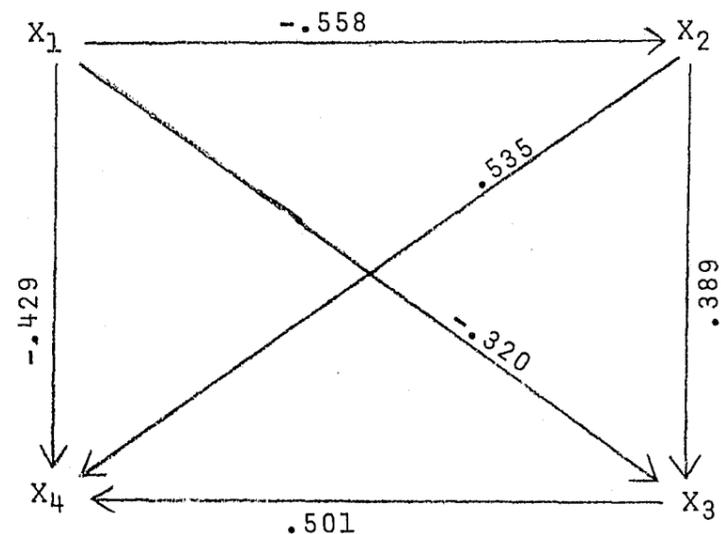


FIGURE 1  
 PREDICTED LINKAGES BETWEEN POWERLESSNESS (X1), AFFECT TOWARD SCHOOL PERSONNEL (X2), EVALUATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS (X3), AFFECT TOWARD INVOLVEMENT IN THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION (X4), AND INVOLVEMENT IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY (X5)

TABLE 1

INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN POWERLESSNESS (X1), AFFECT TOWARD SCHOOL PERSONNEL (X2), EVALUATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS (X3), AND AFFECT TOWARD INVOLVEMENT IN THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION (X4)

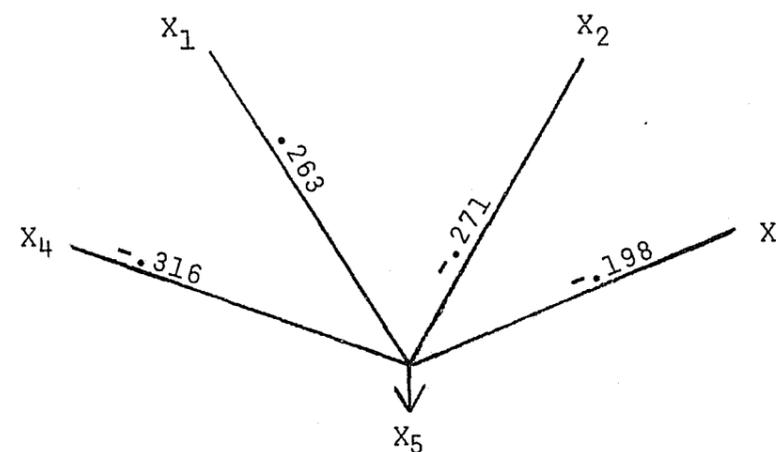


Partial Correlations

$X_1X_3.X_2 = -.139$	$X_2X_3.X_1 = .261$	$X_3X_4.X_1 = .425$
$X_1X_4.X_2 = -.186$	$X_2X_4.X_1 = .394$	$X_3X_4.X_2 = .380$
$X_1X_4.X_3 = -.327$	$X_2X_4.X_3 = .428$	$X_3X_4.X_1X_2 = .364$
$X_1X_4.X_2X_3 = -.146$	$X_2X_4.X_1X_3 = .324$	

TABLE 2

INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN POWERLESSNESS (X1), AFFECT TOWARD SCHOOL PERSONNEL (X2), EVALUATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS (X3), AFFECT TOWARD INVOLVEMENT IN THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION (X4), AND INVOLVEMENT IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY (X5)



Partial Correlations

$X_1X_5.X_2 = .139$	$X_2X_5.X_1 = -.154$	$X_3X_5.X_1 = -.126$	$X_4X_5.X_1 = -.232$
$X_1X_5.X_3 = .216$	$X_2X_5.X_3 = -.215$	$X_3X_5.X_2 = -.105$	$X_4X_5.X_2 = -.209$
$X_1X_5.X_4 = .147$	$X_2X_5.X_4 = -.123$	$X_3X_5.X_4 = -.049$	$X_4X_5.X_3 = -.256$
$X_1X_5.X_2X_3X_4 = .103$	$X_2X_5.X_1X_3X_4 = -.064$	$X_3X_5.X_1X_2X_4 = -.023$	$X_4X_5.X_1X_2X_3 = -.168$

APPENDIX A

The following sample items provided operational measures of the variables employed in this article:

<u>Item Content</u>	<u>Item to Scale Score Correlations</u>
ORGANIZATIONAL POWERLESSNESS	
The opinions and desires of students don't seem to make any difference in the way this school is run.	.714
There's not much I can do about the way I'm treated here whether I like it or not.	.643
Nobody here will let us make decisions for ourselves.	.665
People like me have little influence on how this school is run.	.592
AFFECT TOWARD TEACHERS	
Most teachers couldn't care less about me.	.644
When all is said and done, our teachers don't really care what we think.	.621
Most high school teachers don't really care whether their students do well or not.	.680
Usually our teachers don't really listen to our views in class.	.639
EVALUATIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS	
School is preparing me to make decisions for myself.	.771
School is helping me to become a better citizen.	.747
The things we learn in school help me to understand what is going on around me.	.738

<u>Item Content</u>	<u>Item to Scale Score Correlations</u>
School is giving me the ability to think clearly, which will be useful to me in day to day living.	.744
AFFECT TOWARD THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION	
School is so boring that I'd drop out if I could.	.713
School is dull and boring.	.743
School is an enjoyable experience for me.	.711
I'd rather be doing just about anything instead of going to school.	.699

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