

Title, Charles R. 1995. *Control Balance: Toward a General Theory of Deviance*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Elliott et al (1979)

... Our concern here is to return to consideration of the etiology of delinquent and criminal behavior and to propose a new integrated theoretical formulation as a guide to research and understanding. The focus is on the offender and those social processes and features of social contexts which both generate and maintain delinquent patterns of behavior. More specifically, our objective is to provide a conceptual framework in which traditional strain, social-learning, and social control perspectives are integrated into a single explanatory paradigm which avoids the class bias inherent in traditional perspectives and which accounts for multiple etiologies of (multiple causal paths to) sustained patterns of delinquent behavior. ...

Previous Theories: Strain and Control

The Anomie/Strain Perspective

The term *anomie* was coined by the French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1897/1938, 1951), who argued that, under certain social conditions, traditional societal norms and rules lose their authority over behavior, resulting in a state of normlessness, which Durkheim called *anomie*. During periods of rapid social change, traditional norms may be viewed as no longer applicable to behavior, leaving people free to pursue any ends by any means (*anomie*).

Merton (1957) was the first to elaborate Durkheim's concept of *anomie*. The basic premise of all theoretical statements in this tradition is that delinquent behavior is a result of socially induced pressures to delinquency, rather than pathological impulses of individuals. This general body of theory is thus referred to as strain theory, since it assumes that man is basically a conforming being who violates normative expectations only as a result of external social pressures

is important to note, however, that Cloward and Ohlin have changed the level of explanation from the macrosociological level which characterized Durkheim's work to an individual level. It is the *perception* of limited access to conventional goals that motivates the *individual* to explore deviant means. This change in level of explanation was essential for the integration of strain and learning perspectives.

Elliott and Voss's more recent work (1974) has attempted to deal with the class-bound assumptions inherent in strain theory. Their formulation extends Cloward and Ohlin's classic statement in the following three ways: (1) The focus on limited opportunities was extended to a wider range of conventional goals. (2) The goal-means disjunction was modified to be logically independent of social class. (3) The role of social learning in the development of delinquent behavior was further emphasized. Elliott and Voss have proposed a sequential, or developmental, model of delinquency: (1) Limited opportunities or failure to achieve conventional goals serves to (2) attenuate one's initial commitment to the normative order and (3) results in a particular form of alienation (normlessness), which serves as a "permitter" for delinquency, and (4) exposure to delinquent groups, which provide learning and rewards for delinquent behavior for those whose bonds have undergone the attenuation process.

From this perspective, aspiration-opportunity disjunctions provide motivation for delinquent behavior. As compared with Merton and Cloward and Ohlin, Elliott and Voss view *both* goals and opportunities as variables. They postulate that middle-class youths are just as likely to aspire beyond their means as are low-SES youths. While the absolute levels of aspirations and opportunities may vary by class, the discrepancies between personal goals and opportunities for realizing these goals need not vary systematically by class. Given Durkheim's (1897/1951:254) view that poverty restrains aspirations, Elliott and Voss have postulated that aspiration-opportunity disjunctions would be at least as great, if not greater, among middle-class youths. In any

case, the motivational stimulus for delinquent behavior in the form of aspiration-opportunity discrepancies or goal failure is viewed as logically independent of social class.

Normlessness, the expectation that one must employ illegitimate means to achieve socially valued goals (Seeman, 1959), is postulated to result from perceived aspiration-opportunity disjunctions. When a person cannot reach his or her goals by conventional means, deviant or illegitimate means become rational and functional alternatives. When the source of failure or blockage is perceived as external—resulting from institutional practices and policies—the individual has some justification for withdrawing his or her moral commitment to these conventional norms. In this manner, a sense of injustice mitigates ties to conventional norms and generates normlessness.

Once at this point in the developmental sequence, the relative presence or absence of specific delinquent learning and performance structures accounts for the likelihood of one's behavior. The time-ordering of the exposure to delinquency variable is not explicit. It may predate failure or it may be the result of seeking a social context in which one can achieve some success. While the exposure may result in the acquisition of delinquent behavior patterns, actual delinquent behavior (performance) will not result until one's attachment to the social order is neutralized through real or anticipated failure, and the delinquent behavior has been reinforced.

The results of research relative to this set of propositions have been generally encouraging. Using a predictive design which allowed for establishing the correct temporal sequences, Elliott and Voss (1974) found that this set of variables did, in fact, account for 31 percent of the variance in self-reported delinquency frequency scores and 21 percent of the variance in self-reported delinquency gain scores across time. Brennan and Huizinga's (1975) path-analytical work on a sample of 730 youths also supports this theoretical model. They concluded that the most powerful predictors of delinquent behavior were youth percep-

tions of limited opportunity, negative labeling, peer group pressures for delinquency, and normlessness. They were able to explain 31 percent of the variance in self-reported delinquency scores on the basis of these variables. Jessor et al. (1968) also found good support for a similar set of predictor variables on a general measure of self-reported deviant behavior.

While considerable empirical support for an integrated strain-learning approach to delinquency has been amassed, most of the variance in delinquency remains unexplained. If the power of this theoretical formulation is to be improved, some basic modification is required. One avenue is suggested by the weak predictive power of the aspiration-opportunity discrepancy variables. In both the Elliott and Voss and the Brennan and Huizinga studies, for example, anticipated failure to achieve occupational or educational goals was not predictively associated with changes in levels of delinquency. Limited academic success at school and failure in one's relationship with parents were predictive, but only weakly. To some extent, the low strength of these predictors might be anticipated, since they are the initial variables in the causal sequence and are tied to delinquency only through a set of other conditional variables. On the other hand, the strong emphasis placed on these specific variables in strain theories seems questionable, given the available data. It might be argued that the difficulty lies in the operationalization or measurement of the relevant goal-opportunity disjunctions. However, we are inclined to reject this position because previous findings as to this postulated relationship have been generally weak and inconclusive (Spergel, 1967; Short, 1964, 1965; Elliott, 1962; Short, Rivera, and Tenneyson, 1965; Jessor et al., 1968; Hirschi, 1969; Liska, 1971; and Brennan, 1974). Furthermore, there is substantial evidence in the above-mentioned studies that many adolescents engaging in significant amounts of delinquent behavior experience no discrepancies between aspirations and perceived opportunities. The lack of consistent support for

ization (failure to internalize conventional norms) and integration into conventional groups or institutions which provide strong external or social controls on behavior. From our perspective, these need not be viewed as contradictory explanations. On the contrary, they may be viewed as alternative processes, depending on the outcome of one's early socialization experience.

For example, Hirschi (1969) has argued that high aspirations involve a commitment to conventional lines of action that function as a positive control or bond to the social order. Strain theories, on the other hand, view high aspirations (in the face of limited opportunities) as a source of attenuation of attachment to the conventional order. Recognizing this difference, Hirschi suggested that examination of this relationship would constitute a crucial test of the two theories. Empirically, the evidence is inconsistent and far from conclusive. One possible interpretation is that both hypotheses are correct and are part of different etiological sequences leading to delinquent behavior.

Empirical studies using the control perspective have focused almost exclusively on the static relation of weak internal and external controls to delinquency without considering the longer developmental processes. These processes may involve an initially strong commitment to and integration into society which becomes attenuated over time, with the attenuation eventually resulting in delinquency. The source of this difficulty may lie in the infrequent use of longitudinal designs. Without a repeated-measure design, youths with strong bonds which subsequently become attenuated may be indistinguishable from those who never developed strong bonds.

tion experiences, which result in variable degrees of commitment to and integration into conventional social groups. The effect of failure to achieve conventional goals on subsequent delinquency is related to the strength of one's initial bonds. Limited opportunities to achieve conventional goals constitute a source of strain and thus a motivational stimulus for delinquency only if one is committed to these goals. In contrast, limited opportunities to achieve such goals should have little or no impact on those with weak ties and commitments to the conventional social order.

Limited opportunities to achieve conventional goals are not the only experiences which weaken or break initially strong ties to the social order. Labeling theorists have argued that the experience of being apprehended and publicly labeled a delinquent initiates social processes which limit one's access to conventional social roles and statuses, isolating one from participation in these activities and relationships and forcing one to assume a delinquent role (Becker, 1963; Schur, 1971, 1973; Kitsuse, 1962; Rubington and Weinberg, 1968; Ageton and Elliott, 1974; and Goldman, 1963). It has also been argued that the effects of social disorganization or crisis in the home (divorce, parental strife and discord, death of a parent) and/or community (high rates of mobility, economic depression, unemployment) attenuate or break one's ties to society (Thomas and Znaniecki, 1927; Shaw, 1931; Savitz, 1970; Monahan, 1957; Toby, 1957; Glueck and Glueck, 1970; Andry, 1962; and Rosen, 1970).

In sum, we postulate that limited opportunities, failure to achieve valued goals, negative labeling experiences, and social disorganization at home and in the community are all experiences which may attenuate one's ties to the conventional social order and may thus be causal factors in the developmental sequence leading to delinquent behavior for those whose early socialization experiences produced strong bonds to society. For those whose attachments to the conventional social order are already weak, such factors may further weaken ties

this relationship suggests that failure or anticipated failure constitutes only one possible path to an involvement in delinquency.

The Control Perspective

The different assumptions of strain and control theories are significant. Strain formulations assume a positively socialized individual who violates conventional norms only when his or her attachment and commitment are attenuated. Norm violation occurs only after the individual perceives that opportunities for socially valued goals are blocked. Strain theory focuses on this attenuation process. Control theories, on the other hand, treat the socialization process and commitment to conventional norms and values as problematic. Persons differ with respect to their commitment to and integration into the conventional social order. As Reiss (1951:196) put it:

Delinquency results when there is a relative absence of internalized norms and rules governing behavior in conformity with the norms of the social system to which legal penalties are attached, a breakdown in previously established controls, and/or a relative absence of or conflict in social rules or techniques for enforcing such behavior in the social groups or institutions of which the person is a member. Hence, delinquency may be seen as a functional consequence of the type of relationship established among the personal and social controls.

From a control perspective, delinquency is viewed as a consequence of (1) lack of internalized normative controls, (2) breakdown in previously established controls, and/or (3) conflict or inconsistency in rules or social controls. Strain formulations of delinquency appear to be focusing on those variables and processes which account for the second condition identified by Reiss (1951)—attenuation or breakdown in previously established controls. On the other hand, most control theorists direct their attention to the first and third conditions, exploring such variables as inadequate social-

An Integrated Strain-Control Perspective

Our proposed integrated theoretical paradigm begins with the assumption that different youths have different early socializa-

to society, but are not necessary factors in the etiological sequence leading to delinquency.

Our basic conceptual framework comes from control theory, with a slightly different emphasis placed on participation in and commitment to delinquent groups. Further, it identifies a set of attenuating/bonding experiences which weaken or strengthen ties to the conventional social order over time. Our focus is on experiences and social contexts which are relevant to adolescents.

A diagram of our proposed theoretical scheme is shown in Figure 44.1. The arrows in Figure 44.1 indicate the direction and sequence of the hypothesized relationships. While the time order designated in Figure 44.1 is unidirectional, the actual relationships between initial socialization, bonding/attenuation processes, normative orientations of groups, and behavior are often reciprocal and reinforcing. We have also pre-

presented the variables in dichotomized form to simplify the model and the discussion of its major elements.

Bonds

Control theorists disagree about sources of control, but then, all accept the central proposition that delinquent behavior is a direct result of weak ties to the conventional normative order. In operationalizing control theory, major emphasis has been placed on the bond(s) which tie a person to society. Hirschi (1969) conceptualized four elements of this bond. First, *attachment* implies a moral link to other people and encompasses such concepts as conscience, superego, and internalization of norms. *Commitment*, the second factor, is the rational element in the bond. Hirschi views commitment to conformity as an investment in conventional lines of action, such as an educational or occupational career. Other theo-

ally bound by the social norms and rules and the degree to which one internalizes or adopts those norms as directives for action. Our notion of commitment is akin to Hirschi's concepts of attachment and belief.

Integration and commitment together constitute the bonds which tie an individual to the prevailing social order. High levels of integration and commitment imply strong bonds and general insulation from delinquent behavior. Conversely, low social integration and commitment presuppose weak bonds and a susceptibility to delinquent behavior. All gradations of integration and commitment are possible.

Building Social Control: The Bonding/Attenuation Processes

The inclusion of the bonding/attenuation process in the model suggests that, throughout adolescence, youths are involved in experiences and processes which attenuate or reinforce their childhood bonds to the conventional social order. Adolescence is a critical life period, both psychologically and socially. As youths make the transition from childhood to adulthood, the level of involvement in the immediate family declines and they move into new and more complex social settings at school and in the community. For one who developed strong childhood bonds, such factors as (1) success experiences at school and in the larger community, (2) positive labeling in these new settings, and (3) a continuous, stable, harmonious home life constitute positive reinforcements of initially strong bonds and continuing insulation from delinquency. For some, the transition is not as smooth, and failure, negative labeling, isolation, and rejection occur in these new social settings; these, in turn, may create difficulties in the youth's relationship with his family. The net effect of these new experiences may be a weakening of one's integration into and commitment to these social groups and institutions and an increasing likelihood of involvement in delinquent behavior. Finally, for those who never developed strong bonds during childhood, bonding/attenuation experiences will either strengthen

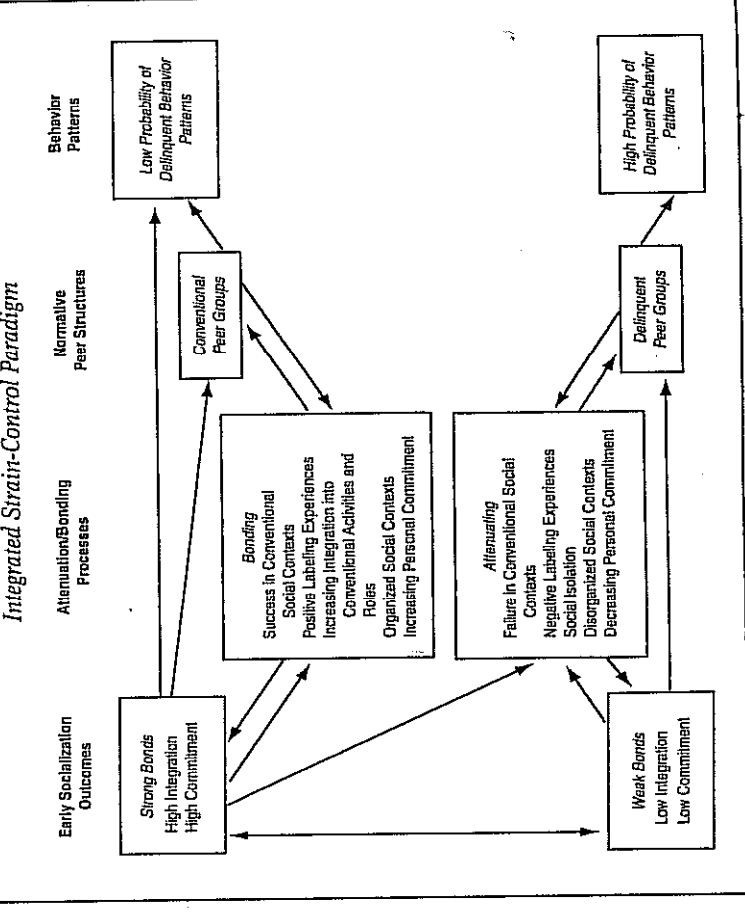
risks have tied the concept of commitment to such notions as "stake in conformity" (Goode, 1960) and "side bets" (Becker, 1960). *Involvement* is the time and energy dimension of the bond for Hirschi. Given the limits of time and energy, involvement in conventional activities acts as a social constraint on delinquent behavior. The final bond, *belief*, refers to one's acceptance of the moral validity of social rules and norms. According to Hirschi, this psychological element of the bond is effective as long as a person accepts the validity of the rules. If one denies or deprecates the validity of the rules, one source of control is neutralized.

Other control theorists, such as Reiss (1951), Nye (1958), and Reckless (1967), use a more general classification of bonds as internal (personal) and external (social) controls. Hirschi's dimensions are not easily placed into these two general categories, although Hirschi identifies attachment as an internal and involvement as an external element of the bond (1969:19). We believe that distinguishing internal controls, whose locus is within the person (beliefs, commitment, attitudes, perceptions), from external controls, whose locus is in the surrounding social and physical milieu, poses fewer difficulties and produces greater conceptual clarity than is found in Hirschi's four concepts.

The external, or social, bond we have defined as *integration*. By this, we refer to involvement in and attachment to conventional groups and institutions, such as the family, school, peer networks, and so on. Those persons who occupy and are actively involved in conventional social roles are, by this definition, highly integrated. Group controls exist in the form of sanctioning networks (the formal and informal rules and regulations by which the behavior of social role occupants or group members is regulated). This conceptualization of integration is akin to Hirschi's concepts of involvement and commitment.

The internal, or personal, bond is defined as *commitment*. Commitment involves personal attachment to conventional roles, groups, and institutions. At another level, it reflects the extent to which one feels mor-

Figure 44.1 Integrated Strain-Control Paradigm



ant groups or subcultures facilitates and sustains delinquent behavior. When examining the influence of social bonds, it is critical that the normative orientation of particular groups be taken into account. This focus on the normative orientations of groups is the central theme in subcultural theories of delinquency (Cohen, 1955; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; and Miller, 1958) and constitutes an important qualification to a simple interpretation of the relationship between social bonds and delinquency.

This position has an empirical as well as a theoretical base. Severy (1973) and Elliott and Voss (1974) found exposure and commitment to delinquent groups to be the strongest predictors of subsequent increases in delinquent behavior. Both investigations found that the predictive effect of exposure alone was not particularly strong, but exposure plus high commitment to the delinquent group was a very powerful predictor of delinquency (i.e., there was a substantial interaction effect for these two independent variables). Participation in a delinquent peer group thus had an independent effect on delinquent behavior, in addition to the effect associated with strength of conventional bonds. Akers (1977), Conger (1976), and Linden and Hackler (1973) have reported data which suggest that strong peer bonds are associated with both delinquent and conforming behavior patterns, depending on the normative orientation of peers. Finally, data from the Chicago Gang Study (Rivera and Short, 1967a, 1967b; Short and Strodtbeck, 1965; and Tennyson, 1967) indicate that highly delinquent gang boys are more closely bonded to their class communities (subculture) than are less delinquent, nongang boys.

Delinquent Behavior

Delinquent behavior is viewed as a special subclass of deviant behavior. While deviance includes all violations of all prevailing norms, delinquent behavior includes only violations of statutory proscriptive norms, or, as they are usually called, laws. Thus, delinquent behavior takes on special meaning because (1) there is generally

broad community consensus for these norms, (2) virtually all persons are aware that these specific proscriptions are enforced by official sanctions, and (3) the risk of detection and punishment influences the performance of delinquent acts.

We are not concerned here with the isolated delinquent act. Our focus is on sustained patterns of delinquent behavior, whether the person involved is socially or self-defined as a delinquent or nondelinquent person. Although our definition of delinquency subsumes one characteristic of a delinquent role (sustained patterns of delinquent behavior), it is our view that continuing involvement in delinquency may not necessarily involve the enactment of a delinquent role (Becker, 1963). There is empirical evidence that many embezzlers, auto thieves, check forgers, shoplifters, and persons involved in violent assaults against persons (including rape) do not view themselves as criminal or delinquent (Cressey, 1971; Gibbons, 1977; Lemert, 1951, 1953; Cameron, 1964; Robin, 1974; Gauthier, 1959; and Gebhard et al., 1965). Furthermore, many adolescents involved in sustained patterns of delinquent behavior are never apprehended and publicly labeled as delinquent persons, and have neither a public nor a self-definition as a delinquent or criminal person (Sykes and Matza, 1957; Reiss, 1962; Cameron, 1964; Hirschi, 1969; Kelly, 1977; and Jensen, 1972). Thus, our conceptualization of delinquency focuses on sustained patterns of illegal behavior and is logically independent of the concept of delinquent role.

Multiple Etiological Paths to Delinquency

There are two dominant etiological paths to delinquency in the paradigm shown in Figure 44.1. The first involves an integration of traditional control theory and social learning theory. Weak integration into and commitment to the social order, absence of conventional restraints on behavior, and high vulnerability to the influence of delinquent peer groups during adolescence characterize the socialization experiences re-

lated to the first path. Depending on the presence and accessibility of conventional and delinquent peer groups, some weakly bonded youths turn to delinquency while others maintain an essentially conforming pattern of behavior or a legal, but unconventional, lifestyle.

The crucial element in this path is the delinquent peer group. Weakly bonded youths may not hold conventional aspirations (as for academic success), but then do share in more general aspirations for friendship and acceptance, as well as status and material rewards, which may be offered through participation in a group. Given an absence of conventional restraints and access to delinquent groups, the reasons for involvement are not unlike those for involvement in more conventional peer groups during adolescence.

The second path represents an integration of traditional strain and social learning perspectives. Youths who follow this path develop strong bonds to the conventional social order through their socialization experiences. The crucial element in this sequence is the attenuation, or weakening, of these bonds. Attenuating experiences during adolescence involve personal failure to achieve conventional goals and/or threats to the stability and cohesion of one's conventional social groups. Once one's bonds are effectively weakened, like those who never developed strong bonds, one is free to explore alternative means for goal achievement and to participate in delinquent or unconventional groups.

In most instances, this path also involves participation in peer groups which tolerate or encourage delinquent forms of behavior. It is our view that truly individual adaptations to this situation are unlikely to survive long enough to generate detectable patterns of delinquent behavior. However, two possible subtypes deserve mention. The diagram of this integrated paradigm shows a direct causal path from initially strong bonds and subsequent attenuation experiences to delinquent behavior patterns. Under some circumstances, participation in groups providing reinforcements for delinquent acts is unnecessary. Attenuating experiences are

sufficient to motivate repeated acts of delinquency, which are attempts to regain conventional rewards through unconventional means. This pattern involves the classic strain model, in which the person retains a strong commitment to conventional goals and values and uses illegal means as a temporary expedient. The attenuation process is only partial, and these youths retain some commitment to and integration into conventional groups. We anticipate such patterns to be of relatively short duration and to involve highly instrumental forms of delinquent behavior. Patterns of theft may characterize this etiological path.

A second subtype corresponds to that described generally by Simon and Gagnon (1976) in their article on the anomie of affluence. This path involves those whose commitments to conventional goals are attenuated by a decreasing gratification derived from goal achievement. Unlike the previously described subtype, which involved failure to achieve conventional success goals because of limited means or abilities, this type has ability and a ready access to legitimate means and is successful by conventional standards. The failure to derive personal gratification from "success" results in an attenuation of the commitment to these success goals and sets in motion a search for alternative goals whose attainment will provide a greater measure of personal gratification. This path to delinquency clearly requires participation in social groups in which delinquent behavior patterns can be learned and reinforced. This pattern of delinquency is characterized by a search for new experiences, which frequently involves illegal forms of behavior, such as illicit drug use and sex-related offenses.

At a more tentative level, we postulate that the two major paths (1) typically involve different forms of personal alienation and (2) result in different self-images and social labels. Conceptually, alienation plays a slightly different role within strain and control perspectives. From a control perspective, alienation, in the form of powerlessness, societal estrangement, and social isolation, directly reflects a weak personal

commitment to conventional groups and norms. For strain theory, however, alienation represents a crucial intervening variable linking failure to delinquency. It is evidence of the attenuation of one's commitment bond or, in Hirschi's (1969) terms, the neutralization of "moral obstacles" to delinquency. In the form of alienation described by Cloward and Ohlin (1960), the neutralization is achieved through a blaming process in which failure is attributed to others or to general societal injustice. These same elements are present in Sykes and Matza's (1957) techniques of neutralization. Cartwright et al. (1966) and Cartwright (1971) identify four types of alienation which provide this direct encouragement, justification, or permission for delinquency: normlessness, futility, lack of trust, and perceived indifference. If we assume some relationship between the two causal paths and social class, there is some indirect empirical support for the hypothesis that the form of alienation is tied to the strength of one's initial commitment bond. Brennan and Huizinga (1975) have reported that normlessness was the dominant form of alienation among middle-class delinquent youths, while powerlessness and societal estrangement were the predominant forms of alienation among low-SES delinquent youths. We thus postulate that the form of alienation defines the particular causal path involved.

We also hypothesize that those with initially strong bonds are less likely to view themselves as delinquent, even when they are involved in sustained patterns of delinquent behavior. Such persons are more likely to come from advantaged backgrounds and to have prosocial self-images. Consequently, they are likely to view their delinquent acts as temporary expedients, retaining at least a partial commitment to conventional goals. The probability of apprehension and public labeling by the police and courts is also much lower for such youths. In contrast, those who never developed strong bonds to the social order are more vulnerable to labeling processes and thus more likely to be viewed as delinquents by themselves and by others (Jensen, 1972).

This may account, in part, for the persistent view among law enforcement officials and the general public that most delinquents are poor and/or nonwhite, in spite of the compelling evidence that the incidence of delinquent behavior is unrelated to these variables.

Summary and Discussion

We have postulated two primary paths, or sets of conditions, which lead youths into delinquent behavior. The first (and probably most frequent) sequence involves (1) weak bonds to conventional society and (2) exposure and commitment to groups involved in delinquent activity; the second involves (1) strong bonds to conventional society, (2) conditions and experiences which attenuate those bonds, and, in most instances, (3) exposure and commitment to groups involved in delinquency.

Two types of bonds or controls were specified—integration (internal) and commitment (external). Integration includes such variables as occupancy of conventional social roles; participation in conventional activities, organizations, and institutions; and the presence of effective sanctioning networks in one's immediate social contexts. Commitment includes such variables as perceived legitimacy of conventional norms, normlessness, social isolation, societal estrangement, powerlessness, attachment to parents and peers, belief in conventional goals and values, and tolerance for deviance.

We also discussed some specific experiences or conditions frequently encountered during adolescence, which reinforce or attenuate one's bonds. Variables identified here include failure-success experiences; positive or negative labeling; and social crisis and disorganization in the home, school, and community. Under these conditions of stress, even those with initially strong bonds to society have an increasing likelihood of involvement in delinquent behavior. In addition, delinquent behavior and performance structures are a necessary

variable in both etiological sequences for the majority of adolescent offenders.

We believe the synthesis of traditional strain, social control, and social-learning perspectives into a single paradigm has several advantages over a conceptualization which treats each theory as separate and independent. First, the provision for multiple etiological paths to delinquency in a single paradigm presents a more comprehensive view. The integration of strain and control perspectives assumes that these two paths are independent and additive and that their integration will account for more variance in sustained patterns of delinquent behavior than either can explain independently. Independent tests of these traditional perspectives in the past have often failed to include the variables necessary to test alternative explanations, and even when such variables were available, the alternative explanations were assumed to be competitive and were thus evaluated with respect to the relative strengths of the two competing hypotheses (Hirschi, 1969; and Eve, 1977). Such an approach misses the possibility that both hypotheses are correct and are accounting for different portions of the variance in delinquency. We have also suggested that different patterns of delinquency may be tied to alternative etiological paths; for example, we postulated that one of the strain paths (limited means/goal failure) should produce forms of delinquency which are considered very instrumental by conventional values. The alternative strain path (attenuated commitment to conventional goals) should result in less instrumental forms of delinquency, since it characteristically involves a search for new experiences (e.g., drug use) rather than attempts to achieve conventional goals.

Second, we believe that our integrated paradigm is consistent with previous empirical findings and offers some insight into contradictory findings. Previous research using the social control perspective has established a relationship between the strength of one's bonds and social class, with low-SES and minority youths characterized by weaker bonds (Nye, 1958; Gold, 1963; McKinley, 1964, and Hirschi, 1969).

In contrast, the attenuated commitment strain path has been associated with affluence and the limited means-strain path seems most relevant to working-class youths. The combined effect seems consistent with the observed class distribution of self-reported delinquent behavior. Our assumption that weakly bonded youths run the greatest risk of official processing (because of greater surveillance in their neighborhoods, more traditional forms of delinquent behavior, and limited resources with which to avoid processing in the justice system) would account for the observed class distribution of official measures of delinquency.

The integrated paradigm also offers an explanation for the contradictory findings on aspirations and delinquency. It may also account for the generally weak results of tests of the labeling hypothesis, since we view labeling as an attenuating process, which thus should affect youths with prior commitment to the conventional order most directly. Such a view is consistent with the findings of Short and Strodtbeck (1965), Gould (1969), and Ageton and Elliott (1974) that the impact of negative labeling experiences is greater for middle-class youths, and that, for most youths who are apprehended and processed officially (primarily weakly bonded youths), the effects of official labeling are very weak (Fisher, 1972; Foster, Dinitz, and Reckless, 1972; Jensen, 1972; Ageton and Elliott, 1974; Bernstein, Kelly, and Doyle, 1977; and Thomas, 1977).

This integrated conceptual framework may, at present, appear too all-inclusive. However, it is our view that a broad range of variables must be considered before a truly parsimonious set can be identified. Clearly, a satisfactory explanation of delinquent behavior requires multiple variables and a broader conceptualization than has been used to date. This conceptual framework provides the broader perspective, and additional research using this paradigm should result in a more precise set of variables.